



# Skilled IN THE Art of DENTISTRY

by Marilyn Thomas

Because dental anxiety is a concern for **Dr. Gregory J. Wych**, he acknowledges his patients' fears without judgment. This awareness and his own personal experiences have motivated him to ensure that his general dentistry patients are comfortable while he provides high-quality cosmetic techniques to the adults in his care.

**D**r. Gregory J. Wych's journey into his chosen profession was induced by a dental catastrophe that occurred during his senior year of college. He recalls that he had a "really bad week" that involved an unfortunate collision between a racquetball racket and his front teeth. To repair the broken smile, the neighborhood dentist in his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio, applied dental bonding, a procedure that uses tooth-colored resin to build up teeth and/or fill in irregular spaces. Although a reasonable option at the time, the material would fracture easily, and that is "humiliating for anybody," says Dr. Wych, "especially a dentist."

This event seemed to seal his fate. He soon enrolled in Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, and after his graduation in 1984, he enlisted in the Navy as a dental officer. In the course of duty,



he was relocated to Beaufort, South Carolina, where he served at the Naval Hospital and Marine Corps Air Station.

A few years after his discharge, Dr. Wych purchased an existing dental practice on Woodrow Street in Irmo. Prior to this, a colleague in general dentistry had applied veneers to improve Dr. Wych's troublesome teeth, but "they weren't satisfying," he says, and continued to be very breakable.

In 1996, Dr. Wych achieved two major successes that forever altered his career in dentistry. First, he made an appointment with Dr. Bill Dickerson, general dentist renowned for his cosmetic work, where Dr. Wych had completed continuing education courses. Dr. Dickerson placed 10 high-quality veneers on Dr. Wych's front teeth, and, as a result, he could finally brandish the smile he had been seeking. "It was very positive," he says about the experience. "It changed my life."

That same year, Dr. Wych also moved into a new, custom-built office facility at 7505 Saint Andrews Road in Irmo, where he continues to practice to this day. "I just want people to have a great experience and great customer service," he says, "because I'm all about customer service and experience myself, because that's what I want."

With his soft-spoken manner and quick wittedness, Dr. Wych endeavors to help each patient feel at ease. His reassuring credentials are confidently displayed in the comfortable waiting room, where patients can enjoy trail mix and a cappuccino, ground from fresh beans. Other comfort-centric measures include colorful original artwork, some by local painters; open, airy hygiene cleaning areas, furnished with Tempur-Pedic cushioned chairs; and large windows that stream natural light and overlook strategically placed bird feeders outside the building.

For patients who are especially apprehensive, the practice has offered sedation dentistry for about fifteen years. "We do what's

called moderate enteral oral conscious sedation," Dr. Wych explains. "We can do an amazing amount of work in one appointment," he says, and "We'll wake you up when it's over." The Art of Dentistry is one of the few general dental practices in the state that has earned a government-issued permit to perform this procedure by satisfying the rigorous inspection and training processes required.

In addition to routine dental procedures (cleanings, fillings, root canals, crowns, etc.), cosmetic dentistry is another distinctive service offered by Dr. Wych, and this "can be everything from whitening your teeth to porcelain veneers (and) implants to replace missing teeth," he says. Because of his expertise, Dr. Wych has been awarded a fellowship with the International Congress of Oral Implantologists, the world's premier dental implant organization.

computed tomography (CT); the Waterlase dental laser (to treat moderate gum disease); and Envision a Smile: Cosmetic Dental Imaging software. Plus, the electricity that supplies all of the office equipment is generated by solar panels installed outside the building.

The practice's current office manager, Phyllis Wood, was hired as a hygienist twelve years ago, and she chooses to work for Dr. Wych because of "his skill set and his importance of continuing education, and just being on the cutting edge," she says. "He goes the extra mile. He is always going to provide a very, very high level of care to his patients, and that's why I'm here and that's why I like working here."

South Carolina requires dentists to take a minimum of 14 hours of continuing education each year, but Dr. Wych has completed as much as 300 hours in a year's time. He has also taught at the Spear Institute, a school that provides higher education for dentists, and has written three books about dental topics.

Being involved in the community has always been an extension of The Art of Dentistry, and Ms. Wood, as the "face of the practice," has served on the Irmo Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Wych is a founding member of Leeza's Care Connection, a local non-profit, and an active member of Saint Peter's Catholic Church in downtown Columbia. The practice has also participated in the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry's outreach program called 'Give Back a Smile.'

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The graphic includes a stack of books on the left, with titles like "DENTISTRY: A Patient's Guide" and "PATIENT NEEDS". On the right is a portrait of Dr. Gregory J. Wych, D.D.S.

Additionally, "We do something here called 'FASTBRACES,'" adds Dr. Wych, who is a Senior Master Affiliate and an instructor for other general dentists in installing the patented apparatus, which significantly reduces the amount of time the patient must wear braces to straighten their teeth.

To support this comprehensive care, the office is equipped with the latest technology available including digital 3-D cone-beam

which restores the smile of battered spouses.

"My smile has gotten bigger; my self-esteem has improved," says Jean Parker, an Art of Dentistry patient from Columbia. "I can sincerely say that my visits to Dr. Wych and staff are ones that I look forward to!"

More information about the practice and all the procedures available can be found on their website at [www.irmocosmeticdentist.com](http://www.irmocosmeticdentist.com) or by calling 803-781-1600. ■