

## At the Helm MDA Executives



*Before becoming the MDA's first executive secretary, James Proctor was advertising manager for the Columbia Tribune.*



*In 1973, Betty Spurgeon Satterfield served as president of the National Conference of State Society Officers—the first woman to do so. In 2015, Executive Director Vicki Wilbers would serve as president of a group with a similar leadership function—the American Society of Constituent Dental Executives.*

From the Missouri Dental Association's creation in 1865 to just after World War II, a practicing member assumed the duties of the secretary's office. But as the association's membership and activities grew, so too did the list of responsibilities for the executive secretary—past the point where a dentist running a busy practice had time to properly handle such functions on a day-to-day basis. Delegating these responsibilities to executive management was the logical solution.

In 1946, the association appointed James Proctor, a graduate of journalism and a newspaper advertising manager, as MDA's first executive secretary. In the position, Proctor was tasked with a plethora of responsibilities: maintaining membership records, cooperating with component societies, overseeing committee activities, planning annual meetings, cooperating with the ADA, influencing legislation to the benefit of the membership and increasing public relations, to name a few.

Proctor would establish a centralized office in Columbia, but he resigned in 1949. The central office moved to Jefferson City, where it has remained since. Betty Spurgeon Satterfield, who assisted Proctor in establishing the office, assumed the duties of executive secretary.

Satterfield would enjoy a thirty-year career with the MDA. The widow of a World War II U.S. Navy torpedo pilot who died flying missions near the Marshall Islands in the South Pacific, she dedicated herself to the association. She would lead the MDA through the tumultuous 1960s and the creation of Medicare and Medicaid. In 1973, she served as president of the National Conference of State Society Officers—the first woman to do so.

In 1979, the MDA created the position of executive director and named Roger Weis as the first to hold

the title. Before joining the dental association, he served more than eight years as the assistant executive director of the Jackson County Medical Society.

Weis would lead the MDA for nearly twenty years. He oversaw the purchase of MDA's first executive office building in 1981 and the construction of the

one that replaced it in 1994. He dealt with the AIDS epidemic and Medicaid crisis of the 1980s and oversaw MDA's implementation of the ADA's direct reimbursement program concept. Also during his tenure, a Board of Trustees and a House of Delegates replaced the previous Board of Governors and Executive Committee, and the Missouri Dental

Insurance Services was created, providing a new source of non-dues income for the association.

In 1998, Jake Lippert, a former MDA president and recently retired dentist, became the association's executive director. He quickly went about improving MDA's legislative influence in Jefferson City and relationships with state agencies, including the Missouri Dental Board. Lippert also oversaw the association's change to policy governance and the staff's assumption of more duties.

As executive director, Lippert helped develop and pass important legislation. During his time, the Missouri Dental Board officially established the Dental Well Being Committee, which would strengthen the assistance that the Well Being Program provided to dentists. Legislation also passed that allowed a surviving spouse to own a dental practice for two years following the death or incapacitation of the dentist. He also led the construction and move to MDA's current office building in west Jefferson City, a move that afforded the association room for growth and additional non-dues revenue.

*In 1979, the MDA hired its first executive director, Roger Weis, who would oversee the purchase of MDA's first executive office building in 1981. Below he is shown with Executive Assistant Mike Porter and the sign staking claim to the new association office.*





*In 1998, Dr. Jake Lippert, a former MDA president and recently retired dentist, became the first dentist to become executive director. At the 1991 ADA House of Delegates is Lippert with colleagues and friends, Dan Livingston, Chad McCoy and Christ Mangos. A familiar foursome seen around the dental profession for many decades was Lippert and his wife, Anna, and Dr. Lum Young and his wife, Mary Lou (pictured at right). Not only friends, they all worked tirelessly for the profession in various roles throughout their careers as dentists and as volunteers serving in organized dentistry.*



After leading the MDA for more than nine years, Lippert announced his intention to retire, and the Board of Trustees named Vicki Wilbers as executive director in 2006. Wilbers had served as assistant executive director for eight years and had fourteen years of total experience with the MDA. Her knowledge of the association, its members, the policy governance structure, staff management and MDA programs made her the ideal successor to maintain the association's momentum.

Since Wilbers assumed the director's chair, she's continued to strengthen and maintain MDA's traditional partners in the oral health community, both for the benefit of the membership as well as the public it serves. She's forged new relationships—engaging with organizations such as the Missouri Coalition for Oral Health, the Missouri Primary Care Association and the Missouri Foundation for Health—to address issues of access to dental care, charitable care and oral health education.

With twenty-three years of combined service to the MDA, Wilbers has been instrumental in the growth and development of the MDA Expanded Functions Dental



*Vicki Wilbers started her MDA career on May 20, 1992, as an administrative assistant while finishing her degree in business administration from Lincoln University. She has served many roles in her twenty-three years of service, including membership director, assistant executive director and current executive director. Wilbers has always been an active participant in MDA programs, as seen in the above image from the early 1990s with fellow MDA staff (from left) Karen Raitchel, Tammy Miller, Wilbers, Mike Shindler and Dr. Lynn Mouden, on a day at the Capitol to increase awareness about the PANDA program. She would lend her support to the development of the Missouri Mission of Mercy charitable dental clinic, as seen (left) at the 2013 MOMOM in Cape Girardeau with Dr. Darren Mahaffey, who with his wife, Dr. Sarah Mahaffey, initiated bringing this clinic to the state. Wilbers and her husband, Darrell, (below) affectionately known as "Tooter," have come to call many of the MDA dentists friends and especially enjoy time with them on Travel and Learn destinations and through other MDA events.*

Assistant program and in establishing the Missouri Mission of Mercy charitable dental clinic since 2011. She's served as the president of the American Society of Constituent Executive Directors and on the advisory committee to ADA Executive Director Kathleen O'Loughlin, ensuring Missouri has a voice at the national level.

While presidents, board members, editors, council and committee chairmen have come and gone during the past seventy years, these five individuals have afforded the MDA effective leadership. They have ensured the organization runs smoothly, efficiently and effectively and is among the nation's best representatives of the dental profession.



**James Proctor, 1946–1949**  
**Betty Satterfield, 1949–1979**  
**Roger Weis, 1979–1998**

**Jake Lippert, DDS, 1998–2006**  
**Vicki Wilbers, 2006–Present**