

# Dennis Tregoning, DDS – A Dentist Story

**Dr. Dennis Tregoning paints a vivid picture of his career’s humble beginnings.**

Ahh. To be a young dentist back in the day. So glamorous. The patients. The procedures. The painting. The painting?

On a Sunday afternoon many years ago, Dr. Dennis Tregoning was spending the day at his dental practice but it wasn’t to see patients. “At the time, my office was located next door to another dentist. I came in on Sunday to paint my office because I didn’t want the other dentist to know that I had to paint my own office!” said Dr. Tregoning.

It turns out the neighboring dentist had a secret of his own. “As I was walking out of the office that day with paint in hand, I saw the other dentist walking out at the same time as me. And he was coming out carrying a carpet cleaner! We both looked at each other and smiled.”

When you have your own practice, there are many things you need to take care of that have nothing to do with dentistry. You have to hire people, manage your people, manage your building, and manage your accounting and financing. And maybe even paint the walls and clean the carpet.

Dr. Tregoning graduated from dental school in 1973. “I decided pretty early in life that being a dentist was something I wanted to do,” said Dr. Tregoning. “I was originally accepted at UCLA, but it was far away and very expensive, so I went off to Marquette University with the plan of becoming a dentist. And I did just that.”

After graduation, Dr. Tregoning owned a private practice in Janesville, Wisconsin. It was a picturesque small community, but there was always a fear that the town could be on the verge of decline. “General Motors was in Janesville for 90 years and there was this consistent rumor they would leave,” said Dr. Tregoning. “This concern was always in the back of my mind because I knew if they left, it would tank the local economy, bring housing values down, and lead to great job loss.” It turns out his fears were not unfounded. General Motors ended up leaving Janesville.

With concerns about the future top of mind, he sold his practice to a new graduate in 1984. “This was unusual at the time,” said Dr. Tregoning. “Back then you started a practice and stayed wherever you were for life, and here I was leaving.” Later that same year, Dr. Tregoning went to work part time with Midwest Dental. “I joined Midwest Dental when there

were just 17 Midwest Dental offices," said Dr. Tregoning. "Still, 17 dental offices was a lot for one dental company at the time."

After practicing in a couple different offices with Midwest Dental, Dr. Tregoning moved to Madison, Wisconsin where he still practices with Midwest Dental today.

### **Benefits of working at a DSO:**

"After joining Midwest Dental, I didn't have to, for example, deal with updating and keeping the computer system working. And it used to be just such a big burden deciding what insurance to take," said Dr. Tregoning. "Life became a lot easier without those concerns."

Dr. Tregoning also enjoys the educational opportunities available with a DSO. "One of the biggest advantages is they keep me on my toes," said Dr. Tregoning. "You have all this great continuing education support, and when there are industry changes, I get a memo telling me about the changes. I don't have to worry about it. Private practices just don't have that support. It's up to the dentist to know everything."

Looking back on his early career, Dr. Tregoning recalls another time when being a solo practitioner wasn't quite so glamorous. "Another company in my building decided to turn off all the water to the building to work on a plumbing problem. We didn't know this was happening," said Dr. Tregoning. "So with no water flowing, our pump burned out. And then of course we were completely down and unable to treat patients until we could finally get the pump replaced. It was actually a pretty devastating incident. Now if that happened, I would just call the Midwest Dental support center and they would come out and put a new pump in! No more hassles. I love it!"



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