

ALL SMILES

AFTER 30 YEARS WORKING WITH PATIENTS AT LAKE FOREST SMILES, DENTIST DOUG CAMPBELL CERTAINLY KNOWS THE DRILL.

BY BILL MCLEAN
ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY BLITT

Nobody should be surprised to learn that dentist Doug Campbell has set the bar high in terms of complete dental care since returning to his hometown of Lake Forest to work on patients more than 30 years ago.

The former Michigan State University gymnast did, after all, earn a silver medal—on the high bar—at a Big Ten Championships meet and qualified for the NCAA Men's Gymnastics Championships in his senior season.

"I didn't compete in my first two years of college," says Dr. Campbell, who launched his practice, now called Lake Forest Smiles, 30 years ago with a team of four in the Sunset Corners Shopping Center. "The guys on the Spartans' gymnastics team were too good.

"And Lake Forest High School wasn't exactly a powerhouse in gymnastics when I was a student there."

Campbell, today, must rank among the top all-around dentists in Lake County, if not the state. Trained in cosmetic and restorative dentistry and blessed with artistic and technical skills, Campbell is as committed to top-notch dental care as he is to outfitting his practice with the latest in high-tech tools, technology, and materials. But, to Campbell, any discussion about Lake Forest Smiles without mention of his partners, Drs. David E. Schmidt (with Campbell since 1999) and Kate Steingreaber (a recent addition), is an incomplete one.

Campbell has been a team-first dentist since the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry graduate displayed his friendly, relaxed approach to his first patient.

The roster of his entire Lake Forest Smiles team is up to 18 beaming professionals. Lake Forest Smiles' cheery tag line: *Achieve Your Happiest & Healthiest Smile.*

The team celebrated Lake Forest Smiles' 30th anniversary in July.

"I still love going to work, after all these years," Campbell says. "And I attribute that mostly to my team. It's the best. As soon as you walk in, you see and feel a positive, happy atmosphere. The way everybody welcomes you couldn't get any friendlier. I'll never stop feeling fortunate, because they're 'family' to me and to our patients."

Two of Campbell's patients this year were supposed to get a routine checkup and a cleaning. But neither stayed in the chair very long. One was told to make an appointment with their doctor, fast, because of a high blood pressure reading. Lake Forest Smiles team members, in addition to conducting oral cancer checks, take patients' blood pressure before the patients open wide.

The other recent patient's medical condition was more dire. He ended up undergoing heart surgery two weeks later, survived, returned to Lake Forest Smiles for a checkup and a cleaning, and—with a smile wider than a tennis net—thanked Campbell and his team for saving his life.

"We don't just go to great lengths to provide the best dental care," Campbell says. "We're also concerned about a patient's overall health. As for addressing dental matters with my patients, there has to be honesty and integrity. I care. I listen. It's more about what's right for the patient, not about what's right for me."

Campbell's family moved to Lake Forest when Doug was in the first grade. He won a Daughters of the American Revolution award and served as class president as an eighth-grader. Campbell played football in the fall, basketball in the winter, and competed in gymnastics in the spring at Lake Forest High School. Gymnastics was his main sport, by a mile—or by at least the length of a vault runway.

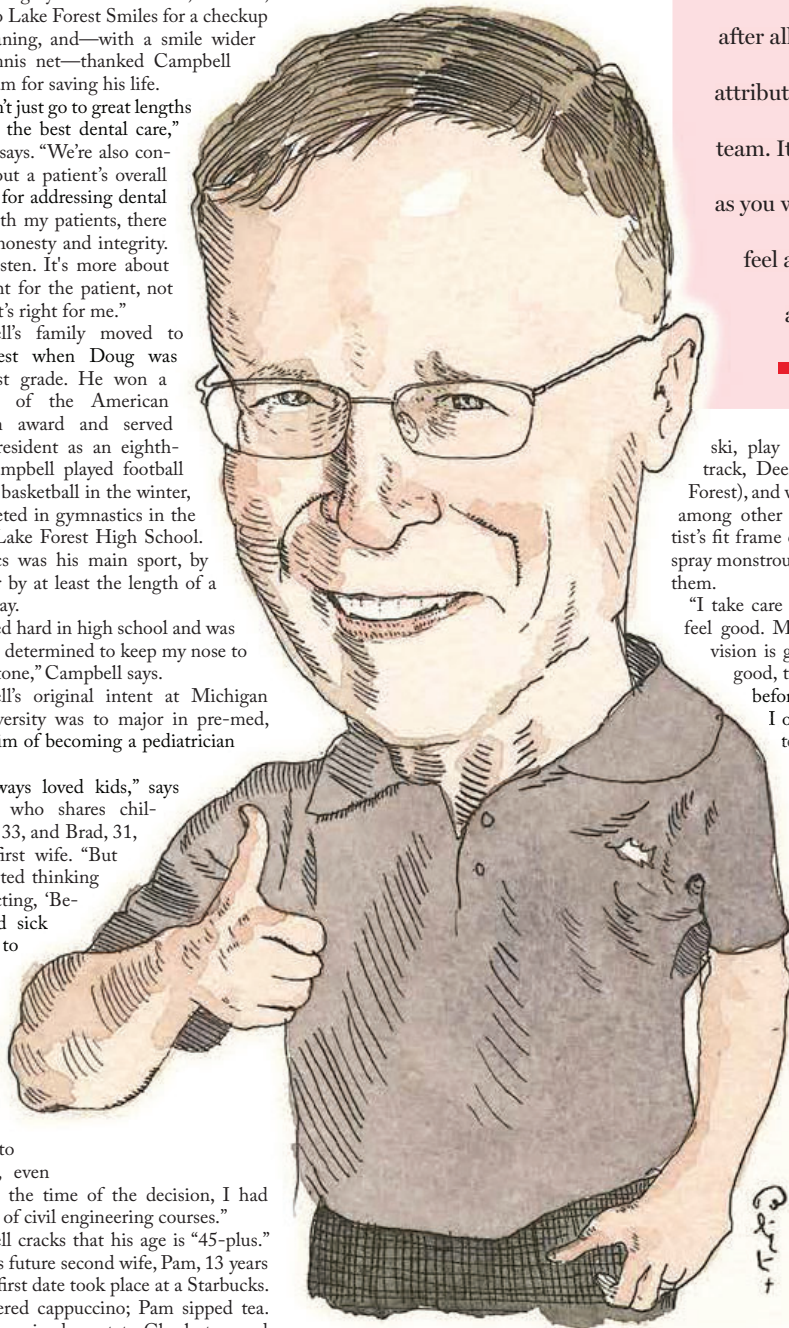
"I worked hard in high school and was bound and determined to keep my nose to the grindstone," Campbell says.

Campbell's original intent at Michigan State University was to major in pre-med, with the aim of becoming a pediatrician one day.

"I've always loved kids," says Campbell, who shares children Cari, 33, and Brad, 31, with his first wife. "But then I started thinking and projecting, 'Being around sick kids, six to seven days a week ... that doesn't sound so appealing.' I then switched to pre-dental, even though, at the time of the decision, I had taken a lot of civil engineering courses."

Campbell cracks that his age is "45-plus." He met his future second wife, Pam, 13 years ago. Their first date took place at a Starbucks. Doug ordered cappuccino; Pam sipped tea. Pam grew up in downstate Charleston and ran track (200- and 400-meter runs, mostly) in her high school and college years.

They got married 10 years ago and love to spend time outdoors together. They run, water ski, snow



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ski, play golf (mostly at their home track, Deerpath Golf Course in Lake Forest), and vacation in Lupton, Michigan, among other destinations. The good dentist's fit frame can slalom behind a boat and spray monstrous rooster tails with the best of them.

"I take care of myself," Campbell says. "I feel good. My hands are still steady. My vision is good. My back and neck—all good, too. I love what I do. I said it before, but I have to say it again: I owe so much of my happiness to my team at the office. And I'm grateful for the support I've received from the community. What a wonderful community, Lake Forest."

"You get to build relationships in dentistry," he adds. "That's something else I've enjoyed in this field. And many of those relationships turn into friendships."

It's obvious by now, isn't it?

If the former gymnast had to judge the field of dentistry, he wouldn't hesitate for a second.

He'd give it a perfect 10.

Lake Forest Smiles is located at 825 South Waukegan Road in Lake Forest (in the Sunset Corners Shopping Center). For more information, call 847-234-4800 or visit lakeforestsmiles.com.