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Valedictory address

Dr Anthony Kravitz was installed as the President of the British Dental Association at last year's 2004 National Annual Conference in Bournemouth. At this year's 2005 British Dental Association's Annual Conference in Glasgow on May 19–21 2005, he gave his valedictory address.

I have never been known as a shy individual, reticent to speak – but today I believe that I must act out of character – and depart the office of president quietly and without too much fuss. It is time to hand over to my successor.

However, before doing so I must say just a few words. Hilary and I have had the most fabulous year, during my term of office. We have been from Chester to Chicago, from Tunbridge to Tel Aviv and West London, England, to East London, South Africa.

Without exception, we have been greeted with warmth and indeed affection. We can tell you that the BDA is still admired and very well respected, despite out recent difficulties, across not just the United Kingdom – but across the world. Indeed, especially within the Commonwealth, we are still seen as the leaders of the profession in the world.

There have been disappointments of course. It was especially sad that so many of our staff had to leave their jobs during the year, because of the severe financial difficulties faced by our organisation. And, it was not easy to explain what had happened at so many meetings I attended. Like my predecessor, at this meeting last year, it has been a disappointment to hear occasional unjust criticism of the BDA.

But, the BDA is very fortunate to have both staff and elected officers who are dedicated to the best interests of our members and their patients and I believe that the



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overwhelming majority of our members appreciate this.

A further disappointment was the failure of government to carry through any of the major changes which were promised for this year – and their failure to heed the call not to deplete other countries' dental workforces to bolster our own.

Now to my thanks. It is always invidious to single out individuals from the many who have assisted me to have such a wonderful – and (I hope) what others might judge as successful term as President. But I cannot sit down without publicly thanking Kerry Dalton, Ian Wylie's PA, who has also taken on the role as my PA during the period. She has sorted out the invitations, the diary and my budget during

these 54 weeks – indeed from before my installation last May. Hilary and I have made her a small personal presentation.

I would also like to thank my branch, East Lancashire and East Cheshire, for first nominating me for this high office and then also for supporting me so much during the year. Indeed, we thank all those who have looked after us so well. Finally, a very big thank you to my wife Hilary and my children – indeed grandchildren, for putting up with all my tantrums at moments of stress.

John, if your year is just half as good as mine, you and Irene are in for a fantastic time. We hope you enjoy it in good health and with much happiness.