

THE WILTON BULLETIN

“It just goes to show, you have your mind set on something you can get it accomplished.” — Eva Zimnoch

78th Year No. 28

Thursday, July 9, 2015



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Wilton dentist awarded Mastership

by Hayden Turek
Reporter

Dr. James T. Aris, DMD, the doctor behind Wilton Center Family Dentistry, has received the Mastership Award (MAGD) from the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) after 1,355 hours of continued education. The award was conferred last month during a convocation ceremony at the academy's annual meeting in San Francisco.

MAGD, which is one of the most respected designations in the dental profession, requires an additional 1,100 hours across 15 disciplines of dental study, post-doctorate, and is the academy's highest honor.

The academy is a professional association of 39,000 general dentists with a primary focus on representing the interests and serving the needs of general dentists. It is the second largest dental association in the United States, and the only one that caters exclusively to general dentists.

A general dentist is a primary dental care provider.

The academy honored 144 dentists with Mastership this year, and has honored 3,060 over the course of its 60-plus-year-history.

Aris attended continuing dental education courses at the University of Pennsylvania (where he received his doctorate of medical dentistry), New York University, Tufts University and the Dawson Academy, as well as courses offered through the American Dental Association and the Connecticut State Dental Association.

Of the 1,100 required hours for Mastership, 400 must be hands-on credits that demonstrate a mastery of the skills and techniques being taught in lecture halls. Aris exceeded another minimum there, with 511 of his 1,355 hours taken in hands-on settings.

“Healthcare professionals must stay current,” Aris told *The Bulletin* last week. “The nature of the profession involves new discoveries daily, so by continuing my education, I’m essentially keeping up with the ever-progressing dental practice.”

“There is no end to learning,” he added. “Attending more hands-on courses, seminars and lectures is always a part of my schedule. I also want to focus on sharing my knowledge; lecturing or teaching once a week at a dental school is a future goal. But, what I love to do best, I’m blessed to be doing right now, working with patients to help them achieve their optimal dental health.”

“I take these courses by world class lecturers and bring back world class dental knowledge to



The team at Wilton Center Family Dentistry. From left, Dental Assistants Carly Herrera and Tanya Ralph, Office Manager Judy Klem, Dr. James T. Aris and wife, Pamela Aris, Hygienists Sue Rhieu, Laura Clements and Natalie Wall. — Andrea Topalian photo

share with my team, and it directly benefits my patients. It's really the patients who inspire me to achieve more, and so it is they who are truly responsible for my being awarded Mastership,” Aris observed.

“Unless you're moving forward, you're moving backward,” Aris said.

Dr. Aris is not the only life-long learner at Wilton Center Family Dentistry.

Office Manager Judy Klem is pursuing a fellowship from the American Association of Dental Office Managers.

Hygienists Natalie Wall and Laura Clements recently attended a dental convention at Mohegan Sun. Hygienists with Wilton Center Family Dentistry regularly attend this conference, the Annual Charter Oak Dental Meeting, as well as the Nutmeg Conference sponsored by the Connecticut Dental Hygienist Association.

Dental assistant Tanya Ralph is also pursuing her education, studying to become a hygienist.

“Dr. Aris is not only an incredible role model, but he is enthusiastic about keeping everyone on their toes,” said Klem.

“It's amazing,” she added, “to witness him work full time and to take courses on top of it,

and to not only take the courses, but to excel in them.”

James Aris

“I knew early on in my high school career that I wanted to pursue dentistry because of my love of the sciences and fine arts. Dentistry truly combines art with science,” Aris said.

Before being honored with Mastership, Aris was named Fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry, for which he had to pass a 400-question exam and take 500 hours of continued education.

In addition to his new designation, in 2014 Aris was named Scholar of the Dawson Academy, an international organization that specializes in continued dental education.

In continuing his education, Aris recently completed the NYU Linhart Continuing Dental Education's Advanced Full-Mouth Reconstruction year-long course.

Aris was mentioned in 2014's “The Leading Physicians of the World,” a yearly publication that features top international healthcare professionals, where it is written that “excellence in dentistry is the first commitment of Dr. James T. Aris and his professional staff.”