

Homewood dentist David Mayer retires after 3 decades of service

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After three decades, Dr. David D. Mayer sold his dental practice in Homewood to a 29-year-old dentist named Dr. Alex Shore. For a few months, Shore has been slowly taking over, seeing Mayer's patients while Mayer assists him.

Under Shore's ownership, the practice has been named Signature Smile Arts.

"We worked with a guy that's kind of a matchmaker for dentists that are looking for a practice and dentists that are looking to sell the practice," Mayer said.

Shore said he'd been practicing dentistry for about four years. He graduated from the University of Michigan School of Dentistry, one of the highest ranking dental schools in the country. Shore said before buying Mayer's practice, he worked underneath other dentists, learning the ropes and acquiring skills.

"When you're fresh out of school in today's world, you come out with just enough knowledge to do dentistry but not enough knowledge to be fast, efficient and good. A lot of things need work," Shore said. "So, the right opportunity is usually working underneath another dentist with experience."

Shore said he worked for a "DSO" or "corporate dentistry," meaning an owner has their name on the building while other dentists work for them. A DSO is different from a small, family dentistry, such as Signature Smile Arts, serving a community like Homewood.

"You do things the way they want, and you're very much a 9-to-5 worker," Shore said, describing what it was like to work for

a DSO. "[Patients] can see one doctor one week and another doctor the other week. That's that model. There's nothing wrong with that model, but it just wasn't very fulfilling for what I wanted to do in dentistry."

Over time, Shore said he no longer needed mentorship and wanted to own a practice with his own patients. Shore wanted to practice dentistry at Signature Smile Arts where he said he can set his own hours, practice the way he wants and get to know patients who are happy to see him.

Mayer said he sees himself in Shore. Like Shore, Mayer was 29 years old when he first began to practice dentistry in his own private practice. Mayer said he believes Shore shares many of his values and ideas as a dentist.

"Homewood's such a great community to live in and be a part of. It's been an awesome experience," Mayer said. "I was able to practice in a small community which I always wanted to do. I feel very blessed that I was able to do that. I'm looking forward to retirement now."

In his retirement, Mayer, a Flossmoor resident, said he'll spend more time golfing, biking, traveling and enjoying the company of his wife and black Labrador.

Inside Signature Smile Arts is a wall full of photographs of the children who are patients. When a child has no cavities, they're rewarded with a sticker of a star on their picture. Mayer said he's been doing this since June 1990 when he first opened the practice. It's called the No Cavity Club. Shore said he plans on continuing the No Cavity Club.

Signature Smile Arts is 18114 Gottchalk Ave., behind the Homewood Post Office.



Nick Ulanowski/H-F Chronicle

Dr. Alex Shore, left, is taking over the dental practice of Dr. David Mayer as he retires after 30 years of service in Homewood.



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