

DOCTOR ROBERT

From Humble Roots to Trusted Smiles: The Crowning Story of Beatles Superfan and GPS Resident Dr. Robert Masi, DDS



Near the north edge of the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, in a historic Cotswold Carriage home built by the Ford Family and designed by famous architect Albert Kahn in 1930, lives the affable and esteemed Dr. Robert Masi, DDS, who embodies the adage that great dentists don't just examine teeth — they examine lives.

This year, as Dr. Masi celebrates his 35th year of practice, we take a look back at the journey that shaped the personal touch, humor, wit, intelligence, advanced technologies and Italian family-friendly culture he brings to dentistry, as well as residing in one of Grosse Pointe's most historically significant and distinctive homes.

His story polishes the American dream by drilling deep into time-tested qualities for success — old school hard work, perseverance, relationship building, continuous learning and meticulous planning.

At 61, Dr. Masi continues to be a cornerstone of dental excellence in Michigan. His practice, much like Grosse Pointe Shores, is more than a hallmark; it's a nurturing space where compassion meets expertise — creating not just enduring smiles, but enduring relationships.

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If the Shoe Fits

Born to Italian immigrant parents, Dr. Masi's family moved from East Detroit to Grosse Pointe Woods in 1971. His father — a shoe repair artisan — instilled in him the values of hard work, customer service and dedication. Developing his work ethic in the family-owned Macy Appearance Shop in the basement of the now defunct Eastland Mall, young Dr. Masi would balance between honing interpersonal skills with customers and focusing on his academic aspirations through the very day before he finished his graduate studies.

Along the way, his spirit found its true calling when he turned his genuine desire to helping others through the medical field.

“As far as I can remember, I always wanted to help care for people,” he said.

After attending Ferry Elementary School and Parcels Middle School, he graduated from Grosse Pointe North High School in June 1981. Later that fall, he began his medical dream, focusing on pre med courses at Wayne State University in Detroit. He took his MCAT in the summer of 1984. He did so well on the standard medical school entrance exam he was accepted into WSU’s prestigious School of Medicine.

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When One Door Closes . . .

Something happened soon after that profoundly changed his education and career forever.

“I worked as a phlebotomist (a person who draws blood) at Cottage Hospital,” he said. “I realized this profession was not for me. I was unhappy with the delivery system and disenchanted with the medical field.”

A few weeks later, he worked a week at a local dentist. He was immediately hooked.

“I love dentistry,” he said. “It combines science with medicine and art while working with your hands. Just like a sculpture, I love working with my hands. Whether you are making crowns, dentures or other cosmetic materials, there is an art to getting different shades and tints just right.”

He graduated from WSU with a BA degree in Biology in 1985 and applied to Michigan’s top professional dental schools. He was brushed aside at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry and immediately accepted at the University of Detroit School of Dentistry. U-M later accepted him, leaving him with a major life decision.

“My mom said she would continue to cook for me if I stayed home and I loved her home cooking so there was no choice at all,” he said, laughing. “I got more time to study so I lived at home and commuted to U-D.”



Nobody Is Happy to Be Here

His commitment to the dental field was cemented at U-D, where he earned his DDS degree in 1989. His education, shaped by the values of commitment, caring and continuous improvement, became the foundation of his professional philosophy.

“The hardest part of the profession is people do not want to go to the dentist,” Dr. Masi said. “Nobody wants a shot in their mouth. No one is happy to be here. Their blood pressure goes up. Their anxiety goes up. So I need to act more like a flight attendant calming and relaxing passengers during turbulence. I get the patient chuckling and feeling good through a light-hearted approach set in a professional decorum.”

The key is to read people. Every patient is different.

“It’s all about building relationships and learning what works best for each patient,” he said. “Some want to chit chat and some want to just get it done. I want all of my patients to feel good and enjoy the best possible experience here.”

Dr. Masi’s thoughtful and caring approach is recognized by his peers. Dr. Carl Piontkowski DDS, a dentist working in Clinton Township, met him on the very first day of dental school and they have been great friends since.

“He always treats his patients as family,” Dr. Piontkowski said. “He always gives them thoughtful and friendly care. I trust him with my own dental work. He is among the top dentists in Metro Detroit.”

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The Art of Dentistry

After graduation, Dr. Masi worked for a local dentist. In 1994, he started his own dental office in a large building on Vernier Road across from then Eastland Mall. With crime rising, he moved his practice to Greater Mack in St. Clair Shores in 2012, where he continues his mission today to provide state-of-the-art dental care by staying abreast of the latest techniques and scientific advances through attendance at continuing education courses, seminars and conferences.

“Technology has dramatically improved dentistry,” he said. “Our speed and accessibility have improved immensely. We are scanning teeth instead of making impressions. An old drill would take an hour whereas a new high-speed drill takes 15 minutes to get the same job done.”

Over the years, Dr. Masi's affiliations with prestigious organizations such as the Academy of General Dentistry and the American Dental Association highlighted his dedication to service excellence and continuous improvement. Possibly closest to his heart is his work with the Designated Dental Services of Michigan for Underprivileged Children, underscoring his commitment to community well-being.

As technology has improved, so has Dr. Masi's office on every level.

Enter his office and you will enjoy the comfort of carpet, rather than cold floors. The office aroma is easy on the nose, rather than medicinal. He removed the window that separates patients from the support staff to offer a more personal experience, inspires a family-friendly atmosphere among his six full- and part-time employees and displays only the most recent magazines from 14 ongoing subscriptions.

Improving all aspects of his skills, staff and services has helped grow his office to give his more than 2,800 current patients more reasons to smile.

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Best of Both Worlds

The same dedication to his craft can be seen outside the office, in the thoughtful upgrades of his historic Cotswold Carriage home, which stands testament to his deep appreciation for history and community.

Family is central to Dr. Masi's narrative. Joined by his wife, Beth Masi, the sense of home extends beyond the boundaries of their property, nestled next to woods and an open field across from the Ford House. There, they welcome nature's all-star cast, starring woodpeckers, deer, red hawks, bald eagles, foxes, coyotes, bats and more.

Step into their home and you immediately feel its rich history as it embodies the warmth that patients feel when they step into Dr. Masi's office, where a visit feels less like an

appointment and more like catching up with an old friend. Immediately you are greeted by their super friendly and playful cockapoo, Sammy, 12.

The home was designed by famous architect Albert Kahn and built by the Ford Family for its head housekeeper and her family in 1930 after the completion of its main estate in 1929. Originally, the first floor contained a dining room (17' x 15'), kitchen (14' x 11') and a large living room (21' x 18'), which features a large European style fireplace, beamed ceiling and solid oak woodwork. On the second floor there are now two bedrooms, a sitting room, office and a bathroom.

Like many of Kahn's projects, the modest and charming home, surrounded by 57 trees, has beautiful brickwork, a tile roof, and is highlighted by the striking chimney at the side of the house.

According to the Ford House archives, Kahn traveled to the [Cotswolds](#) in England in preparation for his new projects. He took numerous photos and made many sketches on each and every detail of the English style, which is reflected in the cottage house. The house looks as if it has been plucked straight out of England and dropped onto the corner of Lakeshore, a testament to Kahn's attention to detail and level of authenticity in this design.

Dr. Masi and Beth Masi, who married in 2016, converted the attached garage into living space and meticulously renovated the two bedroom, one and a half bath, 2,100-square-foot home. It now has three bedrooms, two and one half baths and 2,600 square feet with a separate new two-car Carriage House that perfectly matches the home's architecture.

"This is the best of both worlds," said Beth Masi, who works in his office. "You feel like you are living up north. We enjoy living next to amazing woods in our backyard and all of the conveniences of living in a small, close-knit community."

Almost Didn't Happen

Beth Masi adores her husband and believes he is the kindest, most caring and most giving man she has known.

"He is perfect in almost every way except he sometimes leaves crumbs on tables and can be sensitive at times," she said, laughing.

Buying the home almost didn't happen.

Just before COVID manifested itself in early 2020, Dr. Masi saw a real estate agent hammering a For Sale sign on the front lawn as he passed the home on his way to work one early morning. He had always coveted the home so he stopped and spoke with the agent. Later that day, he and Beth Masi made an offer and it was accepted. Then disaster struck. COVID shut down the economy and many professional services,

including dentistry. Without a steady income, the couple paused on the home purchase for three months with the seller's approval.

"Then businesses started opening up and the agreement was back on," Dr. Masi said. "We were very fortunate."

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Dentists Without Borders

Dr. Masi's practice is more than a clinic; it's a legacy of patient relationships forged over time, with many stretching back more than two decades. These enduring bonds speak volumes of his expertise and the trust he instills. His success, he muses, comes from reading people, building relationships, and embracing humor — all seamlessly integrated with cutting-edge technology.

As he reflects on the 35 years of smiles and care, his journey — threaded with the legacy of his parents, the support of his family, and the trust of his patients — stands as a beacon of personal touch in an age of technological impersonality.

"I have no plans to retire, but I would like to travel more," he said. "Maybe someday I will be volunteering like Doctors Without Borders to help those in countries without professional dental care. Maybe something like Dentists Without Borders."