

Boston University Henry M. Goldman
School of Dental Medicine

REMEMBERING DR. GERALD M. KRAMER



**BOSTON
UNIVERSITY**

Boston University Henry M. Goldman
School of Dental Medicine

REMEMBERING
DR. GERALD M. KRAMER

*More than a teacher,
a paradigm for life.*



2

Message from the Dean

Jeffrey W. Hutter, DMD, MEd
Dean and Spencer N. Frankl Professor in
Dental Medicine

3

Message from the Chair

Serge Dibart, DMD 89
Professor and Chair of Periodontology, Director of the
Advanced Specialty Education Program in Periodontics

4–5

Foreword

Myron Nevins, DDS, PERIO 67
Paul Fugazzotto, DDS, PERIO 81

6–7

Timeline

The life of Dr. Gerald M. Kramer

8–27

Remembrances

Burton Langer, DMD, PERIO 66

Thomas F. Holmes, DDS, PERIO 71

Michael Stiglitz, DDS, PERIO 72

Roger J. Wise, DDS, PERIO 73, ORTHO 77

Steven J. Peiser, DDS, PERIO 74

Giano Ricci, MD, DDS, PERIO 74

Yousri Said, DDS, PERIO 76

Steven P. Perlman, DDS, PEDO 76, DHL (hon.)

Glenn Fujinaka, DDS, PERIO 77

Fredric J. Witkin, DDS, PERIO 77

Thomas J. Mone, DMD, PERIO 77

Catherine A. Dorange, DDS, DScD, PERIO 78

Robert W. Hymes, DDS, PERIO 78

Massimo De Sanctis, MD, DDS, PERIO 83

Luigi Montesani, MD, DMD

Dean Jeffrey W. Hutter



Dear Alumni and Friends,

It is difficult to believe that it has been more than 13 years since Dr. Kramer passed. His legacy continues to impact residents and patients at the Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (GSDM) every day. Indeed, alumni and friends around the world put his legacy into practice each and every day in their offices.

Dr. Kramer was a founder of the field, and his efforts in building the Department of Periodontology at GSDM had a profound influence on our School. For the last 50 years, the department has been an internationally recognized leader in the profession, and his spirit and philosophy live on at GSDM.

I had the privilege of hosting a Periodontic Alumni Reception in honor of Dr. Kramer during the 2009 American Academy of Periodontology Annual Meeting in Boston. Mrs. Sylvia Kramer and her son Lloyd, daughter Leslie, and granddaughter Melia graciously attended and accepted a plaque in honor of Dr. Kramer, which was later placed in the Periodontology Department.

Since becoming Dean it has been a priority for me to mend historical rifts and welcome our entire alumni family home. I am very grateful to the Kramer family, Myron Nevins PERIO 67, and Ernesto Muller PERIO 61 for all that they have done to make that possible. It is thrilling for GSDM to host the first Kramer Symposium during Alumni Weekend 2013 and I trust that with the support of our periodontic alumni, this will become an enduring tradition.

As we look to our proposed new building and the many ways alumni choose to support the School, it is my fervent hope that those impacted by

Dr. Kramer might come together to help us place his name in the new facility. Indeed, while our proposed new facility is about the next exciting chapter, we must recognize and always show gratitude for those leaders, such as Dr. Kramer, who brought us to this moment.

Dr. Kramer practiced periodontics for 50 years and received virtually every honor awarded by the specialty. Indeed, the American Academy of Periodontology recognized his contributions to the advancement of dentistry with the Gold Medal, and his clinical excellence with the Master Clinician Award. We now honor Dr. Kramer with this memorial publication, which contains remembrances and reflections from many of our devoted Perio alumni. I thank each of the contributors and Dr. Serge Dibart for commemorating Dr. Kramer in this way.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey W. Hutter, DMD, MEd

Dean and Spencer N. Frankl Professor in
Dental Medicine



(l, r) Dean Jeffrey W. Hutter, Mrs. Sylvia Kramer, Dr. Myron Nevins, Dr. Frank Oppenheim, Dr. Serge Dibart, and Dr. Ernesto Muller at the 2009 alumni reception honoring Dr. Gerald Kramer

Chair of Periodontology Dr. Serge Dibart



excellence and the pursuit of greatness by our forebears. A strong and supportive alumni base has allowed us to continue on this path.

Our Dean, Dr. Jeffrey W. Hutter, has been instrumental in providing the leadership and the vision necessary to shape our future in ensuring that the School will be the premier academic dental institution promoting excellence in dental education, research, oral health care, and community service to improve the overall health of the global population.

"Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em." —William Shakespeare (Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*)

Sincerely,

Serge Dibart, DMD 89

Professor and Chair of Periodontology,
Director of the Advanced Specialty Education
Program in Periodontics

Dear Alumni and Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to write the foreword to this inaugural event as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine. This will be our first symposium honoring the legacy of Dr. Gerald M. Kramer.

I met and interacted with Dr. Kramer beginning in the early '80s first as a student (albeit from a different institution!), and later as a colleague, while working with Dr. Sig Socransky at the Forsyth Research Institute. These were times of impressive growth in the field of periodontics and no one contributed greater than Dr. Kramer and his group. He shaped the future of periodontics and left an indelible mark on the minds of his students and followers. He embodied excellence not only in the clinical realm, but also in everyday life. His teachings went beyond the scope of periodontology, as students would turn to him for guidance in their personal lives. As a man of many facets and talents, he was a teacher in the noblest sense of the word.

As you leaf through this commemorative booklet, you might see a different side of Dr. Kramer. You will get a glimpse at his personal life through the photographs and comments that were gathered with the help from his family, friends, and students. As we move forward into this 21st century and the next decades at the Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine, we look confidently to the future because we have a strong past; a past that has been rooted in

Myron Nevins, DDS, PERIO 67



(l, r) Drs. Nevins and Kramer



(l-r) Dr. & Mrs. Gerald Kramer with Dr. Nevins. Dr. Kramer received the Master Clinicians Award granted by the American Academy of Periodontology.



Gerald M. Kramer (Mel, as he preferred) was not only an outstanding role model for me, but a close friend. He was both creative and inspirational and lived life as a renaissance man who cherished his family and friends. He was able to be open to new and diverging thoughts and always a willing candidate for debate. A skilled surgeon and a dedicated educator, Mel was never completely satisfied and instilled his curiosity in all of us. Every student desired

“Every student desired to emulate this elegant individual who ran the race like few others.”

to emulate this elegant individual who ran the race like few others. His tenure as Chair of the Department of Periodontics at the Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry was exceptional in his devotion to the residents and the faculty. He was always available and the first to help professionally or personally. He himself never stopped being a student.

We practiced and taught together for thirty years, co-edited the *International*

Journal of Periodontics & Restorative Dentistry, and founded the Institute for Advanced Dental Studies. His energy was motivational. It is so appropriate that he is included in the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the School where he gave so much of himself.

—Myron Nevins, DDS, PERIO 67

If we are lucky in life, we meet one or two BIG people...

The end of 1979: A “famous” periodontist comes to our periodontal program to give a full day presentation. Primarily a researcher, the presenter begins to offer clinical therapeutic guidelines. Dr. Kramer politely dissects and invalidates these treatment suggestions. The next day, Dr. Kramer explains to us that, while the speaker was his guest, his first obligation is to us, his students. As a teacher, Gerald Kramer was unique.

Fast forward a decade: As Program Chair of the South Shore District of the Massachusetts Dental Society I hold my breath and ask Dr. Kramer to give a full day presentation. He graciously accepts and asks what I would like him to speak about. I think, but do not say, “Did Michelangelo ever ask a client what colors he should paint with?”

My verbal response: “Whatever you think is best. I just want everyone to get a glimpse of how you think, diagnose, deconstruct, and reconstruct a case.” (Definitely the correct response).

The presentation did not include a treatment slide until a few minutes before lunch. It was masterful. The audience sat rapt.

The first clinical case Dr. Kramer presented focused upon a compromised, rotated maxillary first bicuspid amid numerous problems and oral health concerns. After extensive discussion, the therapy selected (hemisection, removal of the buccal root, endodontics and restoration) was “exotic,” but logical.

“As a moralist and role model, Gerry Kramer was unsurpassed.”

A former associate told me the next day that he thought this was an unusual case to show, as it was a treatment which would rarely be utilized. I explained that the message of the case was not the treatment rendered, but rather the thought processes involved and the role of the periodontist as the treatment quarterback.

As a philosopher, Dr. Kramer encouraged the challenging of postulates, and enabled creative thinking. Except for the missing bath house, there appeared to be little difference between Phaedo, Protagoras, and others interacting with Socrates in the Dialogues, and exploring life and treatment philosophies with Gerry Kramer.

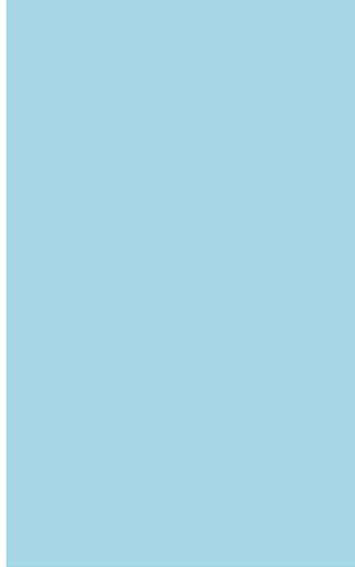
Return to September 1979: Dr. Kramer explains: “When you finish this program you will have the knowledge and skills to treat patients correctly. It will be up to you to do so, not every day, not every hour, but every second. The first time you take a short cut, the first time you go down the wrong road, it is very difficult to come back.” As a moralist and role model, Gerry Kramer was unsurpassed.

Attend any lecture I give or any course I teach, and you will always hear the following: “We all lose sight of the fact that every day, *every day*, an amazing thing happens to us. A person comes to us, gives us their body, and asks us to help them. When this happens, the least we can do is the best we can do. This defines us as dentists, and as people.”

To quote Dr. Kramer once more: “Our definition of success is limited by our perception of possibilities.”

Gerald M. Kramer: More than a teacher, a paradigm for life.

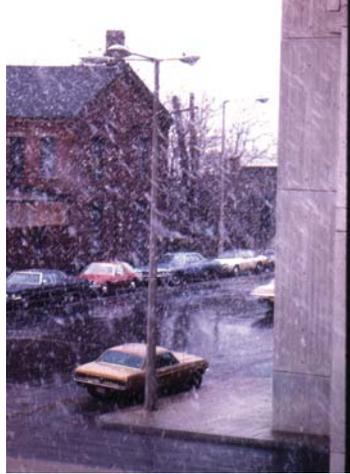
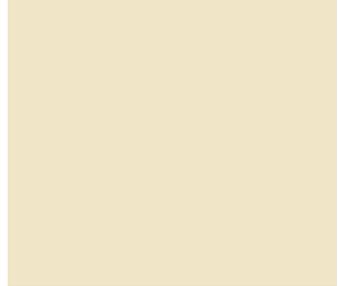
—Paul Fugazzotto, DDS, PERIO 81



January 21, 1945, Gerald Kramer and his bride Sylvia Sher pose with family



The Boston skyline (submitted by Fredric Witkin, DDS, PERIO 77)



November 1976, first snow from BU School of Graduate Dentistry window (submitted by Fredric Witkin, DDS, PERIO 77)



Dr. Kramer lecturing, c. 1977 (submitted by Glenn Fujinaka, DDS, PERIO 77)



Dr. Kramer at a Celtics game

Born in Gloucester, MA, to Tillie and Louis Kramer

Married Sylvia Sher
January 21, 1945

Associate Professor of Periodontology (The Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry (now GSDM) was founded during this period, in 1963)

Professor & Chair, Department of Periodontology

Founds the Institute of Advanced Dental Studies, Massachusetts

Founds the Institute of Advanced Dental Studies, Japan (now the Japan Institute for Advanced Dental Studies)

Editor Emeritus of the *International Journal of Periodontics & Restorative Dentistry*

Dr. Gerald M. Kramer passes away.

DMD, Tufts University School of Dental Medicine

Studied periodontology under Henry M. Goldman

Assistant Professor of Periodontology (GSDM was the BUSM Department of Stomatology at this time.)

Professor of Periodontology

Chair of the American Board of Periodontology

Co-editor of the *International Journal of Periodontics & Restorative Dentistry*

Founds the Institute of Advanced Dental Studies, Brazil

The "Dr. & Mrs. Kramer Scholar Award for Excellence" is established.

June 11, 1922

1944

1944-1946

1945

1950s

1953

1958-1961

1961-1966

1966

1967-1979

1971-1977

1980

1980-1995

1986

1994

1995-2005

1998

May 18, 2000

**Burton
Langer,
DMD,
PERIO 66**

In an attempt to describe Dr. Gerald Kramer's impact on his students, colleagues, and friends, one would have had to know him—not too dissimilar from those who lived during the era of John F. Kennedy or when osseointegration was new and Professor Ingvar Branemark changed the practice of dentistry. He was a unique individual and falls into the category of leaders, both in our profession and in other aspects of life. His contribution to our field was more than the sum of his achievements in that it transcended his time at Boston University and his life.

He had a unique style that embedded itself into the DNA of his students and those who had contact with him. His quest for excellence in dentistry had a ripple effect that instilled enthusiasm into those students and their professional lives. When one thought of his appearance, hypnotic dialogue, and energy, it became a catalyst for those who followed him.

I was privileged to have a long-term interaction with him and it had an unquestionably positive effect on my activities in the profession. There have been only a few who stand out as iconic people, whose personalities and contributions have impacted on my life. I place Dr. Kramer in that category and will always cherish my long friendship with him.

—Burton Langer, DMD, PERIO 66

“His quest for excellence in dentistry had a ripple effect that instilled enthusiasm into those students and their professional lives.”

My first impression of Dr. Kramer was at our class orientation. I specifically recall how articulate he was and how fashionably he dressed. After his welcome and introduction to our group, he addressed root anatomy by asking us how it was relative to periodontal involvement. When we were unable to answer correctly, with chalk in hand he “drew us the root” involving the bifurcated maxillary first bicuspid. He emphasized that we would not “walk through” his course. He expected us to carry a creditable case load working hard for certification.

The other memory I cherish is the day he called me into his office. I entered a little tentatively but he quickly put me at ease. We talked briefly and then I just asked if he was inviting me to work for him in his office in Swampscott. He said “yes” and it was the beginning of an extraordinary learning experience and lasting friendship.

—Thomas F. Holmes, DDS, PERIO 71



**Thomas F.
Holmes, DDS,
PERIO 71**

Michael Stiglitz, DDS, PERIO 72

Walt Whitman in "O Captain! My Captain!" states:

O CAPTAIN! my Captain! our fearful trip is done;

The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;

The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done.

By any measure, Dr. Kramer was an extraordinary individual. Whether as a practitioner, teacher, lecturer, author, department chair, board member, editor, friend, father, or husband, he touched the lives of countless people who have admired, respected, and loved him. And throughout all these roles, there has been one constant theme: Excellence. He pursued it for himself, and he instilled it in those of us fortunate enough to have studied with him. His influence on our lives is vast and deep. In fact, for many of us he has always seemed larger than life.

I was fortunate to have studied with Dr. Kramer from 1970 to 1972. In the spring of 1972, Dr. Kramer delivered his "Top of the Mountain" address to the graduating class. In his speech, he thanked us for taking him through an arduous two-year journey to its pinnacle where, he said, "The view is most beautiful." This remark from Dr. Kramer is so indicative of his great generosity of spirit: *He thanked us!* And in his address, he continued to instill in us the determination to pursue excellence.

A complete résumé of Mel's life would fill an entire journal, so let me mention just a few of his accomplishments:

Diplomate, American Board of Periodontology

Professor and Chairman, Department of Periodontology, Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry (renamed Henry M. Goldman School of Graduate Dentistry in 1977,

now Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine), 1967-1979

Director, American Board of Periodontology, 1972-1978

Chairman, American Board of Periodontology, 1977-1978

Co-Director, Institute for Advanced Dental Studies

Co-Editor, *International Journal of Periodontology and Restorative Dentistry*

But this list of professional accomplishments does not fully capture the man. To do so one has to know his personal qualities as well.

Many stories have filtered back to me about Mel's humanitarianism. Countless former students, friends, and colleagues have sought him out through phone calls, letters, and faxes seeking help, advice, or just a shoulder to lean on. When I would ask how he continued to respond to so many appeals, his response had always been, "They are family, and we take care of family."



(l-r) Dr. Stiglitz, Dr. Kramer's daughter Leslie, Mrs. Kramer, and Dr. Kramer

As if these accomplishments and personal qualities were not enough, Mel was also a devotee of music, the arts, and literature—a true renaissance man! He was an avid tennis and golf player while in the Navy. And as we all know, he had a wonderful sense of humor.

It has been said of a teacher that, "If he is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind." Dr. Mel Kramer accomplished this as a teacher and as Chair of Periodontology at the Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry. Four hundred and seventy-two students came to Boston, all from different backgrounds, all with different reasons for wanting to study periodontics. But our shared desire was that we wanted to study with "The Man."

"The Man," Dr. Gerald Kramer, is a giant among us. With elegance and style and class, and always with that unmistakable, inimitable Boston accent, he has taught us, nurtured us, inspired us, and made us strive to be better than we ever thought we could be. His contributions to the periodontal profession alone would be enough to forever ensure his legacy. But we, his students, colleagues, and friends, are his living legacy, as well. That legacy will live on as each of us passes down to succeeding generations the ideal he instilled in all of us: Excellence.

In *The Prophet*, Gibran speaks of friendship: "When you part from your friend, you grieve not; For that which you love most in him may be clearer in his absence, as the mountain to the climber is clearer from the plain."

—Michael Stiglitz, DDS, PERIO 72



"His legacy will live on as each of us passes down to succeeding generations the ideal he instilled in all of us: Excellence."



(l, r) Drs. Kramer and Stiglitz

Roger J. Wise,
DDS, PERIO 73,
ORTHO 77

“Dr. Gerald Kramer was,
without question,
an exceptional periodontist,
teacher, friend, husband,
and father.”

To speak historically of the origin of the Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry and not mention the inspiring career, the leadership, and the personal charisma of the remarkable academician and clinician, Dr. Gerald Kramer, would be naïve. From 1967 to 1979, during his tenure as Chair of the Department of Periodontology, Dr. Kramer mentored more than 200 periodontal residents, many of whom went on to become national and international leaders in periodontics. It is evident that it was not by accident that this superstar was chosen by the School's Founding Dean, Dr. Henry M. Goldman.

Dr. Kramer's careful selection of his talented clinical instructors, lecturers, researchers, and authors elevated the periodontal department under his leadership to exemplify, at that time, the most highly sought after certificate in periodontics in the world. Each class had 18-20 residents with notable academic and personal résumés and diverse personalities. He took great pride in selecting individuals whose psychological, intellectual, and emotional characteristics would complement each other in a learning environment in a positive way. As a result, his students went on to become leaders in periodontics at the national and international levels.

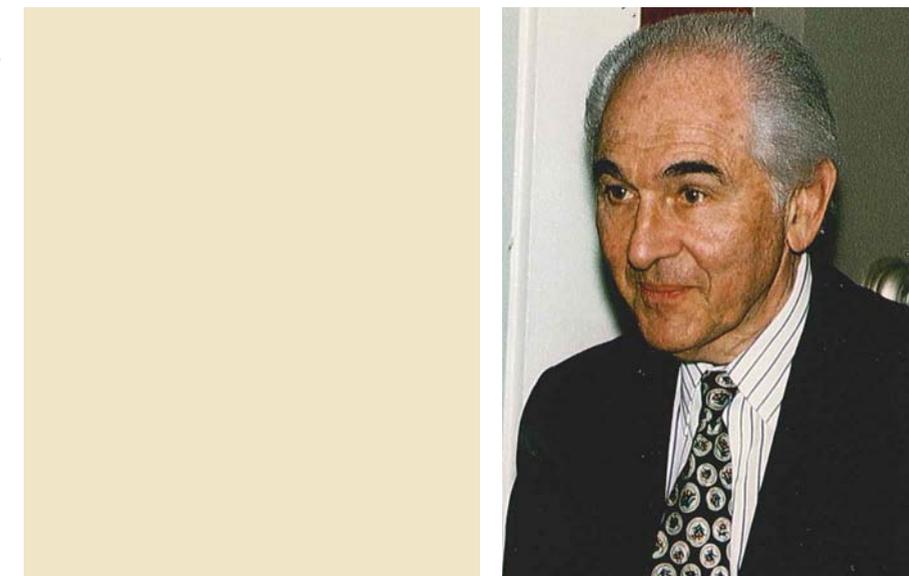
Dr. Kramer's great wisdom was on display at his introductory lecture when he challenged us to strive to be role models of clinical excellence combined with academic prowess. Above all, he inspired us to strive for continued growth in order to ensure a rewarding and remarkable career. It was not acceptable just to practice periodontics, he said,

adding the quote from Jean Giraudoux, “only the mediocre are always at their best.” He demonstrated the art of being a good listener to your patients, reminding us to “never stand up and look down at them, but to address them eye-to-eye.”

By his own example, Dr. Kramer encouraged us to understand a patient's personality and profession in order to facilitate utilizing metaphors from their own lives to help them understand complex treatment plans. His motto was to show human kindness at all times. He advised each of us to broaden our horizons by developing knowledge of art, history, and literature, and to travel and experience other cultures.

His early passing at age 77 left an overwhelming void in the many careers he had originally inspired. His legacy left each of us reflecting on the meaning of raising family and of acting as a responsible citizen. Through his mentoring and strong example, his students continue to remember him today. As we have grown older and realize our own mortality, we can think back on his many words of wisdom that first inspired us to excel. I am privileged to share with so many esteemed colleagues the great impact he had on our lives. Dr. Gerald Kramer was, without question, an exceptional periodontist, teacher, friend, husband, and father.

—Roger J. Wise, DDS, PERIO 73, ORTHO 77



Steven J. Peiser, DDS, PERIO 74

There are not enough words to express fully the influence that Dr. Gerald Kramer had on his students. He inspired and motivated a generation of periodontists through his dedication and commitment to teaching by expression and example.

Dr. Kramer gave unselfishly of his time. He loved teaching, and he loved his students. He taught a standard of excellence, as well as the pursuit of that excellence, both in regards to the therapy delivered, and even more significantly, the character of the individual delivering it.

Giving back was a theme throughout my years with Dr. Kramer. He stressed that no one gets through life for free, and what goes around, comes around. Clinical excellence was secondary only to the integrity of the clinician. Dr. Kramer was our role model. Dr. Kramer forever lives on in the hearts of the students he touched, and in the therapeutic outcomes of the patients they managed.

—Steven J. Peiser, DDS, PERIO 74

“Giving back was a theme
throughout my years with
Dr. Kramer.”

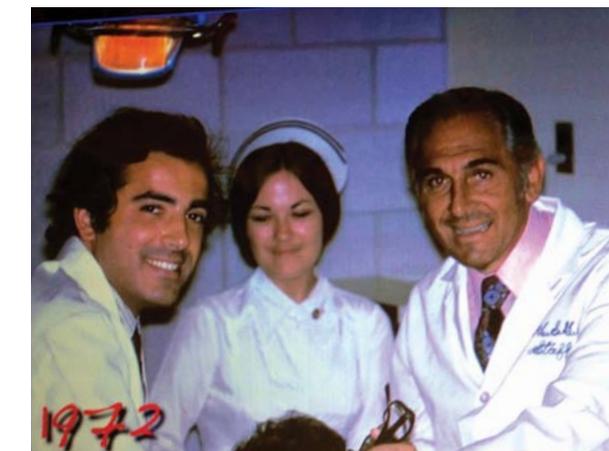
Dr. Kramer changed my professional life. I was unsure of myself when I came to the United States. He offered me psychological support and I gained a great deal of confidence from what I learned from him.

He has been a wonderful teacher, not only for me, but also for many of his students who learned his approach on how to treatment plan a case; how to approach a patient psychologically; to perform accurate and delicate surgeries; and to evaluate the treatment.

In addition, he demonstrated to all his students the importance of great teamwork, taught us how to strive for optimal treatment—fighting for no less than the best.

His approach to life on a personal basis is similar to his approach in teaching, something which his students appreciated and were keen to imitate. This made him a great teacher and a great man who has influenced many, if not all, of his fascinated students.

—Giano Ricci, MD, DDS, PERIO 74



Dr. Ricci (far left) and Dr. Kramer (far right)

Giano Ricci, MD, DDS, PERIO 74

Yousri Said, DDS, PERIO 76



(l, r) Dr. Kramer with Dr. Said

Words alone cannot accurately describe Dr. Kramer. As his student starting in 1973, he was much more than a professor to me. He became an inspiration, an advisor, and a life teacher to me and many other students. He stimulated my passion, pursuit of perfection, and devotion to my profession; through his dedication, he was able to render generations equally devoted to their careers as he was.

He was able to instill within us love for our classmates and instructors, as opposed to competition. The relationships he helped create amongst us are still ongoing to this very day, filled with all the good old memories and feelings, sustained for over 40 years. We formed tangible bonds so strong that every time we meet it feels like it was just yesterday, all thanks to Dr. Kramer.

“He stimulated my passion, pursuit of perfection, and devotion to my profession; through his dedication, he was able to render generations equally devoted to their careers as he was.”

My relationship with his family, Mrs. Sylvia Kramer and his daughter Leslie Kramer, are an extension of my deep love and respect for him. These relations continued even after he had left us, because he is still in all of our hearts.

Dr. Gerald Kramer’s legacy is that he created a turning point in the history of dental therapy, changing the concept of restorative dentistry into periodontal-restorative concepts applied in clinical practice. It comes as no surprise that professionals respect and admire him for revolutionizing and pioneering the profession we have today.

Dr. Myron Nevins, Dr. Kramer’s practice partner and friend, is the noble man behind the scenes, responsible for reviving the celebrity of Dr.

Kramer and making him an icon of Boston University. We should be thankful to Dr. Nevins and greet him for the success of one of his greatest achievements, that was borne out of love and respect to this remarkable man.

Uniting all of his graduate students to honor Dr. Kramer and transforming this eponymous Symposium on Periodontology from a reverie to a reality is a giant step by the Dean Jeffrey W. Hutter. Recognition and gratitude to Dean Hutter are in order for his efforts and vision to revive the legacy of the Kramer Post-doctoral Periodontal program and hence, Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine.

—Yousri Said, DDS, PERIO 76



Dr. Said in front of Dr. Kramer’s private practice in Swampscott, MA



(l, r) Dr. Said with Dr. Kramer

(l, r) Dr. Nevins with Dr. Said

Steven P. Perlman, DDS, PEDO 76, DHL (hon.)



Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Dr. Perlman speak to the press at the 1995 Special Olympics World Summer Games in New Haven, CT. Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded Camp Shriver in 1962, which evolved into the Special Olympics in 1968.

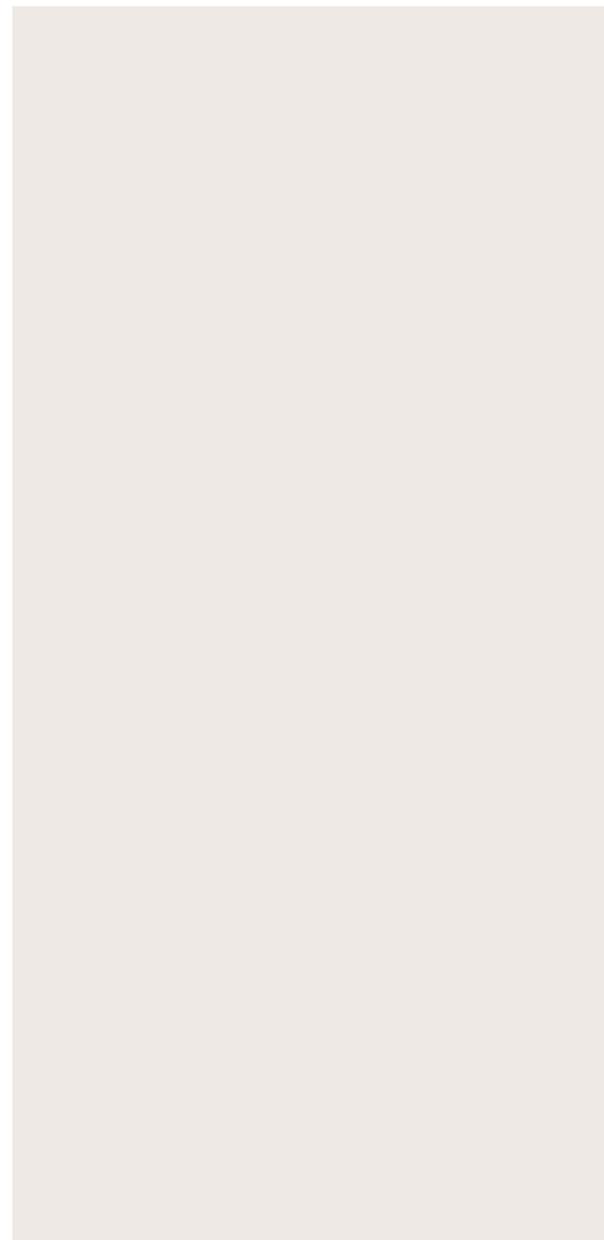
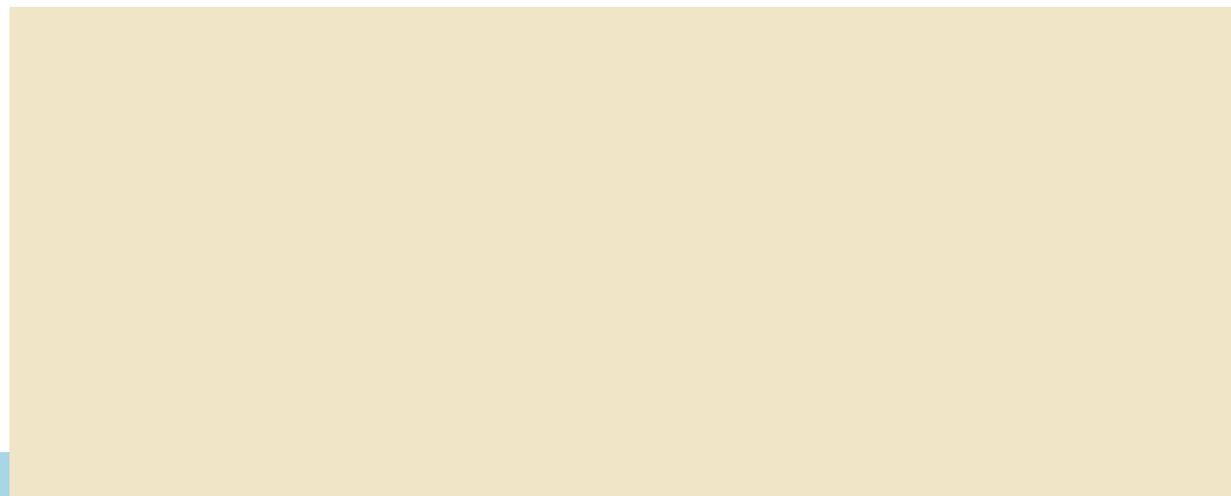
Dr. Perlman teamed up with Eunice Kennedy to create a program to bring better oral health care to people with intellectual disabilities by implementing the Special Smiles initiative at the Special Olympics.

Dr. Perlman credits Dr. Kramer for his connection with the Kennedys, which led to his extraordinary efforts in providing oral health care for people with intellectual disabilities. Dr. Kramer referred Eunice Kennedy Shriver's sister with a disability, Rosemary, to Dr. Perlman for her dental care.

I am probably one of the few professionals outside of the Perio-prosthetics world that was fortunate enough to have Dr. Kramer as a mentor. He cared about the underserved population, especially people with intellectual disabilities. He instilled excellence, compassion, and caring for our patients that we treated together. No one brought more dignity to the profession than he did.

—Steven P. Perlman, DDS, PEDO 76, DHL (hon.)

“No one brought more dignity to the profession than he did.”



The PERIO Class of 1977 observes Dr. Kramer in action (photo submitted by Glenn Fujinaka PERIO 77)



Glenn Fujinaka, DDS, PERIO 77

The very first time I met Dr. Gerald Kramer was during my interview at Boston University in the winter of 1974. At that time, I had only heard and read about how influential and world renowned he was in the field of Periodontics. As I entered his office overlooking the Boston skyline and with all the awards hanging on his walls, I thought to myself, 'what am I doing here?' Was I qualified enough to be part of this program that he had created? Dr. Kramer introduced himself, politely shook my hand, and with the warmth of his smile, made me feel right at home. We spent time talking about periodontics and how we shared our love for it and helping our patients keep their teeth.

I was impressed by his passion and desire to teach his students how to provide the most advanced techniques based in clinical and academic research, but at the same time understand that there was an art to periodontics. Along with this passion, he also made it clear that this was a "family" and that we would always be part of it. It was important to understand that we would represent Boston University and that we had high standards to live up to. I left the building

knowing that if I was lucky enough to be selected to Boston University, that it would change my life forever. As it turned out, I was one of the fortunate ones to be selected to be a member of the class of 1977, and become a member of Dr. Gerald Kramer's Boston University Family.

From that day forward, I have applied all the principles and ideals that he taught us into my daily practice. From "always doing your best or don't do it at all" to "providing the most compassionate and quality care possible"—these and other words of wisdom guide my practice today. His teachings have provided me with a satisfying and wonderful career, but most importantly, how to be a professional and a proud member of Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry's Family. It is a privilege and an honor to have been taught by one of the Masters of Periodontics.

Domo Arigato, Mahalo, and Thank You for everything you have done for me, Dr. Kramer. I try to live up to your high standards every day in my practice and life!

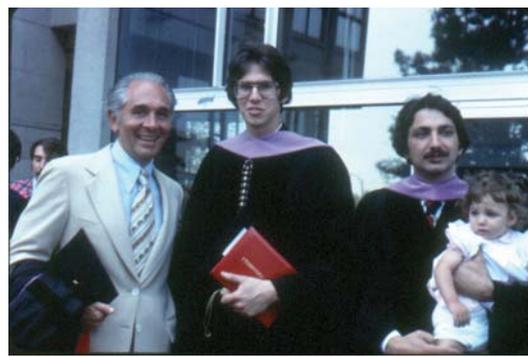
Your humble student,
—Glenn Fujinaka, DDS, PERIO 77



Glenn Fujinaka (1977)



(l-r) Leon Lemian, Fredric Witkin, Ron Kopperick, and Jerry Pieroni



Dr. Kramer, Fredric Witkin, and Jose Boscarino with his daughter Laura



Dr. Kramer (left) and Fredric Witkin



(l-r) Rich Mao, Gerald Straussberger, Jerry Pieroni, and Fredric Witkin



Fredric Witkin (March 1977)

Once thought that the moment I was accepted into the BU Periodontal family occurred in the Boston cold of December 1974 while I was being interviewed by an elegant, distinguished gentleman who seemed more a U.S. Senator than a dentist. That man was, of course, Dr. Kramer. He asked me what made me think I could succeed in surviving the rigors of periodontal training at BU. I, without thinking too much, almost offhandedly, answered "Why wouldn't I, I've always been able to accomplish whatever I want." I'm not quite sure why that answer escaped from me. The truth be told, I was not so self-assured at that stage.

In a later moment of clarity, when considering how I had indeed landed in the BU Perio program I realized that it was Dr. Kramer's belief in me, not my belief in myself that had opened that door; that door and, in turn, many more to come.

Along the way I learned to truly believe in myself and my abilities, to always give the best of myself and to be much more than a technician in periodontics and in all I do. I have always remembered and applied a thought he imbued in me: "the most important step of any procedure

(really anything, dental or not) is the one you're on." To me that meant do your best, always.

Early during my periodontal career I was teaching at a local hospital dental residency program. While I was teaching another attending Periodontist (not a student) something I had learned at BU, I realized what a

"I cherish both the periodontal and life education I was given [by Dr. Kramer]. I had the opportunity to learn from a master of both."

marvelous clinical education I had been given. Now, still years later, looking back over a 36-year career, trying to live up to the values of Dr. Kramer, I have accomplished more than I ever dreamed I could. I cherish both the periodontal and life education I was given. I had the opportunity to learn from a master of both.

—Fredric J. Witkin, DDS, PERIO 77

Fredric J. Witkin, DDS, PERIO 77

Thomas J. Mone, DMD, PERIO 77

I trained with Dr. Gerald Kramer. There is nothing that makes me prouder to say.

I met Dr. Kramer when I was a junior dental student at Penn—in 1973. I spent a day in his office in Swampscott, arranged by one of his hygienists who was a friend of my wife. I can remember the day like it was yesterday. The sun was shining brightly, but Dr. Kramer beamed even brighter as he brought me into treatment rooms and showed me the world of periodontology. X-rays and patient histories going back decades were brought out for me. He started my education as a periodontist right then. I applied to only one post-doctoral program and hoped he would accept me.

“He had flair and charisma and you wanted to be like him.”

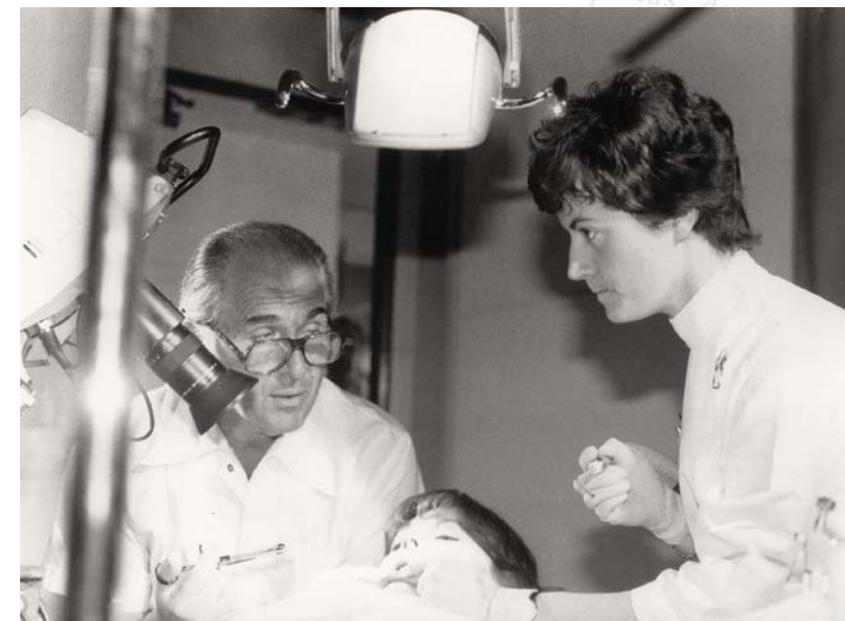
Dr. Kramer was an educator, an innovator, and a showman. He loved the show. A lecture was an event, sometimes taking all day and into the evening. A demonstration surgery in the clinic would have a dozen students crowded around as he showed the difference between “good fibers and bad fibers” in a difficult esthetic surgery. He had flair and charisma and you wanted to be like him.

Dr. Kramer had a lot to share and he wanted to excite you, motivate you, and make you think. I am so grateful to have known him.

—Thomas J. Mone, DMD, PERIO 77



Dr. Kramer lecturing, c. 1977 (submitted by Glenn Fujinaka, DDS, PERIO 77)



(l, r) Drs. Kramer and Dorange

I did my graduate studies at BU between 1976 and 1978.

Drs. Goldman, Kramer, and Nevins enlisted me and my classmate Dr. Annie Amsalem (in Boston) to translate from English into French the courses they were giving to French dentists.

One of them was Dr. Raymond Habib, a talented and open minded general practitioner in Paris. He was enthusiastic about the implications of periodontology in dentistry, especially in fixed prosthesis. He was the founder and the president of a dental society whose name was Groupe de recherche en parodontie et prothèse, therefore he invited the best speakers he had met at BU to present in France.

Dr. Kramer and Dr. Nevins were the first to be invited.

I had the privilege to assist both of them doing surgery and I did the translation.

I learned a lot because they had to explain to dentists who knew almost nothing about periodontology: it was a step-by-step procedure and Dr. Kramer was very educational and patient.

Dr. Habib developed a friendly relationship with Dr. Ron Nevins and they met again long after Dr. Habib had retired. He died in 2010.

Around 1980, when they published the *International Journal of Periodontics & Restorative Dentistry*, they asked my friend Annie and me to translate the French issue. We did the translation for three years.

—Catherine A. Dorange, DDS, DScD, PERIO 78

Catherine A. Dorange, DDS, DScD, PERIO 78

Robert W.
Hymes,
DDS,
PERIO 78

I will always remember Dr. K with fond affection. He was the ultimate professional and the best mentor I had in my formative periodontal career. I would never have had the professional success I had without his personal devotion to his students and the practice of Periodontics.

His words of wisdom include, "It takes a career to build a reputation, and one minute to destroy it." He also said, "Treat each patient like they are your mother and you will do okay."

I remember my interview with Dr. K during the application process. Dr. Steven Peiser of Providence, Rhode Island, was my in-law's periodontist and taught in the graduate perio clinic part-time. I met with Dr. Peiser in the Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry cafeteria two hours before the Dr. K interview. He told me every question that Dr. K was going to ask me. He especially emphasized having a happy, supportive wife, being able to afford the tuition, and that I was not going to practice in the New England area once I graduated. He loved to see his graduates populate the whole US and the world.

In the interview with Dr. K, he indeed asked all those questions Dr. Peiser had briefed me on. Yes, I had a very supportive wife, and yes, I wanted to practice in Southern California.

When he asked me if I could afford to attend BUSGD, I just looked him straight in the eye and lied that money was no problem! He smiled really wide and welcomed me to the class of 1978.

I will never forget it. The rest is history. We all really miss him.

—Robert W. Hymes, DDS, PERIO 78

"He was the ultimate professional and the best mentor I had in my formative periodontal career."



“I was so incredibly excited by his capacity of information and scientific background that it made me fall in love with Periodontology.”

**Massimo
De Sanctis,
MD, DDS,
PERIO 83**

I first met Dr. Kramer in 1978. He came to Italy to give a lecture and I was so incredibly excited by his capacity of information and scientific background that it made me fall in love with Periodontology.

I remember the day in Italy when I had a very long interview with him where he suggested several things I do before being qualified to study at BU...so I studied like crazy because I really wanted to be accepted into the Perio department at BU.

Then I traveled and met Dr. Kramer at BU. When I got the acceptance, I was so happy!

Although, unfortunately, I did not have him as a teacher, every day when I was in practice at BU, I always followed the special way of his teachings. He was a very special person. He had a way of delivering scientific information with such confidence; it was really fascinating. Let me tell you, I have never met another person in my life with that kind of fascination.

—Dr. Massimo De Sanctis, MD, DDS, PERIO 83



Dr. Kramer at the Italian Society of Periodontology International Congress

Example of a Child's Passion

My admiration for Gerald Kramer comes from an acquaintance. He has been a symbol, a myth, and despite his success, he retained a child's passion for his work. It's not easy to remain as such when you become a successful man. Gerald Kramer accomplished this, and perhaps it was his greatest achievement.

I do not exactly remember when I met him for the first time, but I know that I was immediately fascinated by his personality. Gerald Kramer represented, for me, excellence. For us, he was always an example to emulate. His professionalism was a model to follow.

I believe that his greatest victory has been to convey to the students a sense of belonging. Coming from Boston University, and being a student of Gerald Kramer, left you with an indelible mark.

Under Dr. Gerald Kramer's guidance, some of the best clinicians of the world were left with one sole idea—perfection. He shaped his students with an obsession for details. Great respect was given to him by his followers as well as his opponents.

In a world without time and patience, he found the time to convey his ideas. I think he would accept my overemphasis and my rhetoric, because in the end it is justified, and above all, well deserved... “forever retaining a child's passion.”

—Luigi Montesani, MD, DMD

**“In a world without time and patience,
he found the time to convey his ideas.”**

**Luigi
Montesani,
MD, DMD**

Boston University Henry M. Goldman
School of Dental Medicine

72 E. Concord Street, B-303C
Boston, Massachusetts 02118
www.bu.edu/dental

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 1839