

## Benjamin C. Moffett

David Crouch has been quoted as saying, "If Ben Moffett had been born 150 years earlier he would most likely have pioneered an expedition to the wild west." He had great love for the natural environment and lived in a small cabin on a Northwest lake for much of his professional life in Seattle. As a real scientist in dentistry, Ben was a pioneer in his ability to bridge the basic and clinical sciences, especially in his devotion to studying the temporomandibular joint. Ben demonstrated these same pioneering ideas throughout his life. He was one of the first in Washington State to actively windsurf in the early 1970s. He vividly recalled the reaction he received when he washed up on the Lake Washington shore off the United States Naval Station near Sandpoint in a full wetsuit and windsurf board. Throughout this portrait you will learn about the many other areas of Ben's life where he has been an innovator and pioneer.

Ben arrived in 1923 in Bradley Beach, New Jersey, where he was the first born into a family of three boys. Ben's most vivid childhood memory is spending every Saturday morning studying art. "I guess I am really a frustrated artist at heart," explained Ben. "However," he explained, "I have been able to use art in my anatomical studies." Ben's father was a painter by trade and one of his goals was for Ben to be the first in the family to go on to college.

Ben entered college in New York City after graduation from high school in New Jersey. But it seems as though 'Uncle Sam' had a very different plan and Ben spent four years in the Army Signal Corps during World War II. He then returned to the states to earn a BA in Zoology from Syracuse University in 1948, and four years later completed his PhD in anatomy from New York University. Moffett's initial academic exposure to dentistry came at the University of Alabama where he started as an assistant professor in 1952. He taught both dental and medical gross and neuroanatomy in Birmingham until 1959, and then began five years of postdoctoral research training sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation. He completed his first year of research at the Institute of Anatomy in Gothenburg, Sweden, where he investigated lumbar synovial joints.

Ben tried to make the most of his year in Sweden. He met the king and queen, attended the Nobel prize ceremony, learned to lecture in Swedish, and served as a crew member on a North Sea commercial fishing vessel for six days. One of his most significant accomplishments was becoming the first American to complete in the annual Swedish Vasaloppet – the world’s longest marathon sky race (53 miles). He entered the race as a novice skier and only trained for three months prior to the race. Ben cites the tremendous support he received from the Swedish people and training assistance from members of the annual Swedish Vasaloppet – the world’s longest marathon ski race (53 miles). He entered the race as a novice skier and only trained for three months prior to the race. Ben cites the tremendous support he received from the Swedish people and training assistance from members of the Idrottsklubben (sports club) Stern as instrumental in completing the endeavor. The experience and friendships he made had such an impact that Ben returned the following year to again compete in the Vasaloppet.

Moffett completed his postdoctoral training with two years each at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology under Dr. Lent Johnsen’s guidance and at Detroit’s Wayne State University. His studies were within the orthopedic branches of both institutions.

While still in Detroit Ben heard from a colleague about an opening at the University of Washington for a professional scientist. He went to Seattle to apply for the position vacated by anthropologist Bert Kraus, who was leaving for the cleft palate center in Lancaster. Upon returning to Detroit after his interview, Ben recalls receiving a letter from Dr. Alton Moore that said, “I don’t know if we will ever find the person we are looking for.” This did not discourage Ben, and he wrote a detailed letter which was so detailed that it convinced Dr. Moore to recommend his appointment as an associate professor in the Department of Orthodontics. This began a relationship that has had an International impact on the specialty of orthodontics. Moffett was eventually appointed full professor in 1967 and had an immediate impact on the type and quality of research that was conducted from that time on. He chaired three projects which received the Milo Hellman Research Award: David Turpin in 1967, Don Joondeph in 1972 and Bob Smith in 1978. Over the years, Ben Moffett has been the principal investigator for numerous NIH research grants, totaling

several million dollars. He was the author of co-author of nearly 60 scientific papers and was the first director of the UW multidisciplinary TMJ Research Clinic. During the time that Ben was developing his research strategies, He continued to teach his students to be both researchers and clinicians and to constantly ask and explore questions using the scientific method. He emphasized the importance of developing biologically-based diagnoses and treatment planning.

Ben Moffett eventually retired in 1988 and passed away in \_\_\_\_\_. Since that time he has been internationally recognized for his contributions in establishing bridges between various disciplines involved in temporomandibular joint research, diagnosis and treatment. Ben was married to Leena Koskined-Moffett. She was an orthodontist who was well known in her home country of Finland prior to meeting Ben. The doctors Moffett spend a four-month sabbatical leave at the University of Turku in 1987 and also four-months on a faculty exchange program at the University of Bergen, Norway. Ben and Leena had one daughter, Anna, who received a great deal of attention from the two.

Ben also has two children from a previous marriage. Ben's daughter, Joanne, is an oil geologist in Texas. One of his last research ventures prior to retirement consisted of grant support for clinical trials using continuous passive motion (CPM) appliances for TMJ surgical patients. CPM is a method of postoperative rehabilitation in which synovial joints are moved immediately after surgery in slow and controlled cycles. The principle of CPM is based on our knowledge of joint development. As Moffett often explained, "We know that if the joints do not move during development, the joints do not develop properly – and the anatomic structures are not differentiated."

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