

# SUNSTAR AMERICAS SPONSORS 11TH DENTAL CONSORTIUM 2008

by Kent Fletcher

*Focus placed on  
'Women in Dentistry'*

Sunstar Americas, Inc. hosted its 11th Dental Consortium during the Chicago Mid-Winter Dental Meeting in February 2008. Over 150 leaders from thirty-four organizations in the professional dental community enjoyed an evening of networking and a mini-symposium. The Consortium is highly regarded by leaders in the dental profession as the venue that connects so many different organizations concerned with advancing oral health and the dental profession.

Thomas Studney, senior managing director of Sunstar Americas, Inc., introduced the

evening's theme, *Women in Dentistry, Reflections, Issues, Changes and Opportunities*, by telling the guests about Dr. Emeline Roberts Jones, who is believed to have been America's first female dentist. Dr. Jones became her husband's dental assistant in 1855, and after his death in 1864, began a thriving practice in Connecticut. Mr. Studney also acknowledged that today's women in dentistry face drastically different challenges; however, what hasn't changed is that progress and success come from the ability to adapt and to surmount obstacles.

The Consortium then heard from four of today's women pioneers in dentistry. Dr. Kathleen Roth, past president of the American Dental Association (ADA), led a panel presentation that included contributions from Dr. Connie Drisko, dean of the School of Dentistry at the Medical College of Georgia; Dr. Brooke Loftis, past president of the American Student Dental Association; and Dr. Kathryn Kell, general practitioner and trustee of the ADA. These women, whose aggregate experience embraces chair-side assisting, dental hygiene, general and specialty practice, research, academic leadership and professional community leadership, shared their perspectives and their views in an open, intellectually stimulating program.

Around the world, women are increasingly involved in every aspect of the dental profession: as dentists, hygienists, therapists, and assistants; and as researchers and educators. Sunstar is proud to support them as they contribute even more to improved oral health for everyone. \*



Key participants at the 11th Dental Consortium included (left to right, back row) Dr. Brooke Loftis, Dr. Connie Drisko, Dr. Kathleen Roth, Dr. Kathryn Kell and (left to right, front row) Dr. Larry Farrell, Dr. Trucia Drummond, 2003 Lucy Hobbs Taylor Woman Dentist of the Year Award-winner, Dr. Stephanie Houseman, president-elect of the American Association of Women Dentists (AAWD), Dr. Lilia Larin, president of the AAWD.



Sunstar Americas' Senior Managing Director Thomas Studney talked about the drastically different challenges women in dentistry face today, compared to those first women who pioneered in the profession.



Dr. Connie Drisko, dean of the School of Dentistry at the Medical College of Georgia relates some of her insights on the subject of women in dentistry.



More than 150 leaders from thirty-four organizations in the professional dental community attended the Sunstar Americas-sponsored 2008 Dental Consortium Symposium.



From left to right, Symposium participants Dr. Kathleen Roth, Dr. Connie Drisko, Dr. Brooke Loftis and Dr. Kathryn Kell ready to make their presentations on the theme of women in dentistry.

## Sunstar has been sponsoring Dental Consortium symposiums since 1999

In September 1999, as part of the American Academy of Periodontology Annual Session, Sunstar Americas, Inc. (SAI) sponsored a symposium entitled, "Brush up on Wellness." The purpose of that symposium was to discuss the "Current State of Art and Science in the Area of Oral Health — Systemic/General Health." The session included key dental and medical professionals and researchers active in the field. In addition, participating as members of a responder group was the leadership of about fourteen major dental organizations — including Executive Directors, Presidents, Past Presidents, and Presidents-elect.

At the conclusion of the meeting, several representatives from

different groups approached SAI with a recommendation. They asked us whether SAI could continue supporting an event similar to the symposium on a regular basis. The request had to do with the fact that most of the group knew of many of the participants, but in reality never had the opportunity to interact with them before. The participants emphasized that "the whole experience was incredible."

SAI's response was to commit to supporting at least one "get together" per year with the opportunity to invite other groups over time. To date, there have been 11 programs held over the past 10 years.