

Dr. Ted Haeussner

Cultivating a Dental Family



“

If we aren't continually evolving and growing, then we stagnate and wither on the vine.

— Dr. Ted Haeussner

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By **Niki Pocock**
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

A 5-year-old boy sits amongst piles of his father's dental books when he is discovered looking at graphic pathology pictures.

"What are you doing?" the boy's dad asks him.

"Dad, I told you I am going to be a dentist. I need to know this," the boy replied.

The boy's father, 2008-2009 Florida Dental Association (FDA) President Dr. **Ted Haeussner**, laughed as he exchanged the displayed reading material with a dental anatomy book.

"If you're going to be a dentist, let's start learning about teeth," he said.

Just as the boy said, he grew up to be a dentist – Dr. Brian Haeussner – and is currently enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. His older brother also became a dentist – Dr. Dan Haeussner – and is located in St. Augustine where his wife, Kara, works with him as the office manager.

Dr. Ted Haeussner and his wife, Kathy, have approached life and dentistry as a team. They will be celebrating their 36th anniversary in August. In the early years, she worked in the office as a hygienist and did the accounting.

"I continue to take care of the business aspect of the practice so that Ted can do what he loves best – dentistry," Kathy said.

The Haeussners add new meaning to the phrase "family dentistry."

Family Time

So, is there a secret to building a dental dynasty? Subliminal messaging? Coercion?

"I think dentistry might actually be encoded in my father's DNA, but I became interested in dentistry early on," Dr. Brian Haeussner said. "I worked in our family practice for several years before college and did everything from taking out the trash to filing charts to doing lab work. I got to see different aspects of dentistry and I learned a lot watching my father work."

"My parents never put any kind of pressure on me to be a dentist," Dr. Dan Haeussner said. "I used to work in my father's dental office lab and saw what a great dentist he is – people respect and appreciate his work. Seeing his positive influence on so many people had an affect on me, but I have always enjoyed science and medicine. I think of dentistry as my art form."

While Dr. Ted Haeussner did not intentionally lead his children to dentistry, he did intentionally get into dentistry

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Presidential Favorites

- Newspaper comics: Calvin and Hobbs, ZITS
- Movie: "Grosse Pointe Blank"
- Book: "The Hobbit" and "Lord of the Rings," J.R.R. Tolkien
- Musical artist: Fleetwood Mac
- Sports to participate in: kayaking and fishing
- Kayak Location: Doctor's Inlet, a subsidiary of the St. Johns River
- Sport to coach: basketball
- Professional athlete: Charles Barkley
- Professional sports team: Jacksonville Jaguars
- Sport to watch: college basketball
- College sports team: University of Florida and University of Louisville basketball teams
- Meal: steak with mushrooms and a baked potato, seafood gumbo
- Dessert: carrot cake
- Leisure activities: reading, cooking and listening to music
- Places: St. Augustine Beach and home
- Family vacations: Washington, D.C. and New York City
- Grandchildren: Riley and Brody



Dr. Ted Haeussner with son Dan.

Haeussner-isms

If you spend a day with Dr. Ted Haeussner, you are sure to hear the following “Haeussner-isms” on more than one occasion:

- The good news is – is ...
- Nobody told me I had to be a structural engineer to be a dentist.
- You take care and enjoy!
- Be good.
- Well, let’s put it this way ...
- First of all ...
- Time out.
- Okay, sports fans ...
- You all do a great job, but do you think ...
- I’m going to sit down and tell you ...
- Easily done.
- Let’s go enjoy the day.
- The bottom line is ...
- The end result is ...
- Let’s go guys!
- Let’s take a peek.
- For every action, there is an opposite and equal reaction.



Dr. Ted Haeussner and his staff.

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to lead them.

In high school, he observed friends’ parents who were medical doctors and noticed they were scarcely at family gatherings. However, friends raised by dentists were often able to spend time together. Being able to prioritize family involvement appealed to him, so he tested out the waters by following his family dentist around for a day or so and came to love the profession.

“I enjoyed being able to coach my sons in baseball, soccer and basketball. I loved being active in their lives. I was able to be involved with my church – my wife and I even set up a pre-cana program for the diocese. I was also able to give back to the community. All of these things are very important to me,” Dr. Ted Haeussner said.

“Although my father is very passionate about dentistry, he never let it consume his life to the point where we did not get the attention we needed as a family,” Dr. Dan Haeussner said.

Giving Back

However, as his family grew older he became more active in giving back to the profession though involvement with the FDA.

“I got involved in organized dentistry because I wanted to be the best dentist I could be and give back to my profession,” Dr. Ted Haeussner said. “I appreciate how local dental societies are helped by parent associations. After I volunteered at the local level I was encouraged to get involved with the FDA’s political action committees – it was all down hill from there!”

With his dental involvement growing over the years, Dr. Ted Haeussner understands the demands of the FDA president and is more than ready to take on the responsibility.

“If we aren’t continually evolving and growing, then we stagnate and wither on the vine,” Dr. Ted Haeussner said. “To stimulate life you must be willing to change and the FDA has given me the opportunity to significantly contribute to a profession that has given me so much.”

Focusing on the FDA

Dr. Ted Haeussner’s highest priority as the FDA’s president is to get the association focused.

“Every year the FDA changes leadership and every year new initiatives are prioritized while old ones are



A patient listens to Dr. Ted Haeussner as he explains a dental procedure.

put on the back burner," he said. "In order to ensure projects are completed, we have already started to prioritize the FDA's strategic plan to establish a definite path for the FDA's involvement in dental advocacy and patient care."

Projects that top his priority list include the FDA's upcoming public outreach campaign, streamlining dentist-to-dentist communications through technological advances and continuing to address access to dental care.

"The only constant in life is change, but being able to focus and prioritize these transformations increases results," he said. "We owe our patients our best, and the only way that can happen is if we come together as a profession in an organized, systematic way."

Patient Priority

Dr. Ted Haeussner's patients have always been his professional priority. His office's slogan is *Changing Lives with a Smile*, a creed that he and his staff follow daily.

"It is amazing how much changing a smile affects lives and personalities," he said.

Dr. Ted Haeussner's patient philosophy was developed early in his career during a visit from a patient with an

unattractive maxillary partial denture involving the front teeth. The dental piece was made by another dentist and at first he did not suggest an alternative treatment because the patient never expressed concern. However, one day he casually asked the patient if she was satisfied with the partial.

"She started crying. She had become so self-conscious of the partial denture that she never smiled and was not enjoying her life," he said.

After discussing options with the patient, Dr. Ted Haeussner completed a bridge for her. The patient ended up calling him everyday for a week – literally – to thank him. Her husband even called to comment on how out-going she had become.

"It taught me to ask patients how I can help them, not just assume," he said.

The FDA Dental Family

Just as with his patients, Dr. Ted Haeussner does not assume he knows the needs of FDA members and is prepared to do everything possible to bridge the link between membership assumptions and reality.

"I don't know if you will find a dentist who is more devoted to the profession than my father," Dr. Dan Haeussner said. "He truly loves dentistry and his dedication to furthering the profession will allow him to be a fantastic FDA president."

Surrounded by supportive colleagues both at work and home, Dr. Ted Haeussner has what it takes to bring the FDA into focus ... and become a true dental family.

Page 28 -29 photo cutlines:

1. Dr. Ted Haeussner and wife, Kathy, at their graduation from the University of Louisville.
2. Dr. Ted Haeussner, third row on left, coaches son Dan's baseball team.
3. Dr. Ted Haeussner, third row on left, coaches son Brian's soccer team.
4. Dr. Ted Haeussner, back row, second from left, with _____.

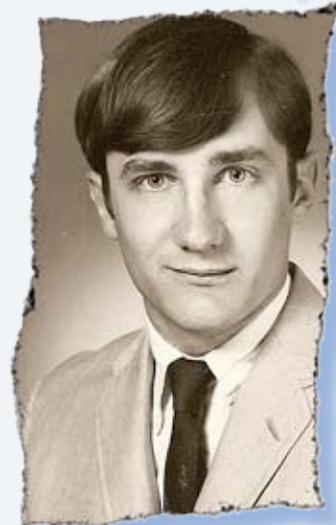
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Family, especially grandchildren, are a big part of Dr. Ted Haeussner's life.



Path to the Presidency

- 1973
 - Graduated from University of Louisville School of Dentistry
- 1991
 - President of the Clay County Dental Society
- 1997
 - Council on Governmental Affairs
- 1998
 - Chairperson of Council on Governmental Affairs
- 1999
 - Chairperson of Council on Governmental Affairs
 - Chairperson of FLADPAC
- 2001
 - Chairperson of Council of Governmental Affairs
 - Committee of Integration of Affiliates
 - Chairperson of FLADPAC
 - President of Northeast District Dental Association
- 2002
 - Chairperson of the Council on Governmental Affairs
 - Board of Dentistry Action Committee
 - House of Delegates for the Northeast District
 - Committee on Governance
 - Alternate Trustee on Board of Trustees for the Northeast District
- 2003
 - Public Protection Committee
 - FLADPAC Board of Directors
- 2004
 - FDA secretary
 - Governmental Action Committee
 - FLADPAC Board of Directors
- 2005 FDA second vice president
 - FLADPAC Board of Directors
 - Governmental Action Committee
 - State Oral Health Improvement Plan for Disadvantaged Persons
 - Division of Medical Quality Assurance Relations
- 2006
 - FDA first vice president
 - Options to Access to Care Committee
 - Children's Oral Health Initiative
 - State Oral Health Improvement Plan for Disadvantaged Persons
 - FLADPAC Board of Directors
 - Governmental Action Committee
- 2007
 - FDA president-elect
 - State Oral Health Improvement Plan for Disadvantaged Persons
 - FLADPAC Board of Directors
 - Governmental Action Committee
 - Council on Financial Affairs
- 2008
 - FDA president



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