Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6385

Wise, Susan

(1972 -)

Born	19720101, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Dentist, Periodontist, President

Summary

Dr Susan Wise is a Melbourne specialist periodontist and served as President of the Australian Dental Association (Victorian branch) in 2017-2018. One of 17 women and 34 men in her University of Melbourne graduating class in 1994, she is a leader of an Australian professional association where women now outnumber men. While women have held leadership positions in the ADA (Vic Branch) before her, Susan is the first Jewish woman and the first mother with primary school aged children to take on the role of President.

Needless to say, even with the help of a ‘fantastic, amazing’ husband, the combination of mothering, running a home, running a practice and performing professional leadership responsibilities has created its challenges. ‘In meetings,’ she says, ‘I will be texting my mother in law; don’t forget to pick up Benjamin for this or that, don’t forget the tennis racquet. My husband does most of the pick ups and drops offs, and most of the cooking. But I am the one who still has to organise things.’ As all working mothers know, she says ‘The hardest thing is the juggling.’

It’s a juggle, however, that has been well worth the effort. During her presidential tenure, she oversaw the development of a new strategic plan for the ADA that has streamlined operations going forward, making the plan more user-friendly and the association more likely to engage members. She has always seen it as her role to mentor young women in the professions, given that she benefited from mentoring herself. Her legacy, she hopes, will be to leave a ‘straightforward’ plan and ‘well organised’ platform for the incoming president. She’s also demonstrated to women who want to take up leadership roles in professional organisations that, with a low key approach and a lot of planning, you don’t have to be superwoman to do it.

Despite the challenges, she encourages other women to ask for opportunities to be involved, as she did. ‘If someone had told me as a graduate in 1994 that I would be the president of the ADA, I would have said ‘get real’, not a chance. So I’ve achieved more than I could have hoped!’

Author Details
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