



# Meet 40 of Our Community's Best & Brightest

Although the number of labs is declining, there's no shortage of newcomers to our profession. LMT profiles 40 up-and-comers who are under 40, nominated by their peers for their business savvy, digital acumen, top-notch technical skills and enthusiasm to thrive in the dental lab world. It's a celebration of those who are learning, growing and taking our industry to the next level.

## Marc Dixon



Age: 37

**"Marc is a 3Shape genius.** There are very few technicians I'd consider to be experts but Marc is one of those people," says Minh Tran, Founder of DentalTechTips and a technician at Essex Dental Laboratory, Windsor, ON, about Marc Dixon, Owner of Decadent Laboratories in Brooklyn, NY. "I reach out to him when I can't solve a problem myself and he's always willing to share his discoveries so we can all benefit and be better technicians."

In 2014, Dixon—who was working at a small, in-house lab in Manhat-

tan—began making 3Shape tutorial videos that demonstrated his time-saving software tips and sharing them online via Facebook and YouTube along with photos of his work. As his tutorials gained popularity, he was asked to moderate the 3Shape Study Group on Facebook, answering users' questions and developing a reputation as an expert.

Eventually, even 3Shape itself took notice: in 2017 it hired Dixon as a speaker and he's now one of the company's software beta testers. Dentists also began asking him to take on their work so, although he'd never had the desire to open his own lab, he started saving money towards that goal.

In April 2019, Dixon took the plunge and leased a 300-square-foot studio in Brooklyn for his new business, Decadent Laboratories, a solo digital operation specializing in complex cases, implant-supported prosthetics and full-mouth reconstructions—all designed in, you guessed it, 3Shape. "I love being my own boss," says Dixon, who also offers private training. "I work more hours now than ever before, but I've never felt more free." ■

## Andy Timblin



Age: 30

**In less than six years** at Bertram Dental, Neenah, WI—which has specialized in cast CoCr partials for 45 years—Andy Timblin has been instrumental in helping the laboratory convert its RPD production from analog to digital and expand its product offerings.

"Andy is almost closer to an engineer than a dental technician. He's diligent and through hours and hours of work, he's helped me develop the best methods for metal printing (SLM) RPDs and, more recently, surgical

guides, ortho parts and All-on-Four thimble-style cases," says Tim Bertram, Co-Owner.

Acknowledging that printing metal is more challenging than printing resin, Timblin says one of the biggest hurdles was figuring out the best settings for our SLM printers and coming up with a good all-around support strategy. "If the supports aren't sufficient, the printed parts will warp. After a lot of trial and error, we're getting great results in a faster, more efficient way," he says. "Knowing that we're using cutting-edge technology to help give the customer the best product is very rewarding."

As the digital department has grown to include six other staff members, Timblin has also taken on the responsibility of training the new team members and managing production and daily workflow issues. Looking forward, he's eager to explore even more new printing services: the laboratory has just moved into a new facility, tripling its square footage and providing ample room for more printers. ■

## Megan Martin



Age: 37

**In 2001**, when Megan Martin was just 18 years old, she began working at Perfect Finish Ortho Lab in Hackettstown, NJ, as a trainee in the finishing department. She immediately liked the work and, over the years, mastered every department in the lab, worked her way up to management positions and took on other special projects. She and a co-worker spent months researching 3D printers, ultimately

launching a new digital department to automate model production; today the department has nine printers and three staff members and receives 40% of its impressions digitally.

In 2019, Martin was named Vice President/General Manager, but she still helps out at the bench, bending all of the lab's fixed expanders and helping to finish cases when things are busy. "I try to lead by example as best I can," she says. "I show up every day on time, stay late when needed and like to pitch in by the team's side whenever they need me."

So what's this go-getter's next challenge? Lab ownership: Martin and current owner Phil Pelligra have a buy-sell agreement in place in which she accumulates shares of the company based on her performance goals. "Megan will be a good lab owner because she has a great work ethic and is dedicated to her craft and respected by the team," says Pelligra, who hopes to retire in four years. "She truly cares about the success of the company." ■

## Hannah Kokovich



Age: 27

**While Hannah Kokovich** originally wanted to be a dental assistant, she ultimately studied dental laboratory technology at Columbus State in Ohio and was a member of the program's last graduating class in 2012.

"I wasn't a great student in high school but once I found what I loved doing, I excelled at it," she says. And although C&B was her least favorite subject—she planned to go into

removables—once she started working as a model technician at Image Gallery in Dublin, OH, she was intrigued by the digital technology used to fabricate crowns and eventually trained as a CAD/CAM technician and ceramist handling posterior work.

"Hannah is an amazing technical innovator," says Lonni Thompson, CDT, Owner. "She has the capability of looking at a case and methodically visualizing the end result. She then blends her knowledge of both digital and traditional techniques to fabricate an artistic, functional prosthesis on time."

And now that she's mastered posteriors, Kokovich is poised to take on her next challenge: her co-worker, Justin Gray, is training her on all aspects of anterior porcelain buildups. "While I enjoy my posterior work, it's not the same satisfaction you get with anteriors," she says. "I want to be able to give patients a brand-new smile that changes their lives." ■

*LMT's 40 Under 40 coverage continues on the following pages.*