“I want the dental profession to realise its potential”

An interview with Dr Raymond Gist, new President of the American Dental Association

What’s ADA doing in terms of ethnic diversity?

The ADA’s recent public apology reinforces its commitment to a diverse membership. The ADA Officers and Board of Trustees felt compelled to act after the striking and deeply personal testimony presented during the June 2010 National Summit on Diversity in Dentistry on the history of exclusion in organized dentistry. The summit was jointly planned and convened by the National Dental Association (NDA), Hispanic Dental Association (HDA), Society of American Indian Dentists, and the ADA. In July and September, the ADA Board developed and approved resolutions that were designed to strengthen diversity and inclusion in the profession.

As the first African-American president of the ADA, do you feel political pressure?

I don’t feel a special pressure to perform because of my race, but I do pressure myself to deliver because I know my capabilities. I want the dental profession to realize its potential, and I want to deliver that message effectively and consistently.

Thank you very much for the interview.

(Edited by Daniel Zimmermann, DTI)