



Tri-Cities Center for
Cosmetic Dentistry

KATHY S. SANDERS, DMD, AAACD

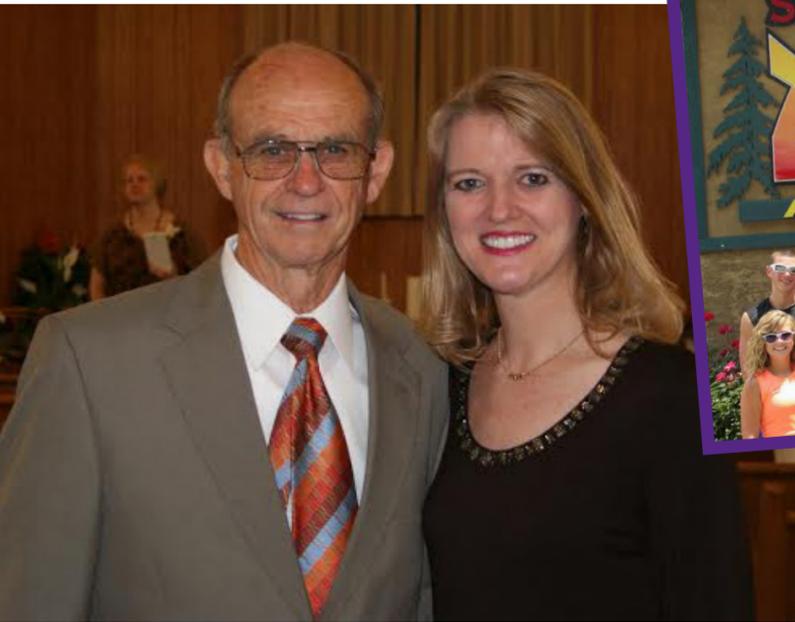


Accredited Member
AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF COSMETIC DENTISTRY®
Setting the Standard

Dr. Kathy S. Sanders

From small town girl to
big time cosmetic dentist

PHOTO BY MICKEY BAKER



Her daddy always said she could do anything she put her mind to. Yet, even he was a bit surprised when his “Georgia peach-of-a-daughter” came home from a high school career day announcing her dream to become a dentist.

Such are the small town beginnings of Kathy Sellers Sanders who grew up the second born of four children in the rural farming community of Pembroke, Georgia, just outside of Georgia’s renowned coastal city – Savannah.

Today, as one of the nation’s most accomplished cosmetic dentists, she’s the designer of award-winning smiles. In fact, Dr. Sanders is one of only 9 dentists in the entire state of Tennessee to have achieved accreditation with the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD) – of which, she’s the first and only female.

A life-long learner with an insatiable quest for excellence, Dr. Sanders is currently building her cases to receive her fellowship through the AACD, a feat which, to date, has only been accomplished by 63 dentists worldwide.

Pretty impressive credentials for a small town, farm girl.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF? HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR WAY TO THE TRI-CITIES?

I’m from Georgia and my husband, Brian, is from Indiana. After graduating from Georgia Southern University, I received my doctorate of dental medicine from the Medical College of Georgia, Augusta.

We moved from Georgia to Kingsport in June of 1991, the morning after I took my dental boards. And, since Brian is a chemical engineer, it’s easy to see how Kingsport was a great fit. He’s been working with Eastman ever since and I started my practice shortly after we moved here.

All in all, we love the Tri-Cities. It’s home. And, it’s been an exceptional place to raise our family.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

Brian and I are so thankful for our two wonderful children, Erika and Michael. I love being a mom and we love participating in whatever it is that delights our children.

Erika is a sophomore at the University of Tennessee, majoring in biochemistry and cellular and molecular biology with a pre-med focus. She’s active as a Leadership and Service Ambassador and volunteers through RAM (Remote Area Medical). She also loves to play the piano.

Michael is a senior this year at Sullivan South High School. He also has his sights set on going to UT. He’s very active in the band, playing tenor drums. And he loves to play ultimate Frisbee and disc golf.

While my extended family continues to live in Georgia, we’ve been blessed to have Brian’s parents move to Kingsport where we get to enjoy them as an active part of our lives.

Family is very important to us.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY MISSION TRIP TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC VIA GLOBAL HEALTH OUTREACH.

Brian and I wanted to take our family of four on a mission trip at a meaningful time in our children’s lives (ages 17 and 19). We researched the available medical missions trips with GHO, a branch of CMDA Christian Medical and Dental Association (whose international hub is right here in Bristol, TN) and found the one week that we could participate, which happened to be the Dominican Republic. All in all, we experienced many amazing moments. The most meaningful experience was in a dental chair while I restored an 11 year old girl’s fractured front teeth.

While I worked to repair the young girl’s tooth, my interpreter and dental assistant, Raysa, shared in Spanish what was in my heart for the mission trip and my desire to share Christ’s love with others because He first loved me.

The young patient expressed interest in learning more about Jesus. However, after explaining about Him, she said she was not ready to accept Jesus. Meanwhile, her younger brother had joined us chair-side. To my surprise, her brother gestured that he would like to receive Christ and I heard him praying, in Spanish, repenting of His sins and receiving the Lord. We celebrated with tears, hugs and pictures.

The entire trip was amazing. Erika and Michael assisted in dentistry and also optometry (along with my husband), and with several physicians. While the first three days we provided care to a community, the last three days were spent providing care to the military and their families. This was only the second year that our group was allowed in the military facility and the only two times that an evangelical Christian group had been invited into their military. In fact, the Dominican Minister of Defense was present to help us through customs and was present to visit with us at the military facility.



WHAT SETS YOUR PRACTICE APART? WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT?

Without a doubt, it’s my team. I can’t say enough about how they make my practice what it is today. From the time you walk in our door until the time you leave, you’ll enjoy pampered attention that comes from the hearts of team members who love what they do – and who are great at it!

Aside from dental chairs equipped with heat and massage therapy, relaxing paraffin hand treatments, and warm scented towels, you’ll be amazed that each and every team member will treat you with a level of hospitality that you’ll want to tell others about.

We have a wonderful time working together and learning together. Not only do I pursue continuing education, each of my team members participate in continuing education classes and training at every opportunity given.

PROFESSIONALLY SPEAKING, WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST REWARD?

The greatest reward is seeing each person’s beauty shine through their smile. I have been privileged to learn from some of the world’s best dentists and have been given many opportunities to transform people’s lives. For me, personally, the most rewarding gift is that of seeing not only the changes to their physical appearance but the transformation of a personality that reveals their inner beauty.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU’RE NOT DESIGNING AWARD-WINNING SMILES?

I love to read and I love to travel. Snorkeling is one of my favorite travel activities, especially in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands – which happens to be our very favorite travel destination.

But more often than not, we’re home, here in Kingsport where we lead a very active life, participating in the activities of our children and serving within our church home, Colonial Heights Baptist Church. We’ve been members of Colonial Heights since 1991. I love working with the youth programs at church.

AACD ACCREDITATION SEEMS TO SET YOU APART FROM OTHER COSMETIC DENTISTS. TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT?

The American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry is really much more than alphabet soup listed on a dentist’s website. Many patients may see these initials and not realize the importance of the AACD.

The AACD is actually the world’s largest non-profit member organization. It’s dedicated to advancing excellence in oral care that combines art & science with the goal of improving dental health, esthetics and function.

Truly, it represents the best of the best, in the entire world. Dentists in more than 70 countries worldwide choose to join the AACD because they’re serious about cosmetic dentistry and desire to give their patients the very best.

And, it was out of that very desire, that I joined the AACD and decided to pursue accreditation.

YOU ACHIEVED YOUR ACCREDITATION IN 2006, CORRECT?

Yes, in 2006, I became the sixth dentist in the state of Tennessee to achieve accreditation with the AACD. Since that time, three more dentists have achieved accreditation, bringing us to a total of 9 dentists in Tennessee as of 2014. I’m currently the only AACD-accredited dentist in East Tennessee and the first and only female accredited dentist in the state.

WHY SO FEW AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation is really a tremendous commitment and it’s a very rigorous process.

It’s interesting, out of the 6,300 AACD members worldwide, only a little more than 300 are accredited. Number-wise, that’s only about 5%.

For me, accreditation was a quest to have my cosmetic dentistry knowledge and skills sharpened by the rigorous examination and review progress.

I know, without a doubt, that AACD membership coupled with accreditation, has vastly improved my cosmetic dentistry abilities. I knew that if I was going to practice cosmetic dentistry, I wanted to be able to provide results that rivaled the world’s leading cosmetic dentists.

And, the only way to achieve that goal would be to be tested and reviewed by the world’s leading cosmetic dentists. And, that’s exactly what you get with AACD accreditation.

WHAT’S INVOLVED IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS?

It begins with a very challenging written examination. Simply passing the written portion of the exam is quite the accomplishment. Then, you have to provide five very specific cosmetic dentistry cases for peer review. The board of reviewers, who have prestigious credentials, examine your work to see if your ability meets the AACD’s rigorous standards. Once you pass this point, you must then go on to the last step which is an oral examination, again, before a board of reviewers who represent the world’s leading cosmetic dentists.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO ACHIEVE ACCREDITATION?

From start to finish, it was a seven year process that took a great deal of time and commitment. Yet, it was very much worth it. Because of my accreditation, I know the quality of dentistry that I’m capable of producing and my patients are also assured of my skill level. AACD accreditation has been one of my best career accomplishments.

HOW DO YOU THINK SOMEONE SHOULD GO ABOUT CHOOSING A COSMETIC DENTIST?

- I suggest you evaluate your prospective dentist with these five criteria:
1. Do they use actual patient photos in advertising their practice, or stock images?
 2. Are they accredited by the AACD? (Not just members.)
 3. Do they use high quality dental laboratories?



4. Are they committed to continuing education?
5. What are their credentials when it comes to occlusal training?

WHAT IS OCCLUSAL TRAINING AND WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT?

Everyone loves a gorgeous smile. However, what if that smile were simply beautiful without being “functional.” What is a functional smile? It’s one that not only looks great but feels and “works” great! An accomplished cosmetic dentist will be able to give you a smile that is not only beautiful but also provides maximum comfort and longevity.

When a new smile is not correctly “aligned,” the teeth will become damaged by the wear and tear of improper alignment. Cosmetic dentists benefit greatly from advanced training in occlusion as part of their continuing education after they graduate.

WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE IN OCCLUSAL TRAINING?

I’ve traveled to seminars across the nation, from Seattle, Washington, to Orlando, Florida, to learn from the world’s foremost occlusal experts, including Drs. Frank Spear, Pete Dawson, John Cranaham, and Mark Piper. I am immensely thankful for the knowledge I’ve gained from these men.

Whenever I attend conferences and seminars, I’m always looking to learn new and improved ways to give my patients smiles that are supremely comfortable.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU THINK PATIENTS CHOOSE A COSMETIC DENTIST BASED ON PRICE ALONE?

I’m sure that happens sometimes. Cosmetic dentistry involves extra steps and high quality materials that cost more. However, we find our patients appreciate the quality of the service we provide at the Tri-Cities Center for Cosmetic Dentistry and we do offer financing options to help.

An excellent cosmetic dentist chooses not only the best materials (that will stand the test of time, thereby saving you time and money over the course of the years), but also the very best dental laboratories and dental ceramists (the individual who makes the veneers and crowns). It is a bonus if the dental ceramist has received accreditation through the AACD. And, this excellence comes at a “price.”

WHAT ARE YOUR MOST IMMEDIATE PROFESSIONAL GOALS?

First, I’m very excited to have initiated the process of becoming an accredited “fellow” with the AACD. This goal alone will potentially take five years to achieve.

Secondly, I’m excited about offering an expanded use of dental implants to individuals who need dentures or partials.” Cosmetic dentistry is not only for those who have a full complement of teeth. I’ve been very pleased to have experienced tremendous success with cosmetic restorations using implant dentistry, performing everything from single tooth to beautiful full-arch restorations.

As for my third goal, my team and I are committed to additional continuing education that emphasizes dentistry as a part of “whole body health.” We are striving to stress whole body health by developing more individualized care in both our restorative and hygiene departments.

ANYTHING ELSE, YOU’D LIKE TO TELL OUR READERS?

Yes! We are accepting new patients and would consider it an honor to work with those who may find out about us via the VIP Seen magazine. We invite anyone interested to give us a call at 423-239-7899 or visit us online at www.drkathysanders.com to find out how we can give you your own “truly remarkable smile.” **VIP**