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PHOTOS | (THIS PAGE) Drs. STEVEN AND TONYA FUQUA OF FUQUA ADVANCED DENTAL IN SOUTHLAKE. LOCATED IN THE HEART OF SOUTHLAKE TOWN SQUARE, FUQUA ADVANCED DENTAL IS A UNIQUE DENTAL PRACTICE OFFERING BOTH ADVANCED PROSTHODONTIC TREATMENTS AND FULL-SERVICE FAMILY DENTISTRY. (OPPOSITE) ACTUAL PATIENT OF FUQUA ADVANCED DENTAL, KATELYN GILLHAM.

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Smiles: the Big Picture

Fuqua Advanced Dental

KATELYN GILLHAM hated going to the dentist. No, that's an understatement. "It freaked me out," she put more succinctly. A rush job to remove teeth did not help matters. "My previous dentist was in a hurry to go on vacation—even though she was the one who kept putting it off in the first place," recalled the 23-year-old. "I had a broken tooth and she had to dig for it. I felt the whole thing through the anesthesia."

Katelyn is the very picture of girl-next-door wholesomeness. Her budding singing career puts her in front of an audience at least once a week and puts her smile on constant display. Until she met Drs. Steven and Tonya Fuqua, she smiled with a closed mouth. Katelyn had two malformed teeth. Not back teeth, mind you, but the teeth that flank her two front teeth, called laterals. They

were too small for her mouth—"mini teeth" she called them—small and pointy like little fangs, hard to miss if she let down her guard.

Those early traumatic experiences that informed her opinion of the dental profession only fed her anxiety for what lay ahead—getting veneers to correct her smile. It turns out that Katelyn had

little to worry about. As her now nearly flawless smile can attest, the right dental team can work wonders, not just to change smiles, but also to change minds.

Her orthodontist referred her to Fuqua Advanced Dental in Southlake. Dr. Steven Fuqua is a leading prosthodontist, and a highly respected expert



THE FUQUA TEAM | (PICTURED ABOVE) THE STAFF AT FUQUA ADVANCED DENTAL—THIS WARM AND INVITING DENTAL OFFICE FEATURES STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT, A CARING AND KNOWLEDGEABLE STAFF AND A STRONG COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE CARE TAILORED TO EACH INDIVIDUAL PATIENT’S UNIQUE NEEDS.

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in the field of implant dentistry and restorative care. His wife, Dr. Tonya Fuqua, provides a full-range of general and preventive dentistry services for a broad range of patients and has become a leading provider of dental care for children with special needs. Katelyn discovered first hand why a growing number of patients trust their dental health needs to Fuqua Advanced Dental.

In a total reversal, it was Dr. Fuqua who rushed to Katelyn’s aid before she was to leave town for a show. Katelyn accidentally broke one of her veneers. “He came in on a Saturday to fix it right before I had to go out of town,” she explains. She likens the team at Fuqua Advanced Dental to an extended family. “They always ask how everything’s going. Some of them have even come to my shows. I was completely comfortable from the beginning. They were very gentle. Even the dental assistants were gentle,” said Gillham. “The Fuquas are amazing. I wouldn’t go to anyone else.”

To earn such praise, the Fuquas had to, first, successfully fix Gillham’s smile, but additionally provide a level of care she had not previously received. “Dr. Steve took a ton of pictures of my

mouth to make sure the veneers looked perfectly natural,” she said. Such painstaking attention to detail results in the kind of camera-ready smile essential for a music star in the making, but it’s not the kind of service just any dentist can provide.

When he started his Southlake practice in 1999, Dr. Fuqua was the first and only prosthodontist practicing in the area. He collaborated with several general practitioners, oral surgeons and periodontists, lending his expertise at study clubs to assist in treatment planning and steadily garnered a reputation as a world-class prosthodontist. Those who know him best say he doesn’t just do it for the pay, he does it for fun—on his time off—the way others fish or collect antiques.

“This isn’t just a job for me, it’s also a hobby. It would probably drive most wives crazy. I guess I’m lucky that my wife is a dentist, too,” mused Dr. Fuqua.

By definition and according to the American College of Prosthodontists, a prosthodontist is a dentist who:

- Specializes in the esthetic (cosmetic)

restoration and replacement of teeth.

- Receives three to four years of additional training after dental school.
- Restores optimum appearance and function to your smile, including the treatment planning and restoration of implants, temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorder and rehabilitation of occlusion with prostheses.

Essentially, Dr. Fuqua is the dental equivalent of an architect. He has achieved a level of training and expertise that only a few dentists can claim.

The American Dental Association does not recognize “Cosmetic Dentistry” as a specialty. Prosthodontics is the only recognized dental specialty for cosmetic/esthetic dentistry. The Fuquas advise all prospective patients to do their homework before choosing someone to perform their smile restoration. “Be sure they have the right credentials, the right qualifications, the extra training and the best equipment for your needs,” urged Dr. Tonya.

Before beginning any restorative or esthetic procedure, the Fuqua team makes sure they have a complete picture of your mouth. In years past, this meant traditional oral x-rays which exposed

patients to significant amounts of radiation. Like many leading-edge practices, Fuqua Advanced Dental has adopted digital radiography, which emits up to 90-percent less radiation than traditional X-rays—making them much safer for patients. They are also far more accurate and versatile. Detailed images of your internal oral structures can be viewed immediately on a chair-side monitor where they can be rotated, magnified, adjusted for contrast and even color-coded. Digital x-rays are also easier to store, duplicate and access for insurance purposes or referrals, among other advantages.

For more complex cases, Fuqua Advanced Dental has on-site access to the revolutionary ProMax 3D Cone Beam CT scanner, which produces richly detailed, distortion-free, realistic, 3D images of oral anatomical structures. With their advanced imaging capabilities, Dr. Fuqua can pinpoint a single tooth or see a panoramic image of your entire oral cavity.

“Teeth are three-dimensional. Traditional x-ray images are 2D. Everything could look normal on a 2D image,” explained Dr. Fuqua, “but, CT scans can detect hidden decay or fractures.” This advanced imaging capability, along with other

specialized tools, allows Dr. Fuqua to play quarterback for his patient’s dental needs. He guides the treatment plan for orthodontists, oral surgeons or periodontists. In fact, a large portion of his business is made up of referrals from other practitioners. “Patients are better off when their dentist knows how and when to refer. It really is a highly collaborative field,” said Dr. Fuqua.

He then employs cutting edge technology to design the most natural looking and fitting restorations or prosthetics possible. Previously, patients had to endure a tray full of putty hardening in their mouths to create an impression. Not anymore. With the iTero handheld scanner, impressions are made digitally for a newer, more comfortable and more accurate way to create impressions. “Using traditional impression methods was more cumbersome and resulted in a loss of accuracy each time,” explained Dr. Fuqua. “Now, we can eliminate a few of those distortion factors that can cause a crown to fit improperly.”

Fuqua Advanced Dental is one of only three dental offices in DFW that has the capability to create restorations in their own lab, according to Dr. Fuqua. There are times when he uses labs outside of their practice, but he often chooses to

do it himself. It’s a time consuming process, and few others would make a similar commitment. By his own admission, Dr. Fuqua admits he is a bit of a perfectionist.

“He sees things other dentists might not catch. He understands the full function of the smile he’s created, not just how it looks.” observed Dr. Tonya.

This big picture approach to dentistry extends to the rest of the practice, starting with the attitude in the office. Patients get a thorough exam and an actual conversation about their smile. “We have patients all the time telling us that they’ve never had anyone do that before, or do as thorough a cleaning, or told them how to brush or floss,” said Dr. Tonya. “This is not a huge clinic—we want to take the time to educate our patients and give them one-on-one attention.”

This holistic approach allows the Fuquas to focus on a patient’s mouth while their staff cares for the whole person. “Our staff makes the practice. It can be as simple as asking patients if they’re hot or cold, all the way up to oral cancer screenings or



PERSONALIZED DENTAL CARE | YOUR FIRST VISIT WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE DENTAL TEAM AND DEVELOP AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR YOUR ORAL HEALTH. YOU WILL RECEIVE A THOROUGH AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAM AND GET A CHANCE TO TALK TO THE DOCTORS ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL DENTAL WANTS, NEEDS AND CONCERNS.

reviewing their pictures. It's about empowering our patients about the health of their mouths," said Dr. Tonya.

Ultimately, all patients have a choice—and the Fuquas insist on bringing patients in on their decision-making. They explain every pro and con, present every option available to them and encourage them to ask the hard questions. In their years of practice, the Fuquas have seen their share of solid outside dental work, but they have also seen dentistry that has gone horribly wrong due to misinformation.

"We saw a patient who had been completely misdiagnosed by her dentist and treated with 14 mini-implants," recalled Dr. Fuqua. The mini-implants were not the appropriate treatment. This led the patient to wear dentures over the implants. Only after Dr. Fuqua's intervention was the smile corrected, but the patient could have easily been spared the misdiagnosis (and the added expense) had she been referred to an expert like Dr. Fuqua. Think of it like a mechanic working on a Honda or a Mercedes who has only been trained to fix Fords. In many cases, patients

are given only one type of treatment no matter what their condition because a dentist only knows one approach.

Dr. Fuqua's training and experience allows him to employ all different types of systems to fit a patient's needs.

Despite this level of service and expertise, patients are frequently surprised to find out that Fuqua Advanced Dental is not necessarily more expensive. "People think because we have a Southlake Town Square location that we cost more. They're shocked to find that we're no more expensive than some general practitioners, and that in some cases they even save money," said Dr. Tonya. "We're thorough. We don't take short cuts." And there's no "unbundling," as the Fuquas referred to it, in which patients are charged individually for each step of the process.

Patients also get the full benefit of both specialized prosthodontic care and full-service general dentistry. Dr. Tonya's work with children especially has changed the playing field for quality of care. She is now a recognized leader in the dental care of patients with developmental issues. Anyone touched with a condition like autism can testify to its unparalleled challenges, even on simple tasks, let alone something as potentially fraught with anxiety as a dental check-up. That's where a human touch plays the biggest role, and arguably something that can't be trained. "We strive to make it a positive experience for all patients," said Dr. Tonya. "Even parents of our special needs patients say they wished they had a dentist like me when they were growing up because I try to make it fun for their kids."

It's that "gee whiz" moment—the "that's it?" realization—that has demystified the process of advanced dental care for the Fuqua's patients. A beautiful smile is only part of the picture. Overall health, peace-of-mind and respect for the whole patient—the broader goals that cultivate in their practice—have given the patients of Fuqua Advanced Dental a reason to smile.

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Start Smiling

Dr. Tonya Fuqua brings the promise of healthier smiles to local school children

The sound of a dentist's drill can fire up primal fight-or-flight hormonal charges that bring on cold sweats. That gut-level anxiety, invariably set off in childhood, can taint a person's view of the dental health field well into adulthood. One dentist is combating that formative experience. The kids who visit Fuqua Advanced Dental aren't confronted with a drill—they are spending quality time with "Mr. Whistle." And, they aren't getting a cavity filled—they're "shaking out the sugar bugs."

Dr. Tonya Fuqua is changing the way kids see their dentist. By framing their dental experience with a few well-calibrated tweaks, she is influencing a generation for whom the sound of a drill won't be quite so white-knuckling. "Kids just want to know what is going to happen. They don't want to be lied to," she explained. Her fun, positive approach helps relieve that fear of the unknown. Early in her career, Dr. Fuqua worked with some of the most challenging patients. "I was contacted by the local dental society to help treat kids with developmental issues," she recalled. It was then that she built a special rapport with young patients and learned all the tricks of the trade. Today, Dr. Fuqua sees many special needs kids referred to her by other practitioners.

Her commitment to children expanded well beyond her Southlake practice—when Cook Children's Medical Center approached her to establish a program that provides free dental care to children from low-income families. "They were noticing too many kids suffering from dental pain and it was in their vested interest to address their dental needs," said Dr. Fuqua.

With the backing of Cook Children's and the partnership of

multiple organizations, like Communities In Schools and the Fort Worth District Dental Society, Dr. Fuqua established Save a Smile, a non-profit program that provides preventative and restorative dental care to children in targeted schools. To date, Save a Smile has screened over 36,000 children, from pre-kindergarten through third grade, providing more than \$4 million of free dental care, and enlisting the volunteer services of nearly 100 dentists and specialists throughout Tarrant County.

Save a Smile dentists do everything from routine screenings to restorative care and extractions. Case Aides provide transportation to bring students to and from school or their homes to the private practicing dentist's offices. Volunteers also provide follow up care, help parents fill out Medicaid applications, and in some circumstances, provide basic supplies like food. "Many people think it's too easy to live off the government," observed Dr. Fuqua, "but, I've discovered just how hard it is to access our own system." She finds that Save a Smile families are only too grateful for whatever assistance they can get.

The program, though an unmitigated success, is a massive managerial undertaking. Dr. Fuqua oversees everything from legal issues to the recruitment of new dentists and that is on top of her vigorous practice and family life. Yet the rewards are only too apparent. "We're helping entire communities. No pain means kids do better in school, which means they're more likely to stay in school." And, because Save a Smile maintains its presence in schools over several years, they can ensure that they are making a lasting impact on the kids that they treat. Their bright, healthy smiles say it all.