Irene R. Woodall, a leader in the field of Dental Hygiene, was an internationally recognized speaker and educator for continuing education courses as well as dental hygiene program director at Kalamazoo Valley Community College and the University of Pennsylvania. She also was a published author of several books including: Legal, Ethical, and Management Aspects of the Dental Care System and several editions of the text book Comprehensive Dental Hygiene Care. Woodall was an innovator in technical areas such as the use of ultrasonic scalers vs. hand instrumentation. Woodall served as Senior Editor of RDH Magazine from 1981–1993 and was a strong advocate for self-regulation, challenging myths and the traditional role of the profession. Her talent for persuasion, her ideals and her vision have inspired generations of hygienists.

“I learned that I could step out of the dental hygiene operatory, even beyond the teaching environment, and carry a message (right or wrong!). We haven't done enough of that in dental hygiene. We tend to stick to the tried and true, the legally defined role, the safe approach to spreading information about ourselves and about proper oral care… But far too often we don't take the risk or the opportunity to step out and proclaim who we are.”

Irene's bright career ended abruptly in 1993 when she suffered a brain aneurysm and a disabling stroke that severely affected her cognitive and physical abilities. She is now living in a long term care facility in Chicago, close to her youngest daughter. She is beloved by staff and by all who meet her. Thanks to social media, Irene and her family have been able to re-connect with caring friends and colleagues, many of whom are eager to help with the challenges that disabilities bring. To facilitate this, the Irene R. Woodall Special Needs Trust was created. The trust supports Irene's quality of life, first and foremost ensuring that she gets dental care from professionals who specialize in helping patients with disabilities. The outpouring of love and support has been deeply appreciated by Irene and very meaningful to her daughters.

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