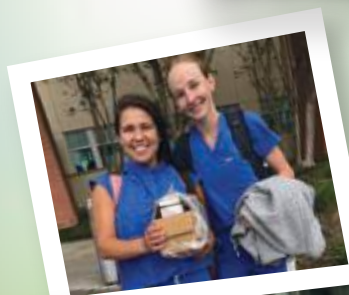


Legacy: BONDS & BRIDGES

a newsletter from UTSD Alumni Association, Spring 2025

Friends Made in Dental School Stay Friends For Life



Giesler Family Dentists: Committed to Community Care

Practicing dentistry and serving residents of Caddo Lake communities for more than four decades has been fulfilling for Michael “Mike” Giesler, DDS. Starting as an associate in an Atlanta, TX, Dr. Mike now owns and operates a “Giesler Family Dentistry” office there as well as in Linden (childhood home of the Eagles’ Don Henley) and Jefferson. Joining him are his two sons, Lanny Giesler, DDS, and Cody Giesler, DDS.

As a youth in west Texas, Dr. Mike set his sights on the oil and gas industry. He studied chemistry at Texas State University in San Marcos and then found employment with Texaco in Port Arthur. Only three months later, Dr. Mike felt uninspired working in a windowless building with countless others. He applied to one dental school, UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry, and started a new life trajectory. Engaged at the time to his now wife, Diane, he juggled weekend and evening jobs at Texas Children’s Hospital to cover expenses.

After graduation in 1976 and a brief time in Athens, TX, Dr. Mike accepted an associate’s position with Michael Thurman, DDS, in Atlanta. The town’s proximity to the Piney Woods appealed to nature lovers Dr. Mike and Diane.

They were excited to build their future there. “Diane is a native of Oregon, and she loves all of the trees,” said Dr. Mike. “She would never have enjoyed living out west.”

Dr. Mike observed Dr. Thurman. The young protégé strengthened his skills, mastering day-to-day requirements of a rural business. “It’s so important to learn from senior dentists,” Dr. Mike acknowledged. “You see how to do payroll and hire people. Banks would loan money years ago to young dentists to start practices. Today it’s more difficult. Along with government oversight, there are many more rules and regulations.”

Upon Dr. Thurman’s death from lymphoma at age 44, Dr. Mike assumed the practice. He found tremendous benefit in the small-town lifestyle and establishing clientele who would routinely visit him for care. “I’ve loved treating patients for over forty years,” commented Dr. Mike. “It’s so rewarding to educate them and provide them with the latest developments in dentistry. I have people now in their nineties with their natural teeth! When I arrived in Atlanta, there was a different culture. When folks had toothaches, they were resigned to having teeth pulled and getting dentures before turning sixty. They never heard about root canals. And now we have implants!”

Dr. Mike became the “go-to man” for family dentistry as well as an active member of First United Methodist of Atlanta, and a volunteer with Texas Missions of Mercy and Tejas Mission efforts. Since 1987, he traveled at least 35 times to serve residents in the jungles of Punta Gorda, Belize. Throughout the years, he included Diane, his sons, and now also their wives and children. A devout Christian, he stayed closely tied to his faith and heeded the call to assist those less fortunate.

Sons, Dr. Lanny and Dr. Cody, watched their father closely and appreciated their childhood experiences with him. “I remember going with my father to Walmart,” Dr. Lanny commented. “The people loved him. They’d come up to him and tell him how happy they were with the dental work he’d done. And with his flexible hours, Cody and I were happy to see him cheering us on at our ballgames.”

Both sons first studied biology at Baylor before attending UTHealth School of Dentistry in Houston. Unlike their father, the two entered the United States Air Force, obtaining advanced dental degrees and practicing dentistry in foreign lands. They credited their military backgrounds for preparing them with lessons in discipline and flexibility. These days, they relish returning to their hometown and raising their families

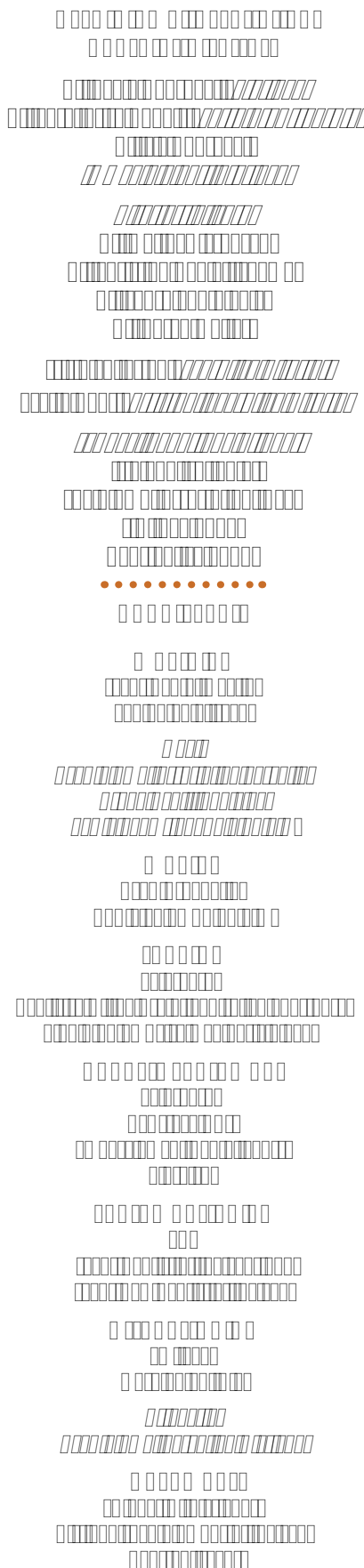


“We’ve had many rewarding opportunities,” stated Dr. Lanny. He recounted fixing the smile of a single mother who worked as a fast-food restaurant manager. “She cried happy tears after receiving implants where her rotted front teeth used to be. It was life changing for her. She felt confident and could progress in her work.”

“Approximately 90 percent of dental school graduates stay within a 50-mile radius of their campus to find employment. We’re here to say that there are many advantages that come with working in small towns.”

The Gieslers not only work hard with each other, they play hard as well. Family members share many fun times together at their lake cabin and during their traditional Thanksgiving flag football games. “And we must thank our wives,” added Dr. Mike. “They are the backbone, the nucleus, of our family. We couldn’t do it without them.”

Dr. Mike's passion for his profession bubbled. "The future of dentistry is mind-blowing," he raved. "Technology allows us to make a crown in an hour. People who would've been content being toothless in their senior years are now receiving preventive treatment and learning about dental health. Just imagine what tomorrow will bring!"



Indeed, with Drs. Mike, Lanny and Cody providing personalized care, Giesler Family Dentists patients can rely on being among the first to know.



A decorative graphic consisting of two groups of slanted rectangles. The first group on the left has four rectangles of varying heights, and the second group on the right has eight rectangles of varying heights. All rectangles are slanted to the right.

with the longest tongue." Coming in at 5.46 inches, Rocky's



In Memoriam

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