

Legacy: BONDS & BRIDGES

a newsletter from UTSD Alumni Association, Summer 2024

UTSD Alumni Find Time for Summer Work and Play



WE HAVE A NEW NAME: Your newsletter is now called *Legacy: Bonds and Bridges* to better reflect the legacy of academic tradition, professional excellence, and lifelong friendships that the University of Texas School of Dentistry Alumni Association fosters.

A Noble Profession Passed Down Through Family Dinners

Dinner-table discussions were rather atypical for the Heinrich siblings growing up in Victoria, Texas. While most children chattered about the big game, test scores, and new music groups, these three often delved into dentistry topics with their father, the late David L. Heinrich, DDS. They listened intently and questioned his accounts of new methodologies and challenging procedures. But what resonated the most for them were talks of a profession that allowed a generous life balance and rewarding family time.



Dr. David L. Heinrich (Class of '56)
and Ann Heinrich

Drs. David J. Heinrich, Lisa Heinrich-Null, and Robert Heinrich followed in their father's footsteps, finding success in dentistry while exploring their individual interests. Each accrued a long list of accolades and accomplishments, yet it was the field's humanitarian element that drove them to excellence.

David J. Heinrich, DDS (Class of '84), the eldest, was a star athlete in high school and college. While a student of microbiology at Texas A&M University, David had his dream of becoming a professional baseball player dashed by an injury. He then poured his passion into pursuing a degree at the University of Texas School of Dentistry. Upon graduation, he moved to Fredericksburg, working for the late Dr. Udo Basse and eventually taking over the business. There he discovered his college German classes helped him communicate, next to the fluent Basse, with native German-speakers residing in Texas' Hill Country. "Our patients found comfort and assurance in our skills when we spoke with them in German," he recounts.

Dr. David entrenched himself in his new town, becoming an active Lion's Club member, assisting with a camp for disabled children in nearby Kerrville, and providing volunteer dental care for the Good Samaritan Center residents. "It has been so rewarding to help at the center and to identify oral cancers and initiate treatment for those in need," he reflected.



Dr. David J. Heinrich relaxing
after a deep sea dive

A sportsman who enjoys fishing and hunting with his trained labrador retrievers, Dr. David experienced excitement as a skydiving instructor, racking up more than 4,000 jumps. He shared that his great uncle was a WWII paratrooper.

But yet again, Dr. David faced a life-changing incident. While wade fishing in the Gulf, a spider bite on his leg became infected with a flesh-eating bacteria. He soon found himself in the throes of a medical emergency and was rushed into surgery for amputation. "I was out for three months, and I was losing patients," he sighed. "But then my brother, Robert, came to my rescue. He would travel to Fredericksburg to see my patients while I healed. I would later reciprocate by seeing his New Braunfels patients when he had surgeries."

Dr. David now seeks adventure by diving not into the skies, but into the deep seas. "I have a weight I can attach to my stump that provides me better mobility in the water," he stated. "During a recent dive near Catalina, I encountered a great white! That was something I'll never forget."

Lisa Heinrich-Null, DDS (Class of '86), middle child and only daughter, excelled academically and keenly focused on polishing her leadership skills throughout her education. "My father told me that I had what it takes to be a good dentist—strong hand-eye coordination, excellent performance in science classes," she recalled. "He also said that it was a good field for women."

Dr. Lisa hesitated, interrupted by a feathered friend landing outside her window. "It's a cardinal!" she exclaimed. "It's like my father is here with us. When I see a cardinal, I think of him. He loved the redbirds." Dr. Lisa resumed her original train of thought, commenting on how both of her parents reinforced leadership and dentistry ideals. "My father told me to do my best and to take small steps to arrive at success, like obtaining a Ph.D. And my mother Ann is a real perfectionist. Even though she didn't study dentistry, she



l-r: Dr. David J Heinrich,
Dr. Robert Heinrich, and
Dr. Lisa Heinrich-Null

would assist my father and would demonstrate how to position the patient's tongue and set up mixes and tools."

Upon graduation from dental school, Dr. Lisa returned to Victoria, practicing alongside her father. She heeded her father's advice and continued to improve herself, adding to her credentials and observing the day-to-day operations of a dental business. After 13 years, she acquired the practice and cultivated communication with patients of all ages. She proudly reflected on an occurrence with a little girl. Unlike many children afraid of adults and dentists, this youngster recognized that Dr. Lisa had her best interests at heart. "She was adorable, with Shirley Temple curls," Dr. Lisa begins. "She faked a toothache to come to me. Soon she confided that she was being bullied at school. We then had a successful conversation along with her parents about how to positively resolve the issue."

"It is very important to maintain a clean and efficient business," she added. "Our elderly patients really tune into that. We establish a good relationship with them, proving our dedication to outstanding service, especially during emergencies."

Dr. Lisa represents her constituents in professional leadership roles by acquiring certification in the latest dentistry methods and constantly attending advanced courses. In her spare time, she finds joy in the kitchen, following five-star recipes and creating delicious dishes such as seafood tartlets and Gulf specialties.

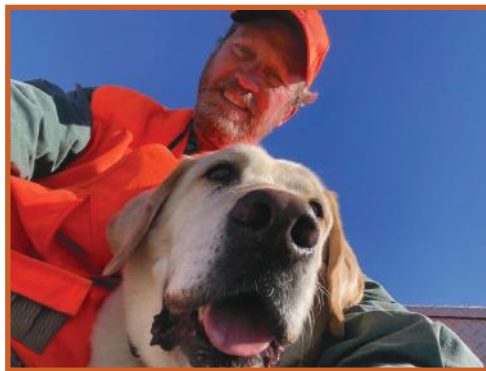
The youngest sibling, Robert Heinrich, DDS (Class of '90), considers the world his oyster. Like his older brother, he studied German in high school and college. He even participated in a summer exchange with the University of Siegen. It was at Texas A&M, while attending undergraduate courses, that he met his wife and eventual business partner, Stephanie.

After graduating from UTSD, Dr. Robert moved to New Braunfels with Stephanie. It was there that he began to practice the life balance of which his father spoke. He sought leadership roles in professional organizations and joined the local Rotary club, contributing to community service projects and fundraisers such as an annual wild game banquet. He hunted and fished in the Texas Hill Country and the Gulf of Mexico. And, while becoming a well-rounded citizen, like his brother and sister, he grounded himself in his career.

Together, Dr. Robert and Stephanie opened their own dental office in New Braunfels. As Dr. Robert tended to the health needs of residents, Stephanie focused on the finances and administrative side.



Dr. Lisa Heinrich-Null at work



Dr. Robert Heinrich and his best pal, Thor



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2024 Events

Friday, September 6
CE Course 1:00-5:00 pm
Dentistry and the Use of Controlled Substances
Dr. Jacqueline M. Clemons
Live Webinar via Zoom
utsdalumni.com

September 20-21/Texas AGD
Friday, September 20
Texas Dentist of the Year and
Texas New Dentist of the Year

Friday, October 18
UTSD Alumni Association & UTHealth School of
Dentistry Luncheon/Reception
ADA Meeting, New Orleans, LA
Venue to be announced

Saturday, October 19
1:00-2:30 pm
Tailgate Party
Dental Central

November 15, 2024
"Dinner with Friends"
UTSD Alumni Association
Distinguished Alumnus of the Year
Petroleum Club

January 11, 2025
White Coat Ceremony
University of Houston

**Contact your Alumni Association
for Class Reunions in 2024.**

“It’s been interesting to grow this project together,” said Dr. Robert. “We’ve met people from around the world who share our interests in the field.” Indeed, Dr. Robert has trained many associates, including several from Brazil who enrolled in UT San Antonio programs. “We respect each other’s strengths and have created a great business model,” chimed in Stephanie.

Dr. Robert remembered being deeply touched by a patient who broke into tears after receiving oral care. “He was a gentleman in his mid-forties who wanted to have a better smile for his daughter’s wedding,” he recalled. “He was the type of father who put his family first. This was a rare occasion for him to do something for himself.” Within a very short timeframe, Dr. Robert coordinated with the lab and completed the required cosmetic procedures so his patient could confidently smile throughout the nuptial ceremony.

Developing into outstanding professionals and community leaders while enjoying family time and personal pursuits was the message that parents Dr. David L. and Ann Heinrich reinforced in their children. Today, decades later, their words and life lessons still echo loudly for three dedicated dentists.



Dr. Robert Heinrich and his wife Stephanie in Iceland

In Memoriam

Class of 1957
Olen R. Allred

Class of 1966
Jeran Joe Hooten

Class of 1967
John Powell Cassity

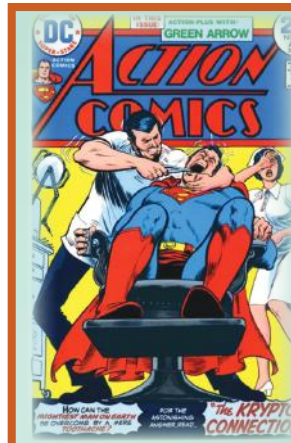
Class of 1973
Kenny M. Baird
PG Orthodontics

Class of 1975
Thomas Heap

Class of 2003
Stephen Bennett Hill

Faculty
Jeffrey Hoover

Friend of the Alumni Association
Sam Adams
Periodontist



Chew on This Fun Fact!



Super-Dentistry

Cavities and kryptonite weaken the Man of Steel into a whimpering wimp! Two comic books spotlighting dentistry, including the featured Action Comics Superman edition, are housed in Houston’s McGovern Historical Center at the Texas Medical Center Library. The other book is a Marvel comic of Dr. Strange, a character protecting Planet Earth from magical and mystical threats.

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