

The Dental **INCREDIBLES!**

Three generations of over-achievers—all in the field of dentistry—are members of one amazing family: the Nelsons of Redding, California.

Our story begins with Dr. Leon Nelson, a practicing dentist for 44 years prior to his retirement in 2003. With accomplishments that include being the founder of Nova Dental Supply and creator of its Dent-Award and Medic-Award Badges (for which he coined slogans such as “Clean Teeth Taste Good!” “We Cater to Cowards!” and “Happiness is No Cavities!”), publishing the first book on cosmetic dentistry (“The Bonding Book”), and holding leadership positions in numerous dental associations, Dr. Leon sites his proudest achievement in dentistry as something different: “Clearly, having my son, Mike, choose dentistry for his career, and then want to practice in close association with me.”

Shortly after Mike became the second Nelson to graduate from the University of the Pacific’s dental school in 1981, he and his father embarked on a “solo-group” practice, the space-sharing arrangement promoted by their good friend, Jim Pride. As two of the earliest clients of Dr. Pride’s Pacific Institute, and later of its successor, Pride Institute, this father and son worked extremely well together. In 1990, they moved across the street to a new, larger location, one that was featured on the cover of “Dental Economics.” As Mike recalls, “My dad and I worked alongside each other for 20 years, and to this day, we still love doing things together.”

That had to serve as a role model for the latest in the Nelson clan of dental incredibles, Mike’s son, Christopher. Soon to graduate from the University of California, Davis, Chris accepted an offer to attend—you guessed it—the alma mater of his father and grandfather, now called the Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry at UOP. “Growing up with a family of dentists (my dad and grandpa) and physicians (dad’s sister and mom’s brother) made for interesting dinner conversations,” says Chris. “Additionally, I’ve always loved seeing the dentist!” Already an achiever of incredible proportions, Chris earned the prestigious Eagle Scout ranking in the Boy Scouts, played roller hockey in state championships, held lead roles in high school musicals, and was a DARE camp counselor. With his already highly honed leadership talents, Chris joined his university’s Pre-Dental Society, soon became president, spearheaded major improvements for the club, and now serves as its fundraiser and as UC Davis’s pre-dental peer advisor. Now, that’s incredible!

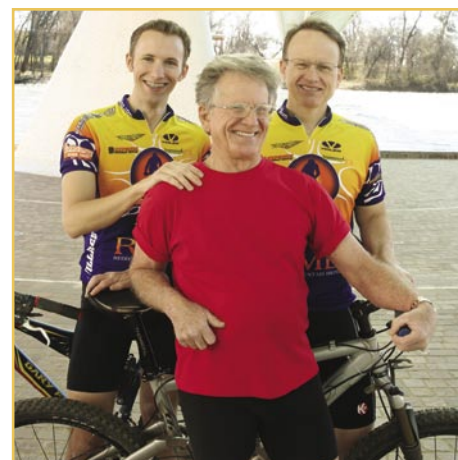
Chris’s passion for dentistry is a “bonfire,” according to his dad, who enjoys “reveling in the warmth of his flames.” Mike adds: “Pride and trust are two words I’m fortunate to use with both of my children [daughter Kendra is a college freshman interested in economics]. I feel ‘pride’ at the people they have become and ‘trust’ in the conviction they will choose wisely and enjoy all the surprises life will throw their way.”



Giving “family dentistry” a new meaning, l. to r.: Leon, Chris, and Mike Nelson

Reflective of his dad’s pride and trust, Chris gave careful thought to his career choice: “I knew dentistry combined the science, leadership, and business management I desired in a career.” Joining the Pre-Dental Society and taking the UOP’s Pre-Dental Simulation Course cinched his choice. “By the end of the practical, I was hooked; I knew I would be a dentist.” Chris plans to enter private practice, possibly partnering with his dad, who is also his bike-riding partner. “I also plan to get involved in my community’s ADA chapter,” he says, “and of course the Pride Institute!”

Three generations of Pride dentists in one dynamic family! We’re thrilled for Chris, his proud dad and granddad, and—let’s not forget to mention—his mom Rhonda and grandma Donna.



Three generations of incredibles show their athletic side, l. to r.: Chris, Leon, and Mike Nelson.



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