

Story by Bob-Ale-Ebrahim
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Sam & Emily Hayes, DDS Brookside Dental Center

As soon as you walk in the door, you feel right at home. The father-daughter dentist team of Drs. Sam & Emily Hayes is located in the charming Brookside neighborhood of Kansas City. Knowing there can be some trepidation and anxiety about going to the dentist, the patient care team will put you at ease right away. Finding a good dentist isn't simply a matter of finding a convenient location, but rather finding the right one who believes in old-fashioned customer service and patient care.

The commitment to patient care is evident as you are greeted by their receptionist, Virginia Jensen. She sets the tone of the visit, is friendly, and has worked for Dr. Sam for over 50 years. Dr. Sam graduated from UMKC and started his dental practice over 50 years ago, opening his doors in 1966. Their assistant Elaine has been with Dr. Sam for 41 years and Sherri, the other assistant, has been part of the practice for 31 years. Dr. Sam expressed his philosophy as treating his patients how he'd like to be treated. He has been an officer for the Greater Kansas City Dental Society for 40 years and currently serves as the secretary/treasurer and continues to teach Advanced Education in the General Dentistry department at UMKC's Dental School.

"When I was, young I went to the family dentist and he asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up," said Dr. Sam. "I want to be a lawyer. We have a lawyer in the family and he seems to be doing better than the rest



of the family. My dentist said, no, you don't want to be a lawyer. I'm a lawyer AND a dentist. As a lawyer, you chase ambulances to get business, but I just sit here, and the pain runs the patients right up the steps to me."

Dr. Sam has had multiple members of families coming to him as patients. In fact, one family, had four generations coming to him at the same time. "I don't have to advertise, they just walk in the door," smiled Dr. Sam. As if on cue, a patient walked right up to us during this interview and asked for an appointment.

Emily Hayes also decided she wanted to become a dentist and graduated from UMKC 15 years ago. Brookside Dental Center's services include: Digital X-rays, Teeth Cleaning, Oral Cancer Screening, Periodontal Treatment, Pediatric Dentistry, Fillings, Crowns, Bridges, Dentures, Partials, Tooth Extractions, Implant Restorations, Veneers, Root Canals and Teeth Whitening. "When I was young I worked at the office during the summers" said Dr. Emily. "I was about six when I assisted with my first emergency," she laughed. "One thing that stands out from my childhood was when my dad would come home from work singing 'there's no business like the dental business, like no business I know' doing his best Ethel Merman impersonation."

As everyone asks what she is going to do when her Dad retires, Emily shared that she plans to continue in her Dad's footsteps. "I'll wait till my sons graduate to join the practice," Emily responded with a laugh. "I am very hopeful that one of my two sons, David or Sam, will continue the tradition and become a dentist. My youngest son Sam is named after his grandfather and I always tell him it will be so convenient because we would only have to change the last name on the sign in front of the office."

"The practice has been a good training ground for future dentists too," said Emily. "We've had former employees who were students who used to be my assistants. It's up to seven now that are now practicing dentists. Dad has also had employees who went on to become dentists."



it changed his life. He went into the business world and was not afraid to talk and it increased his confidence immensely," said Dr. Sam proudly.

"We do oral cancer screenings, we check the tongue, the floor and roof of the mouth, the gums. The mouth can be the first sign of disease. If we find something we send them to the pathologist, do a biopsy and if we catch it early, we can save a life," said Dr. Emily.

"I collect vintage dental equipment and books. I have a French book dating back to the 1630's, I also have books from the 1700's," Dr. Sam reflected. "They did not make wooden teeth, that's folklore, false teeth were carved out of ivory. I have a set of teeth from the Battle of Waterloo. They shipped barrels full of teeth back to England. They would make false teeth and hold them in with gold pins. They could not eat with the teeth, but they could smile. This shows you how much the profession has changed from hundreds of years ago. I have extraction instruments, dental keys, dental cabinets and containers. I even have a collection of containers with fancy tops that held dental powders and pastes." •



"The dental profession has changed over the years. There is better insurance, preventative care and the materials are more reliable and last longer," stated Dr. Sam. "With digital x-rays, you get a fraction of the radiation. The quality and clarity of x-rays are better, more accessible and you can easily zoom in and out," shared Dr. Emily. "With the old x-rays, you had to use a magnifying glass," added Dr. Sam.

"What's exciting about what is on the horizon is the new dental implants. We're involved with the Donated Dental Service and we're able to make huge transformations which have made a big difference in people's lives," Dr. Emily added.

"One of the most inspirational cases we had was with a man who never smiled. We helped replace his teeth and corrected what was going on and



Dr. Sam Hayes



Dr. Emily Hayes



Virginia Jensen

**BROOKSIDE
DENTAL CENTER**

101 East 63rd Street, Kansas City, MO 64113

816.333.1393

brooksidedentalcenter.com