

Dentist Take Others' Snoring Quite Seriously

by Kimberly Goad,

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Keith Thornton - a third-generation Thornton family dentist - never thought of deviating from the course set by his grandfather and father. But, he says, "it was never shoved down by my throat."

The Park Cities dentist, recently named Dentist of the Year by the Dallas Chapter of the Academy of General Dentistry, chose his life's work based on a few observations. "As I looked at it, my dad and my granddad had a very nice life and liked what they do and were very well respected," says Dr. Thornton, 49. "So it was never, 'This is what you will be.' It became, 'That would be nice to do.'" His grandfather and father practiced dentistry together; then he and his father practiced together from 1972 to 1979.

Three years ago, Dr. Thornton, along with Andrew O. Jamieson, M.D., of the Sleep Medicine Institute at Presbyterian Hospital, invented an oral device that stops snoring. It's called the Thornton Anterior Positioner - TAP for short.

"There are other dental devices that do it more or less effectively," says Dr. Thornton, who developed the TAP "through trial and error and evaluating patients and the appliance and how easy it was to wear and whether it had an adverse effect on people's jaw joints." Over the past year, he says, the device has effectively cured snoring for more than 100 patients. Last month, the two men introduced the TAP to the Dallas County Dental Society. Now, he says, "My goal is to put it in the hands of general dentists."