

# Beauty and Brains

Some people seem to be born blessed. Take Dr. Chiann Fan Gibson, a 38-year-old family dentist who lives in Aurora, Ill. Mrs. United States 2005 was a University of Washington, Seattle, cheerleader, she received a merit scholarship and excellence awards in operative dentistry and prosthodontics from Tufts School of Dental Medicine in Boston, and Donald Trump himself named her the official dentist of the Miss Universe Pageant in 1998.



PHOTOS BY Ingrid Williams



WRITTEN BY  
Kristen Wright, Associate Editor

“ Having had braces, I achieved a beautiful smile through orthodontia. This also resulted in an improved confidence level. I’m glad that I can do the same for others today. ”

— Chiann  
Fan Gibson, DMD

But Dr. Fan Gibson's success began on the other side of the world. She was born in Tokyo to Taiwanese parents who immigrated to the United States with three daughters ages 3 and younger. They moved with less than \$200 and no English skills.

She and her sisters grew up in Los Angeles, Tuscon, Ariz., and Houston before the family became naturalized U.S. citizens in 1986.

"I worked at an amusement park, AstroWorld, for a short while during high school and at an Asian grocery store bagging groceries," she said.

A future in the health profession tugged at her, so she studied psychology as an undergraduate.

"I knew I wanted to go into the health profession going into college. Dentistry was the choice during my junior year at the University of Washington," Dr. Fan Gibson said. "I had already taken my premed courses, and during one summer for two weeks, I worked at a dental office for a work-study program. I found it fascinating and said, 'I want to do what he is doing.' I went to my university counselor and mentioned my interest in pursuing dentistry."

The counselor, however, was less than supportive.

"He mentioned that I should become a physical education teacher," Dr. Fan Gibson said. "I don't know why. I'm glad I pursued what I wanted to



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**My husband entered me in the Mrs. Pageant, where I ultimately won Mrs. Illinois and went on to win the national Mrs. USA Pageant.**

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— Chiann Fan Gibson, DMD

do, and I'm glad I changed counselors and went to the Office of Minority Affairs, which helped direct me in the right direction. I took my DAT entrance exam within two months and passed with flying colors. I am still thankful to Dr. Apilado from the University of Washington, who encouraged me to pursue my dreams."

Pageantry helped finance her schooling, Dr. Fan Gibson said.

"It started with the urging of a senior friend," she said. "I entered a local scholarship pageant and won Pierce Junior Miss in 1986, and I went on to win Washington state's Junior Miss that same year. All of these experiences were wonderful and helped mold both my character and strength in my professional career.

"My dental career started in Boston. Upon



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## get to know her ...

what are you reading? WDJ

favorite web site? [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)

favorite comfort food? Potato chips

favorite hometown restaurant? Mothers Restaurant for breakfast, KiKu Japanese Restaurant for sushi

who would you interview? Elvis — if I can find him — or Oprah

graduating in 1995 from Tufts Dental, I was clinical floor instructor in the department of restorative dentistry. Soon afterward, upon the referral of the dean of Tufts, I was asked to join a dental practice in Beverly, Mass., just outside of Boston."

She married Jim Gibson in 1999 and moved to Illinois.

"Prior to our marriage, my husband was residing in Washington, D.C. for 15 years, and I was residing in Boston for more than eight years. We had a great long-distance relationship and lots of frequent flier miles," she said. "We wanted to be near family. My family was in Virginia, Hawaii, and North Carolina. Jim's dad, three sisters, nieces, and nephews all resided in Illinois with their families."

For four years, Dr. Fan Gibson commuted from Aurora to Sterling, Ill., before joining Wheatland Dental in Naperville, Ill., voted the No. 2 best city to live in America, according to USA TODAY. The multi-service, family, and cosmetic practice treats more than 7,000 active patients in a 10,000-square-foot area with upper and lower levels. In-house specialties include orthodontia, periodontics, and oral surgery. In the spring of 2006, Dr. Fan Gibson joined a second dental practice in Naperville, designDENTAL. The 1,800-square-foot dental spa specializes in cosmetic makeovers.

"The good thing about dentistry is the positive impact it has on people," Dr. Fan Gibson said. "It's a profession in which I enjoy interacting

with people. To me, dentistry is an art. I do it every day with passion, and I enjoy it.

"My advice would be to go to a great school such as Tufts School of Dental Medicine. It makes a difference in the level of performance achieved as a professional dentist. Enjoy the artistic profession, as it allows us to express and create beautiful works of art in patients' mouths. That can completely alter their outlooks on life and their futures."

For fun, Dr. Fan Gibson and her husband stay involved with charities and church activities.

"Jim and I work together to help produce a yearly televised charity in Washington, D.C. called Fight Night. During the past 16 years, we have raised in excess of \$30 million," she said.

And recently, she became a dental columnist.

"In August, I became a columnist for the Naperville Sun Newspapers in Illinois. My column is called Open Wide and features a combination of informative yet humorous outlooks on dentistry. Readers e-mail me questions and comments, and then I respond. It runs every second and fourth Tuesday. We're looking forward to syndicating the column," she said.



**Dr. Fan Gibson's twin sister, Ping Holt, at right, is a former Miss Virginia World and lives in North Carolina. Their older sister, Chen, lives in Virginia and is the wife of Navy Lt. Com. Greg Hubbard. Their mother, Linda Yen, and father, Tony Fan, live in Washington, D.C.**



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