

**TDHA Special Service Award
in Memory of Evelyn Edwards**

On November 19, 2012 we lost a great friend, dental hygienist and significant contributor to both the dental hygiene profession and to this organization. **Evelyn Edwards** passed away after a brief battle with diabetes and a stroke

Evelyn was born and raised in Fayetteville, TN. She graduated from the expanded-function dental hygiene program in the School of Allied Health at Vanderbilt University in 1975. She had 38 years of experience in both private practice (13 years) and public health (25 years). Evelyn worked in the school-based dental sealant program in the South Central region. In 2008, she left public health to work for Dr. James Clark in Shelbyville, where she was employed at the time of her death.

Tennessee was the first state in the U.S. to have school-based sealant programs and Evelyn placed sealants being part of those early programs in the 1970's. Evelyn worked in public schools helping all children improve their oral health. She conducted a wide variety of preventive dental programs including application of dental sealants, oral health education, screening and referral programs, teacher in-service training, and community health fairs. During her 25 years of service to public health, she has educated tens of thousands of children, sealed countless amounts of teeth, and improved the overall health of two generations of Tennessee's children.

During her tenure in public health, Evelyn helped write "Oral Health: A Guide for Tennessee Teachers", a teacher resource manual that was placed in all schools in Tennessee. She also co-authored and edited the "Oral Health Services Section's Preventive Oral Health Guidelines", which serves as the reference for public health preventive dental programs in Tennessee. Evelyn served on a statewide committee to develop and implement an annual poster contest in which third and fourth grade students, throughout Tennessee, could promote the principles of good oral health through their artwork. The "Smile! Tennessee" poster contest was a great success and culminated in an awards ceremony each year in the State Capital.

Evelyn held very strong beliefs in belonging to your professional association as well as other beneficial organizations. She was a member of the Tennessee Public Health Association, having served on the registration, nominations, bylaws, and poster session committees. Evelyn was a member, as well as serving a term as President, of the Tennessee Academy of Dental Hygiene which promotes continuing education and

provides scholarship opportunities.

Evelyn was equally successful in the promotion of her beloved profession within the Tennessee Dental Hygienists Association. On the local level, she served 4th District as President, Trustee and CE chair, not just one time per office but multiple times in each office. In 2000, Evelyn was very instrumental in developing a dental health program entitled “The Dangers of Spit Tobacco”, which members of 4th District presented to middle schools in the district. For these efforts, she was awarded the TDHA Dental Health Education Award in 2002. In that same year, she nominated 4th District for the Colgate National Community Outreach Award from American Dental Hygienists Association. 4th District won and Evelyn, along with Linda Sudberry, traveled to Los Angeles to receive the award at ADHA’s Annual Session.

In 2005, 4th District won the TDHA Dental Health Education Award for their efforts in the fight against antifuoridation, mostly due to Evelyn's leadership. She attended numerous local utility district meetings and prepared information on the benefit of community water fluoridation. In January 2006, Evelyn gave testimony at a Tennessee General Assembly hearing regarding the public health benefits of community water fluoridation. Evelyn was also very successful in helping 4th District develop strong relationships with the local legislators. She helped plan and attended the annual breakfast reception for legislators. These relationships proved very beneficial when she was appointed, by the governor, to a three year term as Dental Hygiene Representative to the Board of Dentistry in March 2011.

Evelyn served as Trustee from 4th District to TDHA many times over the years. She served as President of TDHA in 2005-2006 and continued to be very involved after that. Since her presidency, she served again as Trustee, Awards Chair (a role she was very passionate about), and as a member of Council on Regulations and Practice. After her appointment to the Board of Dentistry, she resigned from the Council, but remained active within TDHA. Just two months before her death, she attended the Strategic Planning session of TDHA at Fall Creek Falls and was scheduled to speak at a CE course in Nashville on Saturday after her stroke the Wednesday before.

A warm and generous person, we will miss Evelyn very much. We would like to present her family with the TDHA Special Service Award with our love and gratitude.