



Ernest Martin Setzer  
1895–1943

*This issue of THE ANGLE ORTHODONTIST is dedicated to Ernest Setzer : affectionate appreciation of his steadfast character and important contributions to the science of Orthodontics. The text of this number is contributed by the members of the Northern California Component of the Edward L Angle Society of Orthodontia.*

# The Angle Orthodontist

*A magazine established by the co-workers  
of Edward H. Angle, in his memory. . . .*

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## And Gladly Teach

"And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche."

—Prologue of Chaucer's  
Canterbury Tales.

DURING the years in which orthodontia has won increasing rank as a university discipline, standards of dental teaching have been made more definitive in an attempt to make the appraisal of the dental teacher as objective as possible. His position has become more secure in the university faculty, through systematic policies of promotion and the granting of tenure. In turn, what is expected of him in his work is outlined with more clarity than it was twenty years ago. He must have the esteem of members of the profession: this is measured by the number of appearances he makes before professional groups. He must contribute to the knowledge of the profession and the sciences basic to it: this is measured by his publications. He should show an interest in the activities of education beyond classroom and laboratory instruction: this is measured by his stand on new educational policies which must be studied in a rapidly changing world, by his use of teaching aids and by his participation in committees of the university.

One of the important reasons for using more definitive measuring sticks for the assessment of a man's ability as a dental teacher has been the inclusion of the dental school in the university family. Administrative officers and faculty members in other branches of the university are willing to defer to dental faculties in matters of professional qualifications, but they naturally desire that their colleagues in the dental college meet the standards imposed in other schools of the university.

Few who have seen these objective standards in use would argue that they are worthless, or that they should be abandoned. Their application has done much to remove faculty appointments and promotions from the realm of caprice and personal predilection. In two important respects which we should like to analyze, however, they are deficient for the evaluation of the dental teacher.

In the first place, the dispassionate objectivity of these formal requirements fails to consider the intangibles which often make the difference between shining success and mediocrity. None of the vitality and priceless humor which the late T. Wingate Todd brought to the classroom is revealed in a stark list of titles of the many articles he published. Edward H. Angle, the greatest teacher of orthodontia of them all, published but little after the appearance of the 7th Edition.

Secondly, it must be recognized that there are important differences between traditional liberal arts teaching and teaching in the professional school. These differences stem from the very subject matter itself. The professor of philosophy, already well versed in his field, will read the tightly argued logic of an article written by a colleague. If it seems worth while, he may incorporate it into his lectures. All this is likely to be quite abstract, with practical application of the knowledge to the mundane aspects of life neither necessary nor desirable.

The professor of law or medicine studies a court decision or evidence from a laboratory, and in doing so undertakes an exercise in abstract thinking. Part of his task, however, is to fit the newly found information into the pattern of everyday events. These applications which he makes are still cerebral, requiring no technical or digital skill.

In the dental faculty there must be individuals capable of making and evaluating contributions to knowledge, teaching them in relation to facts already accepted, and making applications of this abstract knowledge through procedures requiring precise digital ability. With all this they should possess the qualities which inspired the familiar observation about a university being Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and student on the other—the intangible attributes desirable in the liberal arts teacher or the professional man. This complexity which characterizes dental teaching furnished justification for the continued use of part-time teachers who conduct a private practice, working in a team with full-time personnel who will assume major responsibility for research programs and the subtleties of educational methods.

How well can the objective qualifications of publications and appearances before learned groups measure the sort of teacher we want for the future? Will they tell how well a man can practice his profession at the

chair? Can they say whether or not he will meet his students with good humor and an abiding sense of fairness and consideration?

In these important matters the dental schools must rely heavily upon interested men in practice, both for guidance and participation. The present era of war-revised values and rapid social flux promises many changes to which the man in practice should give his attention. What transpires in the dental schools today has far-reaching effects for the future, probably more than do legislative proposals.

The personality of the man to whom this issue of *THE ANGLE ORTHODONTIST* is dedicated was rich with the attributes of the natural teacher and leader of men. A real service which can be performed by dentists and orthodontists is to discover in their associates men with the personal qualities of Ernest Setzer. Those who seek to carry on his work would welcome more like him—enlightened practitioners with the long view, a vital interest in progress, and the affability and enthusiasm which strike fire in the student.

W. L. W.

## Ernest Martin Setzer 1895–1943

THE UNUSUALLY full career of the man to whom this issue of *THE ANGLE ORTHODONTIST* is dedicated came to an untimely end September 29, 1943 after a short period of illness. In his too-brief lifetime he was an officer in the army of his country, a leader in his profession and in his community, a lifelong student and an inspiring teacher, an orthodontist of exceptional merit, and a valued friend of countless numbers of people.

Ernest Martin Setzer was born October 5, 1895 in Amador City, California. He was raised in Lodi, where he received his public school education. For his professional education he went to the College of Dentistry, University of California; after his graduation in 1917 he entered the U. S. Army as a first lieutenant in the Dental Corps, in which capacity he saw service in France until six months after the cessation of hostilities.

Upon Dr. Setzer's return from Europe he began the general practice of dentistry in Lodi. In 1922, interested in the growing specialty of orthodontics which had claimed several of his dental college contemporaries, he closed his general practice and gained admission to the Edward H. Angle College of Orthodontia.

The training under Dr. Angle was completed in 1923, and Dr. Setzer located in Oakland for the exclusive practice of orthodontics, where he remained until the time of his death.

He was recalled to his alma mater in 1925 as a teacher of orthodontics. In 1927 he was made Clinical Instructor of Orthodontics in the College of Dentistry of the University of California, to become Assistant Professor and in 1937, Associate Clinical Professor of Orthodontics. From 1933 to 1939 he served as Chairman of the Division of Orthodontics, and in that

capacity did much to shape the program of undergraduate orthodontics which is still pursued in that school.

In addition to teaching clinical orthodontics, he gave instruction in comparative odontology and comparative anatomy. Much creditable teaching material in the form of prepared skeletal material was collected as a result of students' efforts working under the direction of Dr. Setzer.

As an alumnus of the University of California College of Dentistry he was responsible for the planning and first publication of the *News Letter*, a bi-monthly organ of the school's Alumni Association. Through this publication, which continues to appear, alumni of the college have been able to follow many activities of classmates which are not chronicled in the *California Monthly*, the official alumni journal of the entire university.

A charter member of the Edward H. Angle Society, Dr. Setzer participated in its affairs as Associate Editor of *THE ANGLE ORTHODONTIST* and as an active member of the Northern California Component; he was immediate past president of the Component at the time of his death. His publications included an excellent clinical interpretation of Wolff's work on bone mechanics; Dr. Setzer's familiarity with the German language did much to lend authority to that article. He also wrote on clinical subjects, including an analysis of nutritional factors in orthodontics. A column of questions and answers in *THE ANGLE ORTHODONTIST* concerning problems of practice was conducted by him for two years.

He participated in the activities of the Central Section of the Pacific Coast Society of Orthodontists, was past president of the Alameda County Dental Society, and represented that body on the Executive Council of the California State Dental Association. He was a member of Xi Psi Phi fraternity and Epsilon Alpha, honorary organization of his dental college. In all his activities in teaching and in organized dentistry he distinguished himself as a man who could, through uncommon good sense and an appreciation of the rights and dignity of his associates, bring harmony out of discord.

To a full professional program, Dr. Setzer added many civic activities; he was a director of the Lion's Club of Oakland and of the Children's Home Society of California, and President of the Hillside Club of Berkeley.

In 1931 he married Margaret Lee, who survives him, together with their daughters Barbara and Margaret, and a son George. He is also survived by a sister, Lillian Setzer Shealor of Lodi, and a brother, Frederick, of Oakland.

Reviewing the activities and accomplishments of Ernest Setzer as they are set down in one place such as this provides a mild surprise for one who knew him personally. So genuine was his modesty that he succeeded in minimizing his considerable role in professional and community affairs that even those who were his co-workers in the endeavors in which he participated were not kept constantly aware of that participation.

Those who knew him best will remember him standing before an open fire, enjoying the company of congenial friends, or seated at a piano leading an impromptu session with familiar songs, or in the presence of children, whom he understood and enjoyed. As an orthodontist Ernest Setzer

stood at the top of his profession; he was a fine teacher and a public spirited citizen. But above all he was a friend the like of which we shall not soon see again.

At a memorial service for Dr. Setzer, held by the Northern California Component of the Angle Society, Dr. Guy S. Millberry, who served as dean of the College of Dentistry of the University of California during the years in which Ernest Setzer was a student and a teacher, closed his tribute with this paragraph which deserves repetition: "Ernest M. Setzer, idealist in his profession, companionable with his friends, inspiring as a teacher, loved by all who knew him well. May his life and his career stimulate us to serve humanity as he has served."