

Is there life **after** dental practice ownership?

Dentists often put off selling their practices because they are concerned about life after dentistry.

What will they do with all those extra hours, how will they cope with leaving behind the identity that has defined them for decades? This series of articles explores the very busy lives of some of Practice Sale Search's clients, former-practice owners who have embraced post-sale life.

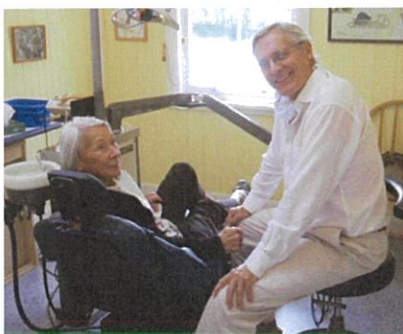
Name: Richard Warren
Age: I was 66 when I sold, I am now 67
Graduated: I graduated in 1975 from Sydney.
Practice Owned: Campbelltown/Camden NSW

Tell us about your career:

My wife's uncle had a practice in Camden NSW. In my final year he offered me a job. I was very fortunate that at the start of my career he offered me a job. The other students didn't have jobs to go to yet and were pretty jealous.

My wife, Fay, was studying dentistry a year behind me; when she finished, she found a dentist in Campbelltown to work for. He was older and thinking of finishing up. He was wonderful; he mentored her in her first years in dentistry and offered me the opportunity to come and work for him. He finished practicing in 1981 and we bought the practice from him.

Fay and I had separate surgeries, she did a certain style of dentistry – she was keen on dentures and was also very good with children. When I started at the practice in May 1978, we had a little girl (we ended up having five kids). Life was very busy and Fay stopped practicing for a while when we had our third kid.



We lived in Camden (15 km away) and that's where our friends were and where we wanted to be.

Fay started looking at real estate in Camden; we found a beautiful converted house and bought it and moved our chairs in 2002. We hoped that the patients would move across and three quarters of them did.

Why did you sell?

In 2017 we started to think about selling. I was starting to feel out of my comfort zone. Once upon a time I could handle everything: endo, crowns, kids, etc. A lot of it started to become uncomfortable for me. Suddenly posterior root canals bothered me, children bothered me. I didn't want to do bridge work anymore.

We decided to get out while we were on the top, while we were still doing well and at the top of our game.

I have not looked back!

How did you sell?

My friend recommended PSS, and I was put on to Kevin Koton. He did a great job, he found these terrific buyers, who have been lovely.

I stayed on for a six-month transition, then I left. It felt good. It was a relief to be handing over my patients and staff to some good dentists. The staff has mostly stayed on and they are all happy with the new owners.



What now?

We are very happy not working. The trick is to stay active.

We have more time to focus on our kids, some of whom have needed us more recently. We have seven grandchildren, four on the Central Coast.

We live on 25 acres, I could be alive for another 100 years and I wouldn't get everything done!

We are cyclists. We did a cycling trip through Europe last year, this year we have cycled through New Zealand's South Island and we did Victoria a few months ago. Next year we are going to cycle through WA.

I have been an officer with the RFS for 27 years and am president of the local brigade. We meet once a month and we train once a month. When we get a period like we had this past summer, with multiple fires and dangerous conditions, we are on tenterhooks. There are no fires around here at the moment, but we are alert and waiting. I was asked to go up to Coffs Harbour last week with a strike team – you have to commit five days. I was all set to go and then they cancelled.

We ended up in a situation in 1997 on a fire trail, about seven trucks, and the fire rushed up the hill like a steam train and both sides of the road were on fire. I thought, "Is this how I am going to die today?" We were able to turn around and managed to get out of there. In the next week or so the pager will go off, I have no doubt.

I spent December and January fighting the bushfires. Our small brigade at Theresa Park put in about 1,700 hours, with our trucks travelling to Warragamba, Southern Highlands, Wombeyan Caves and our own district of Wollondilly. ♦