

Certification Is “the Capstone of My Career”

Even with more than 30 years of experience in practicing orthodontics, Dr. Louis Filippone of Centreville, Va., finds special satisfaction in his July 2021 achievement of American Board of Orthodontics certification.

“Certification validates me as a practitioner. I am practicing with the most current knowledge and skills in the specialty to the best of my ability. It is the capstone of my career,” Dr. Filippone explained.

He hadn’t intended to put off certification. He had passed the Written Examination in 1989 while finishing his orthodontic residency at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

“I was motivated to complete certification then, but I got involved with my practice and then a second office,” Dr. Filippone said. “This always has been unfinished business. I wanted to become board certified before I retired.”

The COVID-19 pandemic gave Dr. Filippone the opening he needed to complete certification. “After the AAO canceled its convention in 2020, they sent a large packet with materials from exhibitors and others. Among this was information about the then-new ABO Scenario-Based Examination. I was excited about this option,” Dr. Filippone described.

He spent the next six months preparing by studying the reading list and reviewing the sample cases and Study Guide on the ABO website. A few months before the exam, he attended the Virginia AAO convention and sought out other orthodontists who had recently completed ABO certification. He inquired about their experiences with the exam and how they prepared.

Dr. Filippone also found the ABO staff very helpful. “I would call Kim Koch, clinical exam coordinator, about once a week with questions. She answered all of them,” he recalled. The ABO calibration kit also was very helpful, he noted.

A Diverse Practice

A native of Long Island, N.Y., Dr. Filippone obtained his dental degree from New York University in 1983. He then served for four years in the U.S. Army Dental Corps at Ft. Belvoir, Va., and in Seoul, South Korea. After the



Dr. Louis Filippone

military, he completed his orthodontic residency at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, N.J., in 1989.

His experience in the military drew him back to northern Virginia, where

he worked in several orthodontic offices until opening his own practice in 1991.

Today, Dr. Filippone has offices in the Washington, D.C. suburbs of Centreville and Gainesville. He treats a full range of children, adolescents and adults.

“Northern Virginia is a crossroads of diversity. We see people from all over the world, from all cultures and backgrounds,” Dr. Filippone said. “The majority of our staff speaks English and Spanish.”

Dr. Filippone is active in the community with Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7589 in Manassas, Va., where he is senior vice commander and youth committee chairperson. He administers youth programs including an essay contest and awards for scout of the year and teacher of the year.

He was drawn to the VFW by the support the post gave to his late father, a World War II veteran, while residing in a Manassas nursing home in his later years.

“Members of the post would visit him and bring gifts like blankets and caps. In Dad’s honor, I wanted to give back,” Dr. Filippone noted.

In his spare time, Dr. Filippone enjoys working on his muscle car collection, which includes a 1989 Corvette, a 2010 Camaro SS and a 2001 Ford F-150 Lightning truck.

Dr. Filippone and his wife, Francine, have four children.

continued



Advice for Orthodontists Considering Board Certification

Dr. Filippone encourages other orthodontists to seek board certification, regardless of age. He suggests reaching out to other board-certified orthodontists. “Talk to people who have taken the test, network with others. Form a study group,” he said.

He emphasized the importance of board certification: “Board certification is one way to differentiate an orthodontist from a general dentist and non-specialist. Certification has given me a sense of credibility and validation.”