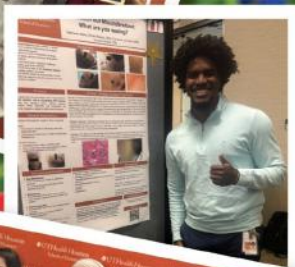


Legacy: BONDS & BRIDGES

a newsletter from UTSD Alumni Association, Summer 2026

Welcoming A New Generation to the Dental Profession



utsdalumni.com



Drive Has Many Meanings for Dr. Gustav Gates

Dr. Gustav "Gus" Gates, DDS, MAGD, has drive, whether as a toddler playing in his toy fire truck, as a motivated medical professional, or as a community connector. He appreciates and recognizes the important role friends and family play in making life successful. "It's because of many special people that I got this far," he shares. "Support systems correlate to achievement."

Born and raised in Seguin, Texas, the son of a government employee and a homemaker, young Gates was all about automobiles, "I had photos of cars everywhere, magazines, and models." He chuckles about a memorable vehicle, one he got to

know as a teenager. "I dreamed of becoming a pharmacist and worked as a janitor and delivery boy for the local pharmacy. I drove a rickety truck to deliver prescriptions. That old, three-gear truck was so problematic. Let's just say it steered me into considering another profession."

Gates graduated high school and entered the pre-med program at the University of Texas-Austin. He made friends with several pre-dental students working in the chemistry department supplies area. Tom Wright, an upperclassman who entered the UT Dental Branch in Houston before Gates, was one such pal. He encouraged Gates to pursue dentistry and to routinely carve the hot dog-sized pieces of chalk to improve manual dexterity. Upon graduation from UT-Austin, Gates met Richard Finlayson and other former UT classmates. He credits Finlayson and fellow Classmates of '75 with sharing their insights and experiences to help others succeed. This camaraderie has lasted for decades, and Gates treasures the many reunions and memories he shares with his buddies.

Gates left for Temple, Texas, after graduating dental school in 1975, to work as a general dentistry resident in the Olin E. Teague Veterans Center. "I had visions of making dentures in Houston, but I knew I could never live in a big city," he states. He served in Temple for one year before renting half of a building (he would eventually own the entire structure). He opened a solo practice, his parents contributing to the purchase of furnishings and equipment. He hired one assistant and together they ran the entire business. "I did everything when I started that office," he notes. "I worked long hours. I cleaned the office. I cut the grass. I gave it my all."

Gates befriended other local dentists, observing and implementing proven techniques. The late Dr. David Tullis and Dr. Bill Frick greatly influenced him. He credits Dr. Tullis with providing valuable guidance and advice on starting a dental practice. Dr. Frick introduced him to organized dentistry. He would later nominate him for membership in the International College of Dentists and the American College of Dentists.

As Gates' business flourished, he grew into a notable community leader. He organized the dental programs in Temple's and Belton's free clinics. He served on the Covenant Lutheran Church council, became the American Heart Association president and an honored volunteer as well as held the fellowship chair and charter member position for the Temple South and Temple Sunrise Rotary Clubs.

In 1986, Gates married Cathy Cummings, the love of his life, whom he met in a Dale Carnegie class. Together they traveled around the world and frequently with their dental office employees to professional



Dr. Gustav "Gus" Gates (l) with his mentors, Dr. Bill Frick (c) and the late Dr. David Tullis (r).

development conferences and trainings. Gates raves about his team, adding that many worked with him for decades. "That's my family," he exclaims. "Building personal connections, that's what it's all about."



Dr. Gates and his wife Cathy have had travel adventures around the world including a visit to London's iconic phone booths.

"For a minimal amount, we became supporters of a Public Radio station. Daily they would announce the sponsors. My dental friends in nearby towns laughed that it was our announcements, not theirs, airing in their offices while they were working on patients."

Throughout the years, Gates has racked up an impressive list of professional honors and awards, including the 1992 Academy of General Dentistry Public Information Award of Excellence and acting as an International College of Dentists Deputy Regent from 2018-2023. He served as Texas Academy of General Dentistry President (1995-1996) and sat on its legislative committee (1998-2001). He has written several Texas GP articles, lectured as the dental consultant for the Olin E.



Dr. Gates often took his staff with him to dental conferences around the country. He assures everyone their "arrest" in the Windy City was all in good fun for the sake of a memorable photo op.



Dr. Gates has been honored many times, including for his service to the International College of Dentistry as Deputy Regent of Texas.

and gratitude for those he's met along the way. Occasionally, he peers in the rearview mirror, yet he thrives on the next new adventures awaiting in life's open road.

Teague Veterans Center, taught esthetics courses to Temple College hygiene students, and presented for the Heart of Texas AGD chapter.

He was nominated to TAGD Dentist of the year three times.

In May 2016, Gates sold his practice. He worked there for a year and assisted other area dentists, including Dr. Tullis, for a couple of years. Nowadays, he daily finds time to enjoy his passions—cars and travel. He can often be spotted tooling around Temple in one of his collector cars, perhaps his prized '66 Mustang, '56 Chevy, or '57 Thunderbird. He cruises through life with a smile



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Upcoming Events

July 2026
Continuing Education Course
Date TBD
(More details to follow)

August 2026
Continuing Education Course
Date TBD
(More details to follow)

September 18-19
TAGD Lone Star Conference
Texas Dentist of the Year
Texas Young Dentist of the Year

September 25-26
UTSD Alumni Reception
Seasons 52
(across from the Norris Conference Center)
5:00-7:00 pm

November
"Dinner with Friends"
Distinguished Alumnus Award
Houston, Texas
(Details to follow)

January 9, 2027
White Coat Ceremony

May 13-15, 2027
Texas Dental Meeting
San Antonio, Texas

More events are being planned.
Check out our website: utsdalumni.com

See Page 4 for photographs of Dr. Gates' car collection.

Dr. Gus Gates, award-winning dentist and vintage car connoisseur, shows off his collection.



Chew on This Fun Fact!



Dolphins Rarely Chew

Oceanic dolphins often have approximately 260 cone-shaped teeth. They are evenly spaced and designed to interlock. That makes it easy for them to catch prey. Often they don't chew their meals but swallow the prey whole. Like humans, if a dolphin loses a tooth, it will be gone forever with no regrowth.



In Memoriam

Class of 1954

David L. Hayes

Class of 1958

Donald B. Bedford, Sr.

Class of 1960

J. Waite Higgins

J.D. McBea

Class of 1961 & 1963

Donald (Don) Morgan

Class of 1962

Thomas (Tommy) F. Holmes

Ellis G. Marshall

Class of 1963

Bill G. Edwards

Class of 1967

John P. Cassidy

James C. Jeffries

Class of 1972

Thomas W. Daniels

Class of 1974

Ronald (Ron) Groba

Class of 1985

David W. Ashmore

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Conroe, TX 77301-1033

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