

A Tribute to Thomas D. Creekmore, 1931-2002

DAVID W. ALGER, DDS, MSD

With profound regret we have learned of the death of Thomas D. Creekmore, longtime Associate Editor of JCO. Dr. David Alger has graciously agreed to write the following memorial tribute. Donations may be made to the Thomas D. Creekmore DDS Memorial Foundation for the Advancement of Orthodontics, 14740 Barryknoll Lane #160, Houston, TX 77079.

Thomas D. Creekmore, 1931-2002

Last month, sadly, we lost Tom Creekmore. He was my best friend of more than 40 years. We spent countless days together pursuing our passions of orthodontics, flying, tennis, skiing, and just talking. He was more than a friend to me. Tom was my mentor, my hero.

Tom was killed doing what he loved most--flying. He approached flying the same way he did everything else--with perfection. His plane had a catastrophic structural failure of some kind, and there was no escape.

The orthodontic profession will sorely miss one of its greatest contributors of the past 35 years. Tom wrote countless thoughtful, well-researched, and poignant articles in this and other publications over the years. He lectured and gave courses all over the world, never missing the opportunity to make us think about what we were doing. He held several patents on orthodontic appliances and was one of the pioneers in lingual orthodontics.

We've all heard the expression "commonly accepted practices" lately. Well, Tom *never* accepted any common practices. When he came across something called "common knowledge", he dissected it to its bones to see if it really was the truth--then put it back together again and found a better way to do it. His thought process was far beyond mine and most of humanity's.

Tom grew up in Brownsville, Texas, in modest surroundings, was graduated from the University of Houston, married his wonderful wife Leslie, and in 52 years of marriage produced four great children. He entered the Air Force and flew T34s, T33s, and eventually F86 Sabre jets. After his stint in the service, he entered dental school at the University of Texas Dental Branch in Houston, where we met. He and Leslie worked their way through dental school, and he was accepted into a preceptorship under the tutelage of Dr. Fred Schudy. It was there that Tom began his long and fruitful dedication to orthodontics. From that time on, he maintained a private practice in Houston.

Tom was able to laugh at "life its ownself" and had an engaging personality that made you feel good just to be around him. We will mourn his loss professionally and personally. I miss you, my friend. I know I'll see you again.

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