



The Art of Dentistry



Dr. Robin Rutherford *Away from the Dental Office*

While Dr. Robin Rutherford spends much of his time at the office, he does manage to have a bit of spare time. He is an avid tennis player and serves as a deacon at Sherwood Church of Christ. His wife, Vicki, is a pharmacist. They have one son, Bryan, who is part of "Teach for America", a national program which places teachers in underserved areas. He teaches 8th grade Algebra in Oakland, California.

Changing Lives . . . One Smile At A Time!

For Dr. Robin Rutherford, the art of dentistry is not just about cavities, root canals or crowns. Thanks to technology, continuous education and skill, Dr. Rutherford's dental practice has expanded well beyond the basics of dentistry as we know it. For the man with a 27-year career in dentistry, it's about changing lives.... one smile at a time!

"Dentistry suits me. It combines science, medicine and interacting with people," said Dr. Rutherford. "Good dental care transforms people and their lives and I get to see the outcomes everyday," he adds with satisfaction in his voice. And good teeth and a nice smile aren't just something nice to look at. Research shows that your dental health can be related to diabetes, stroke and heart disease.

Dr. Rutherford has been part of a transformation in the field of dentistry. Graduating from Texas A&M University, it was his father who suggested he go to dental school. He graduated from the University of Texas San Antonio School of Dentistry, which is ranked the Number One Dental School in the nation, in 1982. A native of Marble Falls, it was relatives living in Odessa that encouraged him to come here and open a practice as a young, aspiring dentist. "I found the people and patients to be really friendly here in West Texas. Setting up shop here was one of the best decisions I've ever made," he said.

Since starting his business here, Dr. Rutherford has taken pride in keeping up with the developments of his profession. "Dentistry is a good field to be in. It is an exciting branch of medicine that is changing for the better. A dentist can do neat things for their patient. Over the past decade, we've seen dentistry explode with new techniques, bringing to the forefront how important a person's smile is," he said.

While Dr. Rutherford continues to provide general dentistry, he also focuses on implants, cosmetic procedures, orthodontics and oral surgery. In fact, Dr. Rutherford prides himself on going above and beyond the annual requirements of 12 hours of continued education for dentists and the abundance of specialized hands-on education he's obtained in these areas of expertise. "I've dedicated more than 400 hours in the past three years alone to attending seminars and observing other dental specialists in the areas of implants and cosmetic dentistry," he said. "I learn from

the best in the field. This year alone, I've traveled to Miami 10 times to attend special classes. I've traveled to Seattle and Las Vegas to find out all I can about new, cutting edge procedures and technology," said Dr. Rutherford. At these seminars, he learns about implants, and how missing teeth can be replaced. Cosmetic dentistry includes much more than teeth whitening. Porcelain veneers can help colored teeth look white again, crooked teeth can be rotated or straightened, chipped teeth can be fixed and gaps between teeth can be removed – all without the use of braces or orthodontic work. "We take before and after pictures, and when the patient looks in the mirror after the procedure, you immediately see a change in their personality," said Tracie O'Steen, Dr. Rutherford's Office Manager. Dr. Rutherford adds that some patients are in the habit of not smiling, hiding their teeth in shame. "We give the patient the freedom to smile and show their teeth. It is very satisfying to see their self-esteem improve and their life take on a whole new meaning," he said.

The patients with life-changing dental procedures are plentiful. O'Steen spoke of one young man who came to the office with a mouth full of cavities and a chip on his shoulder. "He was a good-looking boy, but he was ashamed of his teeth. Once we finished with him, his mom called us and told us the girls wouldn't stop calling him and he had joined the football team – he seemed to blossom all with the help of dental work," she said. Another man in his 40's lost all of his teeth and was facing the thought of dentures at a young age. Dr. Rutherford introduced him to implants, and he was showing off his new smile only a few months after his first visit.

Dr. Rutherford's office also offers Smile Vision, a program that takes a before photo of the patient and transforms the photo into what the patient will look like once the specific dental procedure takes place. This technology offers the patient insight into just how their teeth and smile can be transformed.

Another service Dr. Rutherford's office offers is oral conscious sedation. The first dentist office in the area to offer conscious oral sedation, Dr. Rutherford introduced this option to patients about seven years ago, and he says it's been a huge success and something some patients rely on for their care. "Oral sedation allows the patient to take a pill before their visit. They are awake during the procedures, but

they really don't remember what goes on. For people with a fear or uneasiness of dental work, this is the way to go," he said. Sedation also allows the patient to have fewer appointments, which can mean less time off of work. "Some patients might have been putting off dental work for years because they can't stand the thought of having it done. Sedation makes it much more comfortable for the patient and we can get them fixed up with just a few visits over a couple of weeks," said Dr. Rutherford.

With continuous education and by forming relationships with his patients, Dr. Rutherford strives to be a leader in his industry. "I make an extra effort to stay on top of the latest



Back Row: Veronica Carrasco, Anais Tarin and Cindy Wilkenson Middle Row: Beth Smith and Dana Troglin Front Row: Samantha Lewis



Tracie O'Steen, Angela Bennett, Claudia Bustos, Miyuki Korner and Nicki Hardcastle

A Passion – Not Just A Job

The Staff at Dr. Robin Rutherford's office takes special care of their patients. It is this personable treatment and professionalism that makes Dr. Rutherford proud. "The current staff is the best group of people I've ever worked with throughout my career. They are sharp, they follow up on our patients and they work together as a team to get the job done," said Dr. Rutherford. "I am blessed to work alongside them every day," he added.

Office Manager Tracie O'Steen says the team that works together also plays together. "We have what we call Fun Wednesdays. Once a month, we have a staff meeting where we go over the business issues, but about every 3 months we go do something fun like play putt putt, go ballroom dancing or shoot rifles at the shooting range," she said. "We work in close quarters, in a very fast paced and busy office. It's important we get along and this helps us with team building," she adds. All the work and play seems to pay off, as there is little turnover in staffing. The staff has a passion for dentistry and it shows. They make it a point to shower patients with gift baskets and follow up with phone calls after procedures. And while Dr. Rutherford continues to update his resume with on-going educational clinics and meetings, he makes sure his staff is kept up-to-date as well, taking them with him on many of his educational trips. "We take a trip together as an office once a year. We learn together and have fun together, and that positive energy shows up in our office as we work with our patients," O'Steen said.



Dr. Robin Rutherford and his Staff

developments and do all I can to learn from the best. To me, the best compliment I can receive is the referral of a patient from another patient. That's when you know you have made a difference and you've done your job well." No doubt, many Odessans owe their smile to Dr. Rutherford and that gives him and his staff something to smile about as well.

A Beautiful Swan Smile

Claudia's smile was dominated by her upper gums. The teeth were nice but looked too square. Teeth are much more shapely when they are taller than they are wide. However, Claudia's teeth looked only as tall as their width because her gums covered too much of the top of her teeth. We did a Smile Vision simulation in which a photo of Claudia was computer enhanced to show exactly how her smile would turn out before anything was done. This was so exciting that Claudia immediately made plans for the procedure. "I've always noticed my teeth were shorter than most people but I just thought that's the way I was made. During one of my visits with Dr. Rutherford, I was told that I did have options and through a service his office provides called Smile Vision, he was able to show me in advance how the procedure would change my smile. I was thrilled and agreed to the treatment, which involved minimal removal of bone and gum to better proportion my smile. I had it done on a



BEFORE AND AFTER

Friday and surprisingly I experienced no pain and

only a little swelling. I was back to work by the following Monday. Dr. Rutherford took my "ugly duckling" smile and transformed it into a "beautiful swan smile!"

ROBIN RUTHERFORD, DDS

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