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## Pride, Hard Work and Family

Magdy Attia, D.M.D.

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By Randy Wyles

Magdy Attia, D.M.D. is a proud man: proud of his Egyptian heritage, his military service to both Egypt and the United States, his American citizenship, his dedicated team of professionals working in his practice — and his loving family. It has not always been an easy path for Dr. Attia, but it has been a path he took by his own choosing — possessing a desire to achieve and learn as much as he could while helping as many as possible.

## AMBITIOUS DREAMS

The Egyptian-born dentist has always had a sharp focus on his goals. Having a diverse background and working in private offices, university hospitals, large dental groups and a dental school, Dr. Attia has had the opportunity to observe a wide range of techniques, the best of which he has incorporated into his personal philosophy of dentistry — and his philosophy tends to be unique. For instance, he believes that having worked as a dental assistant in the past has been extremely beneficial to him as a dentist today. “It helps to know what a dental assistant sees and experiences,” he says, adding that he believes he works more harmoniously with his dental assistants because he can relate to their point of view.

A 1989 graduate of Alexandria University Faculty of Dentistry in Alexandria, Egypt, Dr. Attia completed one year of general practice residency, worked in a hospital and fulfilled his mandatory military service commitment by 1993. As an Egyptian Naval officer he served in a variety of areas as well as at the main hospital in Alexandria, while attaining his diploma in preventive dentistry and dental public health, and graduating with honors.

Seeking new challenges, Dr. Attia came to the U.S. in 1994, supporting himself by working at a convenience store and as a dental assistant as he prepared to take his exams prior to enrolling in American dental school. Not only did he have to take the first part of the dental national board in



**On December 21, 2006, the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony, welcoming the new addition of Dr. Attia's Fayette Dental Care office.**

advance without assistance, but he also had to take examinations testing his competency in English.

Ultimately, he chose to attend Nova Southeastern University in Florida. “Their dental school was brand new,” he remembers. “So new, in fact, it wasn’t built yet! They pointed to a patch of grass and said, ‘There’s the school.’” When the school was built, Dr. Attia became a model student, serving as class president for much of his three-year term. “I learned a lot,” he admits, noting that his position as a leader of the small, ethnically diverse class wasn’t easy. Nonetheless, he relished the educational opportunity. “Some of my classmates looked at school as an obstacle. I looked at it as a goal to getting my Doctor of Dental Medicine degree.”

In the meantime, he thrived, being unanimously approved for the Chancellor Award and the American College of Dentists C.W. Fain, Jr. Professionalism award.

While preparing a speech for his graduation, he reflected on his first college graduation in Egypt. Just a week before that commencement exercise, his father passed away. “I was really sad because he didn’t see me graduate,” Dr. Attia remembers. “Family is very important in our culture, and it was so disappointing that he couldn’t be there to share in the joy of my achievement.” Remembering the personal sorrow that marred a celebration, he wasn’t sure he could go through another major milestone without his father by his side.

After a great deal of soul searching, he decided to attend the ceremony

My experience here with Dr. Attia and his staff has been very nice and professional. It had been a while since I went to a dentist. My last experience I felt like they treated me like a child and even lectured me. Here they informed me and respected me. In others words, treated me like an adult. They in my opinion did an excellent job and thorough as well.

— Darrell Carlson





**Dr. Attia takes time to explain his treatment plan to patient Barbara Ruffin based on her X-rays.**

on May 28, 2000. “It was one of the happiest days of my life!” he says. He gave his speech, presented awards to a number of professors and received his own awards. Dr. Attia had worked diligently. “I didn’t want to ‘just pass.’ I wanted to excel.”

Dr. Attia has never seen “graduating” as being the end of the educational process. To that end, he completed another general practice residency from 2000-2001. “I will never know everything, but I wanted to be exposed to hospital dentistry in the U.S.” Working at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach and at the Jackson Memorial Hospital trauma center exposed him to a lot. “The experience I earned that year was invaluable.”

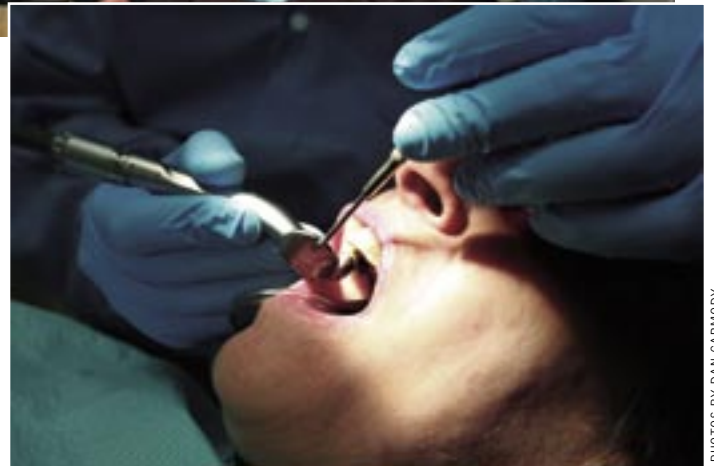
Dr. Attia moved to Georgia, taking the southern regional boards in 2001. Again, while working two jobs — one in the Florida Department of Corrections, the other in a private practice in Atlanta. By late 2001, he had landed a position in Fayetteville with a large company that has more than 100 offices in four states. Over the next few years, Dr. Attia worked for two different companies before finally deciding he was ready to set up his own practice — but there were more changes to come.

**Office Manager Yvonne Lanier-Cherry sterilizes instruments in the autoclave in between overseeing the front office with Deena Attia.**



On April 19, 2002, Dr. Attia became a U.S. citizen. Then he made another major decision. Demonstrating his appreciation for his adopted country, Dr. Attia enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve the same year, duplicating his military service experience, this time in the U.S., just like he duplicated his schooling and residency. “The U.S. gave me educational opportunities to achieve my dream.” he explains, “Besides, I like change — not just one job!”

Currently serving with the rank of Captain in the Reserves, Dr. Attia



**Dr. Attia meticulously works on crown prep on patient Dixie Sleppy.**

will soon be promoted to Major. As part of his Reserve service, he traveled to Germany for his annual training, where he treated U.S. soldiers. His wife and daughter followed him to Germany, taking advantage of the opportunity to indulge in a favorite family pastime: travel, venturing into Austria.

### EXPANDING ON WORTHWHILE FOUNDATIONS

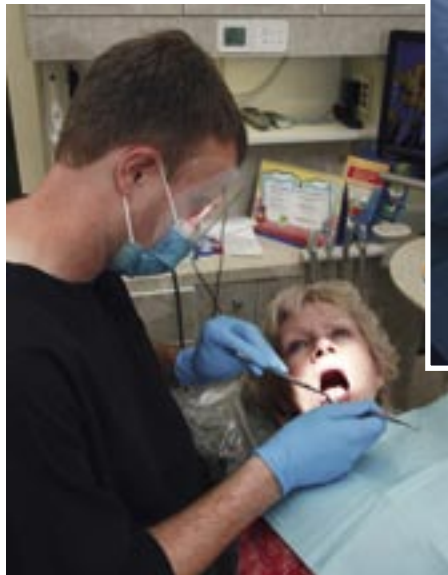
The frenetic energy and patterns of achievement and maintaining more than one concurrent job continues to this day. Having opened his private practice in the Atlanta suburb of Fayetteville, GA, in December of 2006, Dr. Attia is still fulfilling his obligation in the Reserves and he sees patients part time at the DeKalb County Board of Health, “helping people who can’t afford care.”

His concern for people who can’t afford dental care is another re-

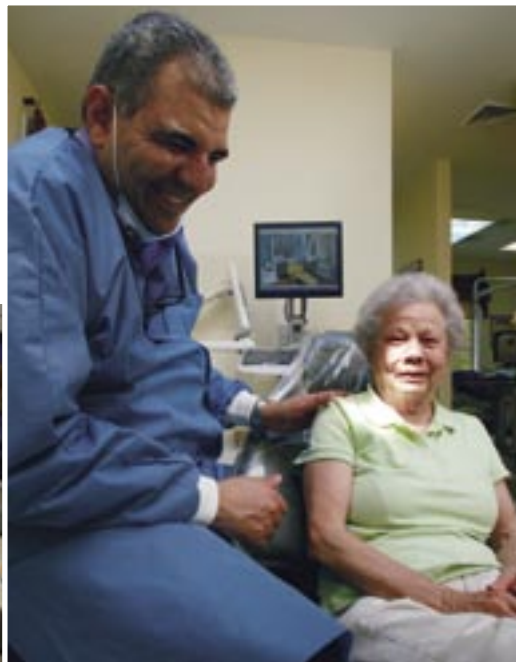
My visit to this office has always been 10 times less painful than any place I have been. The staff is very friendly also. In my opinion, this is by far my favorite office.

— Dewey Hilton

**Hygienist Mike Perio checks patient Pam Pelt before Dr. Attia comes in to go over the latest results of her cleaning.**



PHOTOS BY DAN CARMODY



**Dr. Attia sees patient Reba McGuire as she gets her six-month check-up.**

curing theme in Dr. Attia's life. "There's no insurance in Egypt," he explains. "It's like Medicaid; it doesn't cover much — only extractions and fillings." Throughout his career, working in public hospitals, he has frequently encountered patients who couldn't afford treatment. To alleviate the situation in his practice, he decided to accept many different insurance plans, including the Medicaid programs. But, as he is quick to point out, that doesn't compromise the service he provides.

Impressed by the quality of equipment used at Nova Southeastern University, Dr. Attia wanted to incorporate state-of-the-art equipment in his own practice. For example, he uses the X-Rite computerized shade vision guide to help in selection of a color for a crown or veneer to best match a patient's other teeth. "Often, when a patient gets a crown or veneers, he [or she]'s not happy, but he [or she] doesn't know why. It's because teeth are not one single, solid color. If you look in the mirror, you can see that the color varies from the almost transparent tip to the center. Until now, crowns were one single color. They didn't look natural." With this high-tech system, the computer provides a "map" of the tooth, dividing it into sections of varying color, which are then matched with a crown or veneer that mimics the tooth's natural color deviations. "When I read about it, I wanted it in my office. It matches tooth color as close to perfection as we can get."

On my way home from work last week my front tooth finally came out in my hand. (It had been loose for about three months). I called my dentist and I was told they could see me in seven days, so I called Dr. Attia's office. I was told I could come in ASAP that he would see me before he went home. He wasn't able to save my tooth but he worked miracles and had a temp tooth in my mouth within days. Way before my dentist could even see me. His staff and office personnel work together as a team. They are strong, I couldn't even find a weak link within his staff. Dr. Attia takes the times to show and explain everything he does. Excellent work.

— Tom Bedley

Dr. Attia's office is also the only one in the area equipped with the new Waterlase MD, a Biolase laser with state-of-the-art LED technology for work on hard and soft tissue without the need to numb the patient's mouth, in most cases. Since lasers reduce or eliminate the need for anesthesia during some soft-tissue and restorative procedures, Dr. Attia was able to do four fillings in one day without numbing a 6-year-old patient, whose only complaint was that the water was cold.

The Waterlase all-tissue dental laser uses a spray of water with laser energy to create a powerful but gentle tool that precisely treats a variety of hard-tissue and bone procedures, frequently without the need for anesthesia. It has the capability to cut and coagulate soft tissue, and can perform gingival recontouring, frenectomies and troughing with minimal trauma and little tissue regression.

Of course, laser applications for soft tissue are usually bloodless and heal more quickly, and patients typically have fewer post-op problems.

One of Dr. Attia's patients had front teeth that were discolored due to extensive decay. Using the laser, the doctor fixed her teeth painlessly without anesthesia, resulting in a happy patient who is now proud of her smile.

With a hand piece built of aerospace materials for extreme durability and complete comfort, the all-new HydroBeamT rotates 360 degrees and features an exclusive contra-angle design for use anywhere in the oral cavity. Its small head provides maximum visibility in the surgical field. It features an exclusive ultra-white, shadow-free LED illumination system for better visibility in hard-to-reach areas. The control system is Windows-based, with a touch-screen navigation system for better control. The SensaTouch system includes 16 customizable presets. The 10-50 Hz selectable pulse repetition offers a variety of options in treating tissue, with specific modes for hard and soft tissue and enhanced coagulation capabilities.

The Waterlase is currently used by thousands of dentists around the world, its "no-shot, no-pain, no-drill" message is winning over patients and practitioners worldwide. Dr. Attia attests that he "can do fillings,

**Amira Attia entertains Patty Rigby and Sueanne and Steve Bauer in the waiting room.**





**Mr. Bauer grabbing a cold drink from the patient refreshment bar in the reception room while he waits to see Dr. Attia.**

veneers and even frenectomies without numbing the patient. No needle, no anesthesia, no blood, no pain.” By eliminating needles and the noise of a drill, the laser also helps reduce anxiety and fear.

He considers the Waterlase as crucial a piece of equipment as the intraoral camera and nitrous oxide, but admits that part of the reason he got it was to provide services no one else could: “I want to be unique! I have to be different.” His reasons go beyond the need to distinguish himself from the competition, however. Patient comfort is important to the compassionate dentist. “I care about people,” he said.

Patient comfort is a priority extending far beyond the cozy atmosphere of his reception area, with its 42-inch flat screen TV and the living room furniture. “There are many ways to relax patients.” Putting them at

**Dr. Attia demonstrates the Waterlase MD on a model, showing a patient how it works.**



PHOTOS BY DAN CARMODY

Recently I experienced my first dental laser treatment versus the use of a dental drill. At first I was very leery about the use of this new procedure. When they explained to me how the new laser treatment would work for removing tooth decay/ fillings and that it no longer required the use of a dental drill my first thought was “Oh no, not on me!” ( I am not a good dental patient.) After experiencing my first treatment it actually was great. It was completely pain free and I was completed in no time. Also another great benefit from laser treatment versus the regular freeze/drill, way I had no downtime of having to wait until my mouth unfroze. There was no discomfort whatsoever. What a great new way for dental treatment, especially for children.

— Kim Goulden

ease is accomplished by providing Discovery Toys, educational toys for children of various ages; videos of the beach and animals; natural views out the office windows of a tree-lined acreage; XM satellite radio with headsets; TV; and pictures of sky and fish on the ceiling. Dr. Attia also has CAESY, an educational system for patients that offers information on most dental topics. “We can even create a custom CD for a patient about their treatment plan.”

## DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE

When the doctor has free time, he enjoys reading and traveling. Dr. Attia and his wife, Deena, have toured the Mexican desert on an ATV, snorkeled in the Caribbean and visited 27 states, exploring destinations such as Mount Rushmore and the southern most point of the country. He has also introduced his American wife to many of Egypt’s historical sites, museums and traditional dishes.

There’s not a lot of time for travel these days, however. Dr. Attia has begun his studies with the Pankey Institute of Advanced Dental Education, known for its intense curriculum and schedule. Once again, he refuses to stop learning.



**Dr. Attia with main support team: Deena Attia, Yvonne Lanier-Cherry and Mike Faulkner.**

Meanwhile, back in the office in Fayetteville, Dr. Attia's focus is on establishing his practice and becoming a resource for his colleagues. Even before construction had begun on a building where he could practice dentistry, the dentist placed an ad in the local Hometown Directories so

Dr. Attia has completed a mini implant course. One of the differences of the mini implant is that the crown can be placed the same day. Still, after taking the mini implant course, he is presently involved in a year-long course for the traditional implants. There is so much involved in the course it is not only about placing implants. Oral sedation has been a covered topic and there is much more in the months to come.

Dr. Attia is a member of several organizations: American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, Georgia Dental Association, The World Congress of Minimally Invasive Dentistry, the South Metro Atlanta Study Club, and Reserve Officers Association of the United States, Armed Services Mutual Benefit Association and Military Officers Association of America.

Dr. Attia has earned his Associate Fellowship with the World Clinical Laser Institute. He is not stopping at that, his plans are to earn his Fellowship status and he is pursuing his fellowship of Academy of General Dentistry.

he could start getting his name out in the community. He treated eight patients on his first day in business.

He strives to accommodate patient schedules by staying open Thursday and Friday evenings and most Saturdays, unless he has Reserve duty

**Deena Attia works together with Dr. Attia to build a family and a practice. She is Dr. Attia's biggest supporter at home and the office.**



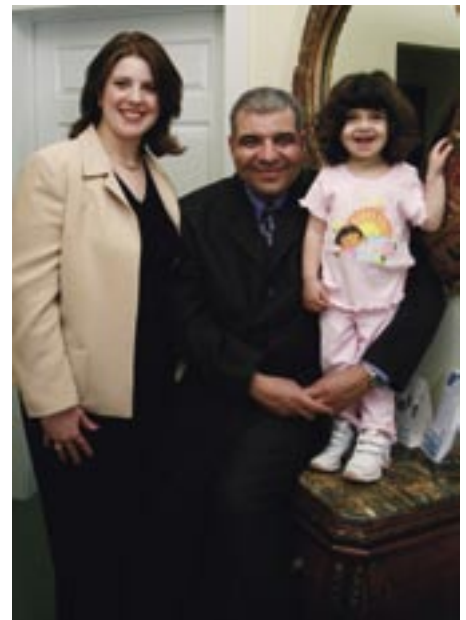
PHOTOS BY DAN CARMODY

or continuing education courses. He is especially sensitive to emergencies when patients are in pain. "I take care of their pain, and then they come back to do other work." Plenty are coming back. Dr. Attia's office features three treatment rooms, but he says in the brief time his practice has been open, he already needs two more fully equipped rooms.



Helping him take care of patients is a small, dedicated team. "I don't like the word 'staff,'" he explains. "We are a team; we work together for the same goal. Last year I received a letter from the ADA Commission to attend a meeting to represent Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama. I was asked to review some of their publication and marketing materials. I told them how I feel about the word 'staff' and they promised to remove it from most of their materials."

On his team are his Office Manager Yvonne, who has more than 26 years of experience; his wife Deena, who serves as practice coordinator; Nakia, his full-time dental assistant; Laura, who works with the team as a part-time dental assistant; and Mike, a hygienist who worked with Dr. Attia at another office. With a great team around him, the highly motivated doctor has plans to expand on the services he provides. "I'd like to be more involved with Invisalign. There are a lot of opportunities there."



Dr. Attia is also contemplating expanding in another way — by opening an additional office in another community. And he's bringing his message to the Internet with his website at [www.fayettedentalcare.com](http://www.fayettedentalcare.com). He wants to educate everyone and remind them that they can get good quality dental care without paying a lot of extra money. ■



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