

When Ami Beth Dickinson was crowned Miss Alabama in 1995, her smile was dazzling—but it wasn't

always that way. As a teenager, Dickinson had undergone orthodontic treatment that made her teeth strong and straight, but she and her parents were disappointed in her overall dental and facial appearance after treatment.

Dickinson eventually consulted David M. Sarver, D.M.D., M.S., an alumnus of UAB's School of Dentistry. Using contemporary graphic planning techniques to communicate and interact with Ami Beth, Sarver redesigned her orthodontic plan and retreated the young woman, with newly defined dental and facial goals. Eighteen months later, she had the beauty—and the confidence—to win the Miss Alabama title.

"These days, orthodontics involves more than just straightening teeth," says Sarver, a 1977 graduate of UAB's School of Dentistry. "Today's focus is on the entire face." With computer technology and improved treatment approaches, Sarver notes, orthodontists now are able to treat growth-type bite problems and improve a patient's facial configuration at the same time. And through computerized video-imaging technology, patients are able to visualize the way they will look at the end of their treatment, greatly enhancing their confidence in the procedure.

"We know that moving teeth or the jaw in a particular manner will cause the soft tissue in the lips, nose, and chin to respond in a certain way," Sarver says. "For instance, if I move the upper incisors back five millimeters, the upper lip may come back four millimeters. I can program the computer to simulate treatment so that, as I move the teeth on the screen, the computer will show me what effect those changes will have on the face."

Sarver says he's always been interested in both the science and practice of orthodontics. After earning his M.S. Degree in orthodontics from the University of North Carolina in 1979, he returned to UAB and taught in the School of Dentistry for 15 years, while maintaining a full-time orthodontic practice in Vestavia, as well as a prolific academic output. He has conducted seminars and lectured worldwide on orthodontics and has written dozens of scientific papers.

Sarver's newly released textbook, *Esthetic Orthodontics and Orthognathic*

David Sarver, D.M.D., M.S.

Changing the Face of Dentistry

By Barbara Westlake-Kenny

Surgery, is the result of research he has conducted since 1985. The book focuses on the use of pioneering software, developed by Sarver, that overlays a patient's facial image on his or her skull X ray, allowing controlled algorithms to be applied to treatment that had previously been somewhat unpredictable.

Sarver believes that the dental clinician should be committed to lifelong learning, and so he has surrounded himself with researchers within his own active practice. Over the past decade, UAB residents, including Mark Johnston, D.M.D., M.S., Greg Osborne, D.M.D., M.S., Sherri Weissman, D.M.D., M.S., Lew Sample, D.M.D., M.S., and Mike Williams, D.M.D., M.S., have filled research positions in his practice, and all have gone on to successful orthodontic careers.

"Since my first days as a student in the School of Dentistry, my mentor has been Dr. Charles McCallum," Sarver says. "He was an inspiration. Even when he was president of UAB, he maintained a vigorous private practice within the university and did orthognathic (jaw) surgery. As president of the student body, I admired Dr. McCallum's leadership skills and his ability to continue to practice even though he had academic commitments. He taught me that there shouldn't be a division between academic and clinical dentistry. The clinician should always remain an active student."

McCallum taught Sarver something else of profound importance: "When he met us as dental students, he said, 'You're entering a profession, and a profession means that you'll be held to a higher standard. You will be expected to take care of people.' I happen to believe that," Sarver says. "I saw Dr. McCallum treating patients, and for him, it didn't matter what their social status was. He treated them all with the greatest care and respect." **UAB**

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Steven Wood