

Three Daughters Make Their Mark on Third-Generation Family Lab

By Kim Molinaro, Managing Editor

Many laboratory owners hope that, one day, their children will join their business—their *other* baby—and continue growing what they’ve built. Jerry Kaizer, CDT, Owner of Murray Kaizer Dental Laboratory in Farmington, CT, has realized that dream three times over: all *three* of his daughters—Emily, Sarah and Hannah—are now managing the family’s 30-person removable laboratory.

The women are the fourth generation of Kaizers to work in the industry and the third generation to be involved in the family lab. While each of them initially pursued a career path outside of the laboratory, they all eventually assumed a role there, working their way up to management positions. “While none of us ever planned to work in the laboratory, we all now love working together and being part of the family business,” says Sarah. “Seeing how much the lab has evolved since my grandfather started it brings us so much joy and we want to continue our family’s legacy in the best way possible.”

Here’s how they divide their responsibilities today and how each is making her mark:

Operations: Sarah joined the laboratory in 2010 as a front desk assistant and, what was meant to be a one-year gig, has morphed into a decade-long career and a knowledge of the lab’s operations inside and out. “If there’s something going on in the lab, I know about it,” says Sarah, who has implemented several new systems to help make workflow more predictable and efficient.

For instance, when she noticed cases were often getting backed up, she restructured the lab’s internal schedule to help cases move more quickly from department to department. She worked with the department managers to determine shorter turnaround times for each type of restoration the lab offers and now, rather than printing out



From left to right: Hannah Kaizer, M.A.; Emily Murphy, CDA, RDH; Jerry Kaizer, B.S., CDT, Owner; and Sarah Kaizer, B.S. While each woman oversees a different aspect of the business, none of them have specific job titles—as Emily says, “In a family business, you have to do whatever’s asked of you.” The lab was founded by their grandfather, Murray Kaizer, in 1962.

the *final* due date on the work ticket, each department simply sees its own *internal* due date.

“In the past, we had some bottlenecks—for instance, the acrylic department was waiting on the metal department or cases were coming up for QC too late—and drivers were waiting to get on the road,” says Sarah. “By shortening our internal working times, we no longer have these issues and all of the stress that goes along with them.”

Finances: Hannah oversees the lab’s finances and is the third-generation family member to do so. A self-admitted Type-A personality, the laboratory has benefitted from her no-nonsense approach: she’s meticulous about reviewing reports that track the lab’s metrics and has taken over the process of bidding on federal and state contracts with universities and other

organizations—an incredibly detail-oriented process that documents the lab’s structure, financial history, pricing and more.

She’s also been successful in converting many offices to first-of-the-month auto pay, simply running the credit card on file to help ensure a consistent cash flow. “That first-of-the-month payment generally covers most of our laboratory expenses which, in turn, gives us peace of mind and allows us to focus our business strategies on production and human resources,” says Hannah.

Technology: With over a decade of experience as a dental assistant and dental hygienist—and the daughter with “the hands”—Emily handles the technical side of the business, including case fabrication and still occasionally working with clients chairside.

She’s also helping the lab stay

on the cutting edge of the removable niche, incorporating new digital services into the lab’s workflow. For instance, she learned how to do digital custom trays with the lab’s 3Shape software—a service now used by 90% of clients—and was also heavily involved in beta testing Dentsply Sirona’s digital denture solution. “I worked with the software engineers to help streamline the design process, dial into the parameters and get predictable results for other end users,” says Emily.

From Jerry’s perspective, while he’s still very active in the business, his daughters’ involvement has allowed him to reduce his schedule to about three days a week and also spend part of the year in Florida, where he stays in touch via phone and video. “One of the biggest benefits to working with my daughters is the inherent trust I have in them,” he says. **LMT**