

Dr. Dibble Marks 40 Years in Saline Practice

Dr. J. Michael Dibble has practiced dentistry for 40 years in Saline.

- By [Tran Longmoore](#)



Dr. J. Michael Dibble has been practicing dentistry in Saline since 1971.

After 40 years of practicing as a dentist in Saline, Dr. J. Michael Dibble has no plans to hang up the sickle probe.

Sept. 1 was the 40th anniversary of the day Dibble joined Dr. Andy Koran's practice in Saline. Today, at 67 years old, Dibble works twice a week at [Woodland Family Dentistry](#) with Dr. Jennifer McFinton and Dr. Jill Bell.

"I am tall. They need people to change light bulbs around here," Dibble joked. "I may make it until I am 70. I enjoy it. I still enjoy coming to work. I love the patients and the great staff we have. I don't think I can just sit around and play golf all day. I need to have a reason to get up in the morning."

Dibble grew up in Detroit, the son of a physician who practiced in Ann Arbor. According to long-time colleague Debby Schneider, Dibble shares many of his father's traits.

"His father used to come home from work with chicken or eggs from the patients who couldn't afford to pay him. Dr. Dibble has always been very generous with patients who have a tough time paying," Schneider said.

Dibble graduated from the University of Michigan School of Dentistry in 1969 and served two years as a dentist in the U.S. Army, stationed in Williamsburg, Va, before joining Koran's practice. Since then, he's been practicing for 40 years in a building previously owned by longtime Saline physician Dr. Douthat. During that time he's asked thousands of Saline residents to "Say Ah." He took

impressions and made mouthguards for hundreds of coach Jack Crabtree's football players. In some families, Dibble is seeing four generations of patients.

"I think what I am most proud of is that we have four generations of people coming here. We've also have so many people who work here who've been here for a very long time," Dibble said. "I hope that shows that we do good work and that this is a nice place to work."

One of those employees is Schneider, who has been with the practice since 1977.

"One of the things that has been really nice is having this young lady with me, almost from the beginning," Dibble said, motioning toward Schneider. "I swear some people come to this office to see her and not me."

Schneider said that the staff at the practice love it when Dibble comes in.

"We spoil him," she said, pointing to a container full of freshly-baked chocolate chip cookies she brought in for him that morning.

Dibble said his 40 years in the practice has flown by.

"It sounds trite, because everyone always says 'they can't believe it's been so long.' But it's true. I think about the day I started and it seems like just yesterday," he said.

Dentistry has changed a lot in 40 years. Dibble said that there are two chief reasons why people don't visit the dentist: Money and Pain. During his 40-year career the profession has made great strides reducing the pain experienced by patients.

"People used to think of the dentist and have an image of pain. Over the years we've done a lot to change that. We know that one bad experience can stay with a person for a lifetime, so we work hard to make people comfortable and unafraid," Dibble said. "At our practice, Dr. McFinton and Dr. Bell do a great job of being gentle and allaying patients' fears."

Dibble and his wife, Linda, who is retired from the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, raised a daughter, Carrie, who is a school teacher in Pinckney.

Woodland Family Dentistry is located at 510 N. Ann Arbor Street. For more information, phone 734-429-4111 or visit the [website](#).