

Legacy: BONDS & BRIDGES

a newsletter from UTSD Alumni Association, Winter 2025

UTSD Alumni Association Honors its Best



Lifelong Friends Honored Together



The year was 1968. Two young college graduates moved into the dormitory at the University of Texas Dental Branch in Houston. Together they moved on to live in old barracks at the VA Hospital in the Texas Medical Center where they worked their way through dental school working for the VA. Thus began decades of friendship, dentistry, and service that led to their joint honor as this year's UTSD Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus.

David Woodburn and Ken Crossland both earned their DDS degrees in 1972 and after short detours, embarked on distinguished careers in the Texas Panhandle. Dr. Woodburn recently retired from his practice in Amarillo. Dr. Crossland still sees patients four days a week in nearby Canyon, including his grandson Declan (*pictured on the left.*)

Those early short detours away from their beloved Panhandle were important in showing the newly-minted dentists the value of service to others.

There was a war going on and as he graduated dental school, David found himself with no more student deferment and a low draft number. He enlisted in the US Public Health Service as part of the National Health Service Corps in Rio Grande City, Texas. He set up a dental office from ground up, including installing the plumbing himself, to serve low-income residents of the Rio Grande Valley. It was the first operational NHSC site in the country. During his three years there, Dr. Woodburn met the love of his life, Alicia Peña. They have been married 50 years.

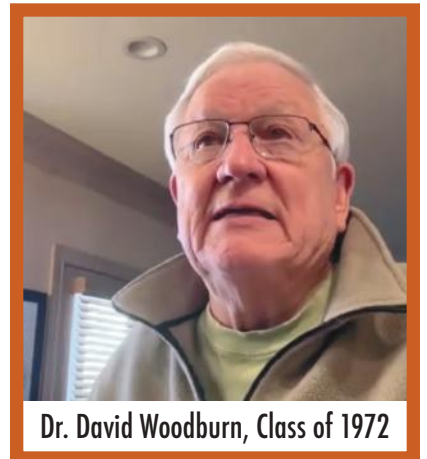
Ken took a different path but one that also prepared him for a life of service to others. A short rotation during dental school introduced him to the need for

dentists to treat inmates in the Texas prison system. He moved to Huntsville to provide dental care at five prison farms. He lived with and was paid the same as the prison guards. After nine months, Dr. Crossland knew he had the experience to open his own practice back in his hometown of Canyon. His Dad helped him build the whole dental office from the ground up. Dr. Crossland is still practicing in the same now somewhat cramped office 52 years later.

Though they always practiced separately, Dr. Woodburn and Dr. Crossland have maintained a lifelong friendship sharing a love of their patients and a passion for the technology of dentistry.

In 1999, Dr. Woodburn became one of the first dentists in the country to use digital X-rays. Dr. Crossland says a fascination with technology is "just a part of a dentist's nature." Over the years, both men made the necessary investments to be sure their patients in rural and small-town Texas had the same access to the most up-to-date equipment and instrumentation as any patient anywhere in the country.

The desire to guarantee the finest dental (and other medical) care for those who live in small communities is a driving force for Dr. Crossland. He says young practitioners often don't want to live in areas like the Panhandle. Dr. Crossland is currently mentoring his former assistant who



Dr. David Woodburn, Class of 1972



Dr. Ken Crossland, Class of 1972, volunteers to help students learn more about their dental health.

is now in dental school. He hopes to pass his Canyon practice to her when she's ready.

Dr. Woodburn worries that the amount of debt many dental students incur will keep young people from building the kinds of practices he and Dr. Crossland did. Dr. Crossland is quite blunt about why he chose UT back in 1968. It had the lowest tuition of the four schools where he was accepted. They both speak of the importance of the personal relationships an independent practice provides, relationships often missing from corporate practices where young dentists, burdened by debt, can find employment without investing money they don't have.



Distinguished Alumni Dr. Ken Crossland and Dr. David Woodburn share a lifelong friendship and lifelong support of the UTSD Alumni Association.

Both men see service as an important aspect of their lives and careers. Both have been active in Texas Mission of Mercy that provides dental services for Texans without access or means. Dr. Woodburn even devised a system that provides high volume suction comparable to what one would find in a dental office for their temporary Mission of Mercy venues. He has also done mission dentistry with his church for many years, including missions to Guatemala and Mexico. Dr. Crossland, who also has been on dental mission trips to Mexico with his church, regularly provides dental care for Life Challenge rehab patients and works with local schools to provide dental

care for students who may not even own a toothbrush.

As leaders in their communities, Dr. Woodburn and Dr. Crossland volunteer more than their dental skills. Dr. Woodburn is an active third-generation Rotarian and has been a member of the Board of Regents of Amarillo College for 25 years. Dr. Crossland ran for Mayor of Canyon. He lost by just 128 votes. He's been president of the local Health Department. Both men have served terms as members of the board of the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum.

Their dedication to their patients as well as their service to the community and the world does not preclude time to spend with family being productive or just having fun.

Dr. Woodburn has put his tinkering skills to work remodeling his late brother's house before putting it up for sale. That's a big job but he still finds time to enjoy his family, including wife Alicia and their three grown children, and his vacation home in New Mexico. His daughter is a chef and restaurant



Ken and Woody have often traveled together with their wives Janet and Alicia, sometimes for dental events and sometimes just for pleasure.



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2025 Events

March 8
Battleship Texas Restoration Tour
Galveston, Texas
Lunch TBD

March 28-29
Star of the South Meeting

May 8-10
Texas Dental Meeting
May 9
UTSD Alumni Association Reception

May 14
UTSD Graduation
NRG Stadium
9:00 a.m.

June TBD
CE Course

September 12-13
AGD
Texas Dentist of the Year and
Texas New Dentist of the Year

October 23-25
SmileCon
Washington, D.C.
October 24
UTSD Alumni Reception & Friends

November
"Dinner with Friends"
Houston, Texas

In Memoriam

Class of 1953
David C. Boyles

Class of 1955
George H. Jurek

Class of 1959
William J. Lawhorn

Class of 1960
Harry W. Schmuck

Class of 1961
Clarence J. Shumbera

Class of 1962
Bob P. Foster

Class of 1963
Burt J. Kunik
Carlos Portales

Class of 1964
James H. Carr
E. Penn Jackson

Class of 1965
Tom Pearson

Class of 1967
Thomas M. Smith

Class of 1972/77
Harry Vance Whitehill, III

Class of 1976
Charles E. "Chuck" Campbell

Class of 1977
Dan P. McCauley

Class of 1978
Lynn K. Hammond

Class of 1985
Charles B. Thomas

Class of 1992
Ayeez A. Laiji

Class of 1996
Curtis Lee Kaiser

Class of 1998
Chris Kim Hoang To

Lifelong Friends,

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owner in Amarillo. The two boys have left the Panhandle. One works for a large medical equipment company in Denver and the other works for an environmental firm in Austin. The Woodburns have four grandchildren.

Dr. Crossland has a home workshop where he does some carpentry, some metal working and whatever creative endeavor strikes his fancy at the moment. He and his wife Janet, who were both widowed, married in 2011 after dating for ten years until, as he says, "all their children were grown." They have four children between them, all of whom were adopted, and 14 grandchildren.

One might think the Distinguished Alumni Awards bestowed on them mark the pinnacle of their careers, but neither shows many signs of slowing down, though both say they are trying. But as Dr. Woodburn says, surely speaking for both, "I like to be busy."

Contact your Alumni Association for Class Reunions in 2025.

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association

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