

Do you find that there is a relationship between writing and being a dentist? If so, what?

It is two parts of the brain. I think dentistry is an art and a science, and writing is an art and a science. In writing you have to think deeply and in dentistry you have to solve problems that emerge rapidly. You don't always know what is going to happen and you better figure something out fast. In writing you have a similar situation where you may not know what is going to happen, but the path you take must lead you to a successful conclusion. For me, both are two totally different forms of thinking, but both are satisfying. I love dentistry. I never thought I'd retire. I will not retire from writing or sculpting either.

You also mentioned that you work on sculptures?

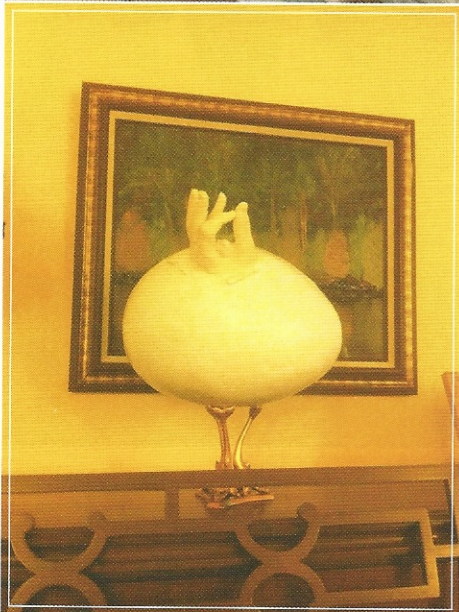
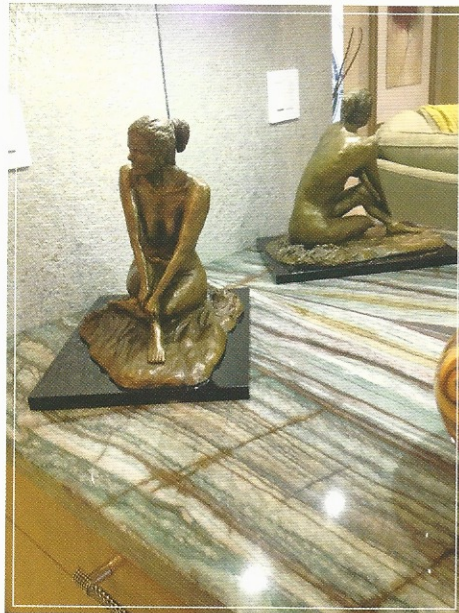
When I was in practice, one of my patients was a sculptor, and she told me that she was going to be giving a class and invited me to join.

What type of sculptures do you work on?

My first sculptures were done using a live model. They were created in clay and then cast in bonded bronze by a studio in New York. I've also done work in Lucite, dental stone and wood.

Do you see a correlation between creating sculptures and dentistry?

Dentists are typically good with their hands, and when I began sculpting it came pretty easy for me. I really enjoyed it. Sculpting is very different than writing a book. People look at a sculpture and either like it or don't. Writing a book is much more intimate.



Sculptures created by Dr. Alvin Berger.

How did you find your transition to retirement?

The transition was quick. It took me probably 30-seconds to get used to retirement. During my practice years I told myself I was never going to retire, because I really loved dentistry. However, after hurting my back using a snow blower and being out of the office for two days, I decided that it was time to think of retiring. I wanted to retire healthy and I wanted my practice to be healthy. So, I sold my practice to Dr. Jacob Seidner. It was the best thing that I could have done for both of us. We practice in a similar way and I felt very comfortable leaving the practice in his capable hands. My practice was healthy, I was healthy and I wanted to retire healthy and live the remainder of my life playing and being productive in another way.

Do you have any advice to your fellow dentists regarding the transition to retirement?

First, find someone to buy your practice and hopefully it is someone as competent as Dr. Seidner. Make sure you have something to do when you leave practice. To leave practice and do nothing is one of the worse things ever. So, before you retire, I think it is important for anyone, no matter what the field, to have hobbies or goals – and it doesn't matter what they are. Play bridge, cards, writing, sculpting, swimming, golf, anything. And obviously going to the fitness center. The things that are most important to staying healthy are doing cardio and strength training, having a good diet, plenty of sleep and a positive attitude. Those are the things that make you successful in life.

Out of the Office

Retired Dentist learns that age is not a barrier to accomplishment

This series, published occasionally, focuses on the hobbies of our member dentists outside the dental office. If you have a hobby that you would like to share with other CSDA members, please contact Randi Sussman, CSDA Communications Manager at RSussman@csda.com.

Q&A with Dr. Alvin Berger

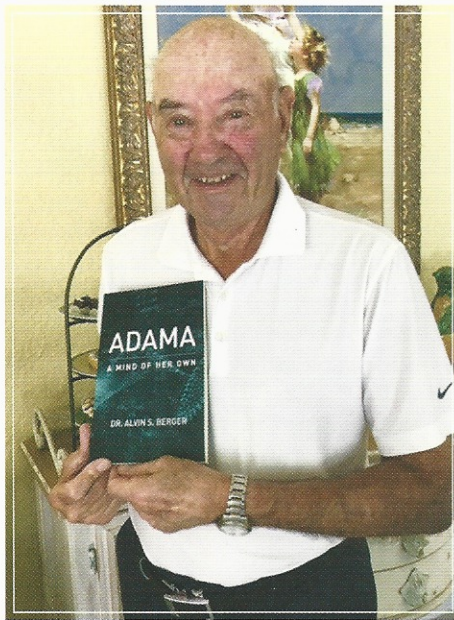
Dr. Alvin Berger is a retired CSDA member dentist. He practiced as a general dentist in North Haven for 42-years before deciding to retire. Dr. Berger has been a CSDA member since 1961 and currently splits his time between Boca Raton, FL and Seattle, WA.

What type of involvement did you have at the CSDA? Did you hold any leadership roles?

I was on the Continuing Education Council from 1961 until I retired. I was chairman of that council for 15 years. I was also a meeting planner for the Annual Meeting for two years. But, basically I was involved in the annual meeting continuously.

Why did you want to become a dentist?

I decided to become a dentist, because I love people and I love working with my hands. Dentistry seemed like a perfect combination, and it turned out that it was exactly right for me. Working in the



Dr. Alvin Berger holding a copy of his book, ADAMA

Mark was an oral surgeon and my sister, Sheila was a hygienist. Also, my niece, Dr. Robin Santiago is a dentist in West Hartford.

Have you always been interested in writing?

No. I never wrote anything before, but I was encouraged by my wonderful partner, Vera Getz.

I didn't know what I was going to write or anything about the structure of a book. I remember sitting in front of my computer and staring at a blank screen. I had some ideas that I wanted to write about, but I didn't think anyone else would want to read it. Then, one day I saw an article about DNA computers.

began writing and it morphed into a story about computers, international intrigue, some love interests and a little bit of sex, along the way. As writing my book progressed, I realized that the challenge of doing something that I had never done before gave me inspiration. After I completed it, Vera read it and loved it. If she loved it, I thought maybe it would be worth publishing.

I published the book through Create Space, which is a subsidiary of Amazon. The book is currently available on Amazon and Kindle Worldwide, and is available in the US, Europe and Asia.

What is your book called?

Adama: A Mind of Her Own. The word Adama is the Hebrew word for earth. The computer is almost human-like, so that is where the title came from.

How long did it take you to write the book?

It took me three years of on-again, off-again writing. I had times of writers block and did not know enough about the workings of the DNA computer, so I had to do some research.

When was your book published?

The book became available in April 2016.

Do you plan on writing another book?

I love writing. I hope to write another book, but I don't know what it will be about yet. It might be another book about international intrigue or it may be