

Patterson commended for contribution to educating public of dental procedure

Shannon Patterson of Paoli, has been commended by both an internationally-known scientist and the head of one of the nation's leading dental implant research centers, for her contributions in educating and informing area residents on the technology and benefits of a new dental procedure.

Her knowledge comes from first hand experience.

Born with a congenital deficiency that prevented her adult incisors (the teeth on either side of the front teeth) from growing in, Patterson recently was able to replace her missing teeth with permanent dental implants.

The procedure was performed by Dr. Thomas J. Balshi, D.D.S., F.A.C.P., founder of Prosthodontics Intermedica, Ft. Washington. Dr. Balshi and Professor Per-

Ingvar Branemark, who discovered and developed the procedure used for Patterson's permanent dental implants, commended her volunteer activities and named her "Patient of the Year."

Presentation ceremonies took place before almost 200 recipients of dental implants and their families at a brunch in the Gwynedd home of Dr. Thomas and Joanne Balshi.

Patterson has appeared at medical conferences and teaching seminars, testifying to the procedure's validity.

She also volunteered to have her story told in both an informative video and an educational brochure.

Patterson participated in a television show, "Philadelphia Health Care," to show and discuss

her early disfiguring condition — and the solution she gained.

"For giving of herself in efforts to aid others," Dr. Balshi said, "she was selected by the entire staff at Prosthodontics Intermedica to be 'Patient of the Year.'"

She was also selected "because she epitomizes someone whose life has been enhanced by receiving permanent dental implants via osseointegration (a procedure by which prosthetic teeth are set into living bone tissue using titanium implants that form a bond with the bone)," Dr. Balshi said.

When Patterson was born with her congenital deficiency, her mother, Cathie Patterson, took her daughter to various orthodontists, dentists, periodontists, and specialists to seek help.

"She wore a retainer with two

false teeth attached to it," her mother said.

The search for a solution to her problem started in their native Michigan and continued when they moved here in 1989.

Patterson was elected vice president of Archbishop John Carroll High School in Racnor.

Though she had self-esteem, the missing teeth and the retainer were a constant worry.

"I was elected vice president of Archbishop Carroll before I received my permanent implants," Patterson said. "Although I could join in normal high school activities, I was never comfortable."

"I played soccer, and I kept worrying whether during the game something would happen to make my teeth come out. When I had braces, the teeth were glued to the

brace, and they would always fall off.

"I'd be embarrassed and have to figure out how to fix it. I'd attach the teeth with crazy glue."

Her mother said, "When she was dating, Shannon would be self-conscious about her teeth. She used to have this trick of flashing her teeth at the boy. It was her way of letting him know about the retainer and to see how he'd react."

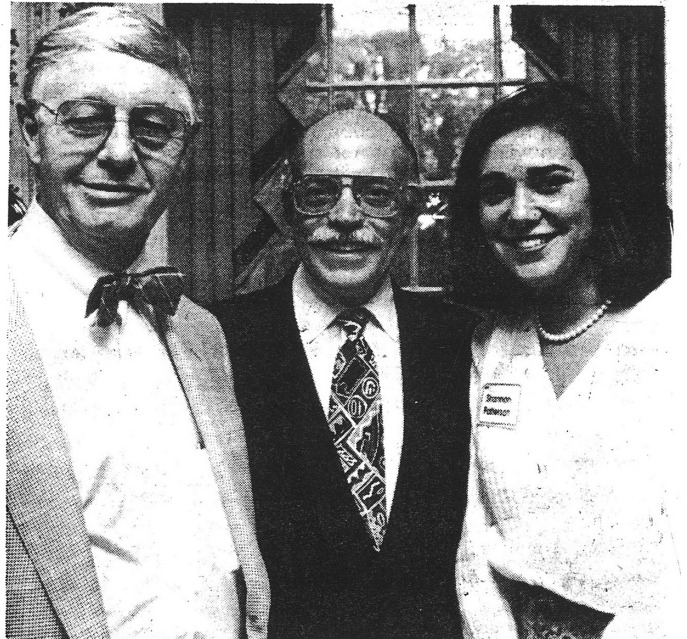
Shannon continued, "Yes, it was my little joke, and I don't miss playing it. Now I have nothing to hide. I don't have to worry about accidents or about my retainer slipping. I can just be me without

having to be concerned about something embarrassing happening."

In addition to fitting Shannon with permanent implants, Dr. Balshi bleached a front tooth that had become discolored after its nerve died in a horseback riding accident.

At the University of Delaware, Patterson is studying general topics. She is considering law or politics as a career. She said her work with Dr. Balshi has given her the confidence and poise to be a public figure.

There is a free video available on the "Rebuilding of a Smile," Call 215-646-6334.



Shannon Patterson (right) of Paoli, and a student at the University of Delaware, was recently commended by famed Swedish scientist Professor Per-Ingvar Branemark (left) and Dr. Thomas J. Balshi, founder of Prosthodontics Intermedica (center). Patterson was recognized for many contributions in educating area residents on a new dental procedure that provides permanent dental implants. The procedure was discovered by Prof. Branemark, and it is implemented by Dr. Balshi at Prosthodontics Intermedica, Ft. Washington.