

Is there life after dental practice ownership?

Dentists often put off selling their practices because they are concerned about life after dentistry.

What will they do with all those extra hours, how will they cope with leaving behind the identity that has defined them for decades? This series of articles explores the very busy lives of some of Practice Sale Search's clients, former-practice owners who have embraced post-sale life.

Name: David Rosenwax

Age: 79

Graduated: BDS SYD 1959, MA Dental Surgery 1969

Practice Owned:

Bondi Junction Practice 1984 – 2003

Earlwood practice: 1966 – Jan 1994

Brief career summary

When I left school, it was my intention to do medicine. At that time medicine was seven years, and dentistry was four. My mother was a single mother, putting my sister and me through school and uni. I knew I couldn't wait seven years to earn a living. So, I did dentistry – and I loved it.

When I graduated in 1960 there was a big recession on; you couldn't get a job. The dental hospital offered me a position, and I worked there until October 1960. Then I got a job in Camden as an assistant dentist with the assistant treasurer of the ADA at the time, and we later started another practice in Campbelltown and ran it between us.

While living in Campbelltown I met the principal of a practice in Picton, and bought his practice. My wife and I moved there and stayed until 1966, when the kids were starting school. We decided to move back to Sydney, to Earlwood, where I bought a practice and had it till 1994.

In 1984 I bought my Bondi Junction practice, but started it virtually from scratch. I had it for 30 odd years, building it up from a couple of days a week to full-time, and sold it in 2003.

For some 20 years I was Oncall Forensic Dentist for the police at the morgue in Camperdown.

I had many interesting cases while I was there

Why did you decide to sell and retire from clinical dentistry?

I had a massive heart attack and



decided it was time to sell.

I still loved dentistry, but after my heart attack I was getting tired easily; it was getting too much for me. I decided it was a warning and I had better listen.

What now?

I didn't do any hands-on dentistry after I sold my practice but I have kept busy balancing my time between charity work, the implant society and my passion for WWII history.

Charity work

I was involved with a lot of charities and community work for many years before I retired. I have been on the boards of "Filling the Gap" (An Indigenous Dental Programme), "Lions International", "Point Zero Youth Services" and "COA" (Centre on Ageing) just expanded my activities there. Ten years ago, I was one of the three people who started Filling the Gap, a charity that was founded to provide volunteer locum dentists to Aboriginal medical and dental centres, which can't seem to attract dentists. We called it Filling the Gap as we are only filling the gap temporarily, while the centres look for a permanent dentist.

We were worried that no one would come, but they did and the communities were so grateful. It is important to help your fellow man, by aiding and raising the

standard of oral health in people who are less fortunate than we are.

WWII

I have built up my private museum on WWII memorabilia, which has been used by various museums. I have also been involved with lecturing on WWII to U3A, Lions, Rotary and Probus Clubs.

Implant society

I was very involved in the Implant Society (ASID). We ran courses twice a year – I found the new graduates that came along had no basic knowledge of implants and their relationship to dentistry. Three of us got together and worked out a one-day intensive course for final year students on dental implantology. We proposed it to the university – we were teaching in Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, University of South Pacific in Fiji. We did that for about 10 years, until the faculties started their own courses.

I received an Order of Australia for services to implant dentistry and the Australian Society of Implant Dentistry and to the community.

Regrets?

My whole career I found extremely rewarding; I don't think I have any regrets not doing medicine.

Dentistry has been very good to me. ♦