

Denturism: New field offers new opportunities



Native American Bev Vernwald owns and operates the West Coast Denture Center. She says many dentists consider a denturist an advantage to their business. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

by Lanita Duke

Grassroot News, N.W.—Bev Vernwald owns and operates West Coast Denture Center in Milwaukie, Oregon. Ms. Vernwald is a denturist. "A denturist is someone who deals with the public denture needs. They make and repair dentures."

Denturists are a practical idea made legal by 1980 law. Prior to this law only a licensed dentist could create and repair dentures. For the

Dental Technology School for two years and graduated in 1975." A lot of her experience was acquired by working at various commercial labs.

The desire to work on her own and an independent spirit lead her into opening her own lab. "I didn't want to spend all that time in school like a dentist. I wanted a job as soon as I got out of school. Also I enjoy working with my hands."

She states that people will go to a denturist because it is a lot more

dentists that I work with are broad-minded and they consider a denturist an advantage to their business."

Being a Native American business woman hasn't affected Vernwald's business. "I thought it might but it hasn't."

Her advice to the aspiring business man or woman is, "Learn as much as you can about running a business. When I started I knew what to do in the dental lab but not out in the office. I'm still in the process of learning."

"I hope to enlarge West Coast Denture Center to a point where I'm not the only employee. Now, I have to do the cleaning, typing, office work and still work in the lab."

Bev Vernwald has a good, strong future in the denturist business. She accepts walk-ins and currently works with a dental group. She is one minority businesswoman who has left no gaps, cracks or loose spots in her career.

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elderly the cost was staggering. Vernwald says, "Denturists have been legal since July, 1980. And I started six months after the law was passed."

Vernwald learned her trade at a Community College. "I went to

convenient than going to a dentist.

"In a way I guess we are their competitor. But we all can work together because they need someone to do the lab work. I enjoy working with the dentist and I hate to look at myself as their competitor. Most of the



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