

John G. Lazur, DDS – A Dentist Story

A career threatening injury can't keep a great dentist down

In 2010, Dr. John G. Lazur, Jr. thought he would never practice dentistry again. While repairing a rock wall, he suffered a devastating back injury. "I thought I just had a sprain and everything would be okay," said Dr. Lazur. "Instead, I woke up the next day unable to get out of bed."

It was during this time in 2010 while facing a potentially life-changing surgery for his injury that Dr. Lazur reluctantly decided he may need to give up his dental practice. "I went ahead and listed my practice with a broker and began my retirement planning."

However, there was a problem with the plan. "I just didn't feel comfortable with the potential buyers or the options that were presented to me, and I really didn't want to stop practicing," says Dr. Lazur. "So at the end of the day, I never did sell my practice."

It's a good thing too, because Dr. Lazur's career wasn't over after all. The surgery went better than expected. In fact, it was a tremendous success. "I went from thinking I would never be able to practice again, to three months of rehab, and subsequently feeling almost as good as new!"

The early years

Dr. Lazur was born in 1947 in the small coal mining town of Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. After graduating from Temple University, School of Dentistry, he completed a Rotating Dental Internship at Fitkin Hospital in Neptune, New Jersey. "It was a great way to further my skills, but I always knew I wanted my own practice."

He began searching for a place to set up his own practice in New Jersey. But in 1975 when an opportunity presented itself in Sunbury, Pennsylvania, Dr. Lazur jumped on it. And he has remained practicing there ever since. In 2002, Dr. Lazur relocated the practice two miles away, across the Susquehanna River in the borough of Shamokin Dam, population 1,689. This offered an opportunity to provide better care for his patients who are located all throughout the Susquehanna Valley. Although his 2010 surgery was a great success, Dr. Lazur was nearing his late 60s and yearning for a balance that would

allow him to keep practicing dentistry while having time to enjoy life away from the office. So in 2014, Dr. Lazur transitioned his practice to Midwest Dental. "I had never in my entire life taken a two-week vacation," said Dr. Lazur. "So after I combined my practice with Midwest Dental, my wife and I celebrated by going to Spain and Portugal, and we had a blast!"

Midwest Dental

Midwest Dental provides the logistical support Dr. Lazur needs. "I like that Midwest Dental takes care of my office administration, while leaving me free to make all my own decisions," said Dr. Lazur. "Energy and time previously dedicated to OSHA and HIPPA manuals, staff management, IT, and other ownership issues, can now be focused on skills and clinical outcomes."

The future

Dr. Lazur plans to always be involved in dentistry, and he has a few other things he wants to pursue as well. While most people at 68 probably aren't thinking about going back to school, Dr. Lazur is more than just thinking about it. "Susquehanna, Bucknell and Bloomsburg Universities are in my back yard, and since the majority of my education is based in the sciences, I would like to take a few courses to get more exposure in the humanities," said Dr. Lazur. He's not stopping there though. "I also want to learn to cook! And I want to make a real meal for my wife — at least once in my life," he teased.

Midwest Dental has recently hired another dentist to eventually replace Dr. Lazur. "And what a great choice!" says Dr. Lazur. "I'm looking forward to becoming his mentor and assuring his future success." With this addition, Dr. Lazur can take his hours down to part-time, allowing him the free time he wants to continue seeing the world. "I already have my next trip planned. A Viking River Cruise down the Danube River in Europe. I can't wait!"

Dr. Lazur has been an Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) member since 1974. He had the rare honor of receiving the Lifelong Learning & Service Recognition (LLSR) from the AGD, and he adheres to the dental philosophies of Dr. Pankey, having begun his career with the first course at The Pankey Institute in 1975.

He helped start a dental clinic in Sunbury for low income patients, has served on the Dental Advisory Board at SUN Area Career and Technology Center, and has been a member of the Pennsylvania Concerned Colleague Committee for over 30 years.

Dr. Lazur looks forward to many new volunteer opportunities during his retirement. "I've been very fortunate and I really want to give back." And when he's not traveling or volunteering, "I want to enjoy the rest of my life with my wife, and watch our children grow. I really feel like I can do all of that now."



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