

## Fun at Five Branches -- and a Victory Against Dentists

The sun just seems to be peeking out from under the clouds, and spring is just around the corner as I sit down to write this article. The event that I am going to share with you began on a cloudy, windy morning in the Los Angeles area. It seems as if the winter was very long this year. Now I know that the winters in California are nothing like the rest of the country, but when the sun is what we see almost daily, dealing with rain and clouds for days just seems endless.

I boarded an airplane this past Sunday (January 23) headed for San Jose, then drove into Santa Cruz to attend the graduation for students at Five Branches Institute. San Jose was enshrouded in fog, but as I drove over the hill into Santa Cruz, the sun began to peek through and the ocean sparkled as if diamonds were shining in the water.

I had been asked to deliver an address during the ceremony. It is always an honor to share in this special event. I enjoyed renewing times with old friends and making new ones. The ceremony encompassed the old and the new, the traditional and modern. Joanna Zhao, LAc, and Anthony Su, MD, began the program with a musical piece, which included a piano and some Chinese musical instruments. Next came a very inspirational Five-Element program moderated by Mary Huse, LAc. She and several of the graduating students presented a short poetic discussion of each of the elements.

Brian McEnaney, Jenny Dull and Judy Tognetti were the ceremony emcees and presented each section with careful thought and candid humor. The ceremony was held in a large room with an ocean view room and a glass-domed ceiling that retracts, which gives you the feeling that you're right up against the sky. The weather certainly cooperated this day, for which we were all grateful.

The faculty speakers included Camille Vardy, LAc, who charged the graduates to achieve their best for both themselves and their patients. Frank Ha, LAc, helped the students remember special highlights from their school days. Jim McDonald, MD, whose wife is a Five Branches graduate, challenged the graduates to strive for the best in patient care.

Tracy Cone and Erik Smith, both graduating students, spoke to their class with love, wit and inspiring words to remember far into the future.

Lucy Hu, LAc, and Joanna Zhao presented the diplomas to each student. Along with diplomas, each student received a special scroll which had been hand-painted by Joanna.

Melody Short, a graduate, presented the class gift. If you have been to Five Branches Institute, you know that each of their classrooms has a different name. Sometimes we all seem to forget the names, or at the least, we get them mixed up. So Melody painted a picture, illustrating the name of each room: Dragon, Lotus, Phoenix, Bamboo and Jade. Once you see Melody's picture, there should be no more

confusion.

Angela Tu, LAc, Five Branches' chair, and Ron Zaidman, the school's chief executive officer, concluded the afternoon with a very special charge to the graduates.

I completely enjoyed the entire afternoon. Thanks so much to the people at Five Branches for including me - and congratulations to all of the graduates: Jade Adkins, Mary Black, Bradley Cimino, Nikol Clark, Tracy Cone, Jessica Davies, Stacy Brinkut, Jenny Dull, Inger Giffin (Satix), Lisa Haselbauer, Courtney Jonson, Kara Katko, Narasha Katznelson, Teresa Maijala, Michelle Marguart, Brian McEnaney, Sheilah Rogers, Melody Short, Erik Smith, Judy Tognetti, and Larry Van Dykan.

### A Victory Against the Dental Profession

While I'm at it, congratulations should go to another group of acupuncturists in California for the success that they achieved recently. The California Dental Board had recently recommended that the requirements for dentists who want to use acupuncture in their clinic be reduced from 80 hours to 24 hours.

The acupuncture profession rallied, testified and convinced the Dental Board that 24 hours would endanger the public, so the board decided that the 24-hour suggestion was not a good idea and abandoned the recommendation. Thanks go to Margarite Hung, LAc, who made numerous phone calls to other members of the profession; Mark Sklar, LAc, of Pacific College, and Pearl Kimball, a student from Samra University, for their testimony.

See you next month!

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