

# PITT DENTAL MEDICINE

Winter 2014–15

## A NEW ERA OF PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

Creating More Patient-friendly  
Experiences to Better Serve  
Our Students and the Community



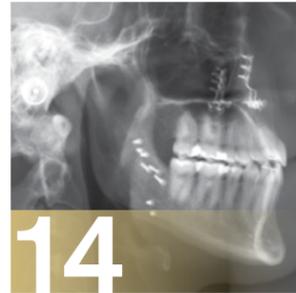
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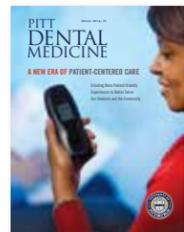
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## PITT DENTAL MEDICINE

Winter 2014–15  
Volume 13, Number 1

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## FROM THE DEAN



Thomas W. Braun

Patients are the center of our mission at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine, whether they are here for care at the present time, to be treated in the future through the science we are exploring, or to provide the basis for clinical teaching to our students and residents. Unquestionably, our goal is to ensure the optimum level of care and service for all our patients.

With that in mind, the School of Dental Medicine is moving forward with a strategic planning process that embodies this focus. This is a multifaceted approach that includes a marketing plan to ensure patients' awareness of the opportunities available to them at the School of Dental Medicine as well as significant facility modifications. Our intent is to have our patient facility look and feel more like an individual care facility rather than have the atmosphere of an archaic clinic.

In that respect, we have increased our clinic hours and are looking at ways to increase patient access and continuity. We also have modified our intake procedures to make them truly user friendly and HIPAA compliant. This includes the incorporation of the electronic health record, access to the school, and a program to ensure patient "customer" orientation by faculty and staff. This upgrade is apparent as soon as one enters the School of Dental Medicine and checks in for care. Such changes are ongoing and will continue to occur into the coming year.

I believe that this issue of *Pitt Dental Medicine* will provide significant insight into how our school is attempting to care for patients, whether they are here or at outlying areas.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Braun  
(DMD '73, MDS '73, PhD '77)  
Professor and Dean,  
University of Pittsburgh  
School of Dental Medicine

# A NEW ERA OF PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

Creating More Patient-friendly Experiences to Better Serve Our Students and the Community

BY SALLY ANN FLECKER

Experts abound at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine dental clinic. The experts are those who supervise the care provided by students and residents to pediatric and adult patients with a wide variety of oral health needs. In fact, one reason why the Pitt dental clinic is such an essential oral health care resource for the region is because it has a cadre of dental specialists who are readily available right at the time they are needed—even at the patient’s chair side.

When Dr. Marnie Oakley joined the school as associate dean for clinical affairs, she quickly discovered another group of experts: the support staffers in the Office of Patient Services. Dr. Oakley started her new role by asking questions and listening. She talked to the members of the support staff to get a feel for the functions of the office. What did everybody do all day? How efficient was it? How happy were people in their jobs? This last question was especially important to her.

“That is something I hope defines me in my leadership role,” she says. “I want people who work for me or with me to appreciate what they do [and] to know why what they do is so important. Oftentimes, especially in health care in a large organization,

staff members can wonder, ‘Am I really important? What kind of impact do I have?’ And, in actuality, they’re very impactful. I want them to remember that. Yes, the dentists and students are providing the dental services to the patients. But we’d be nothing without support services.”

**“The truth is that the staff members were the real experts in the process. They had all the answers.”**

As Dr. Oakley delved into not only what staff members did but also how they did it, she often found that the reason for the way a task was done was simply that it had always been done that way. That didn’t necessarily make good sense. “I didn’t know anything about what they did. I didn’t have the knowledge or expertise to fix it,” says Dr. Oakley. “But they did. The truth is that the staff members were the real experts in the process. They had all the answers.” Their thoughtful answers and willingness to make changes have led to a bevy of enhancements to the work

process, staff and patient interactions, and even the physical environment. These all contribute to making the clinic a friendlier, more comfortable place that better reflects the premier care patients receive.

Staff members were quite adept at providing information about what worked in their jobs, what didn’t, and where the barriers were. That exercise resulted in employees’ developing process maps describing agreed-upon, logical ways to carry out their jobs. Not only was everyone now on the same page, but the process maps also provided a great training resource for new staff members.

Improvements work best when they are organic. Out of this exercise came a reorganization focused on maximizing patient flow and overall services provided by the department. This ensured that staff members were in the positions they were best qualified for. “People were rearranged. Positions were created and eliminated, combined and reorganized,” says dental school communications specialist Jim Rosendale. “Looking at it today, it all makes sense for a clinical department to be organized and function this way.”

This was not change for change’s sake, avows Dr. Oakley. “All of these efforts focused on the common theme that intended to allow staff members to love their jobs again as they felt a sense of



Dr. Marnie Oakley, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs

purpose for everything they did. It was important to the process that each staff member understood how important he or she was in our overall success,” she says. “I think the real payoff has been in the hard work from each one of the staff members during the process. They truly embraced the process and their new positions, and the real benefits are transferred to the patients, fellow staff members, and students who serve as our customers and are serviced by more informed and genuinely happy employees.”

While everyone was feeling reenergized by the reorganization, certified trainers from the University’s human resources office were brought in to present customer service training. “We’re the first face that a patient sees when they come into the building,” says Donna George, manager of patient assistance and information, stressing the importance of that initial interaction.

“Instead of focusing on every patient’s need as a task, the staff now see each patient as a person in need of personal care and a friendly face,” says Dr. Oakley. “The customer is not just the patient; it’s anyone you talk to. It could be the coworker sitting next to you—whoever is asking you for a service related to patient care. You can’t look at it as one more task that you have to do at work.

Instead, you have to look at the customers as human beings—human beings facing real-life issues. Maybe they couldn’t find parking. Maybe they have family problems they’re dealing with at home. You have to respond to whoever is in front of you as a real person. That should translate to everything you do at work.”

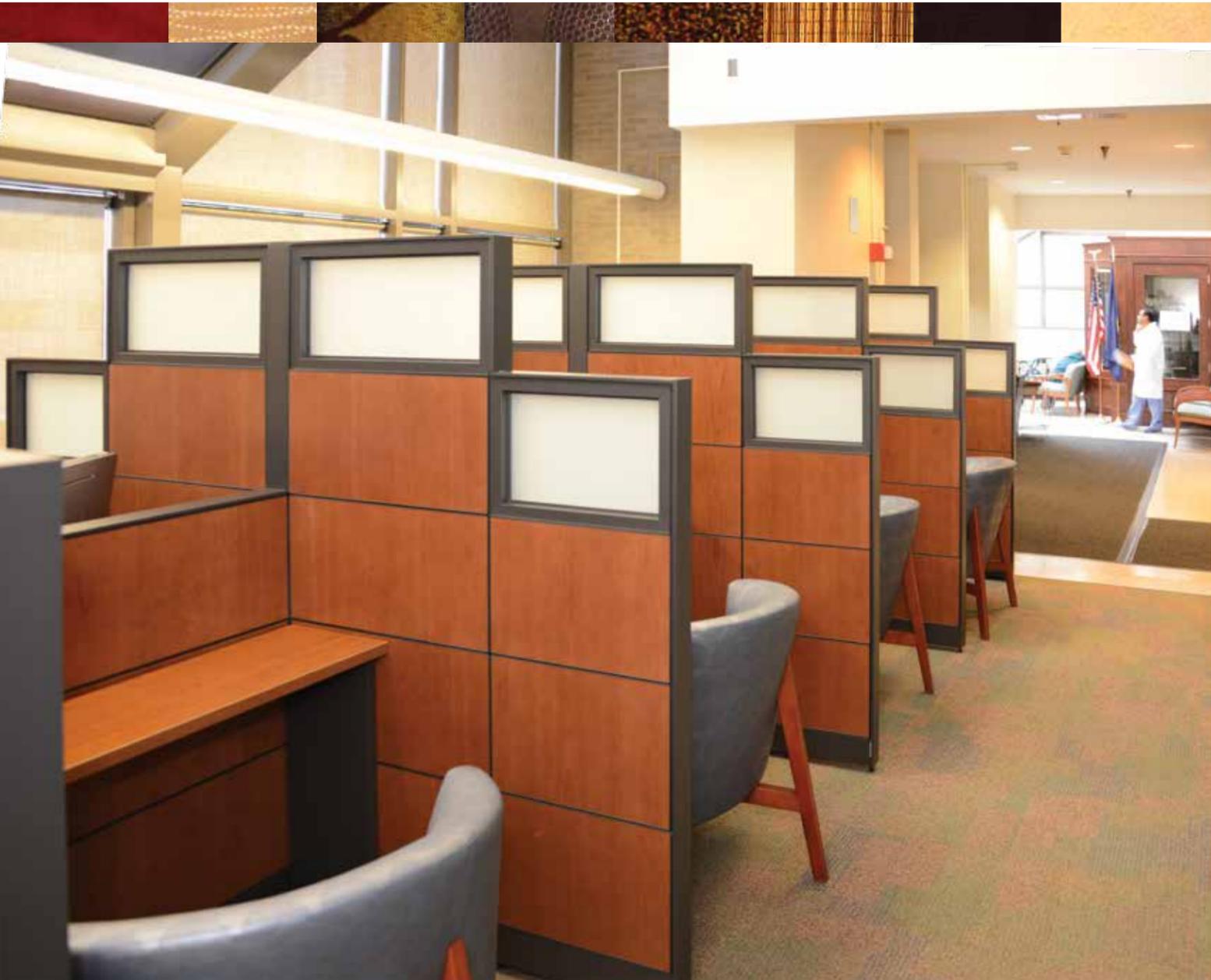
One day, Dr. Oakley found herself sharing a story that someone had told her in an e-mail message. The customer service training had just been completed, and it occurred to her that the story was something the entire staff might enjoy reading. The reaction to that e-mail was so positive that the weekly customer service tip (CST) e-mail—now a year old and counting—was born. “This might be the momentum we need to faithfully remind ourselves,” she thought at the time. “Think about how many times you are a customer in your day: It’s countless. And it’s so awesome when you’re faced with someone who’s just genuinely nice. Finding reasons to be nice and dialing into that quality was what we were trying to appeal to.”



Registration specialists like Kim, pictured above left, went through extensive customer service training to ensure that each patient receives personalized attention and the highest-quality care.

**“Instead of focusing on every patient’s need as a task, the staff now see each patient as a person in need of personal care and a friendly face.”**

Dr. Oakley wrote the CST e-mails every week for the first 12 weeks. “It was becoming like a full-time job for me,” she laughs. “I was researching a lot of stuff. I really wanted to inspire the staff.” Then she invited her two managers, George and patient care and accounts manager Roberta Walk, to join in. Within a month, George and Walk were so positive about



Staff reorganization and a process flow redesign mesh perfectly with the new interior design that is immediately visible when you enter the school's clinic wing.

the experience that they suggested that everyone on staff take a turn presenting a story about one of their experiences or an inspirational message they find useful. "It's really been very well accepted. I think it's made a huge difference in attitudes," says Walk. "Dr. Oakley was interested in changing the perception of this being just a dental clinic into this being a welcoming resource where patients in the community can come to receive dental treatment."

Patients get to chime in, too. Through the STAR Program, patients are asked to provide feedback on their experiences with staff members. "It's almost like a secret shopper," says Dr. Oakley. "We pluck out one person and ask if we can take a little bit of his or her time by asking how his or her registration process or financial counseling went." It's one way of letting patients know that their opinions really matter. "We hope his

or her experience was good," says Walk. "But if it wasn't, we want to hear about it to be able to change things that need to be changed."

"It's not a way to nab staff members who may be having a bad day," adds Dr. Oakley. "We do it with the hope of being able to compliment staff members who are doing a great job. We're here to reinforce good habits and give kudos back, because people need that."

Comfortable and satisfying interactions between staff and patients go a long way in creating a favorable experience in the dental clinic. But there's nothing wrong with having creature comforts. Renovations have taken place to improve the flow and comfort of patients. "Many employees moved to new offices with contemporary designs and patient-friendly interiors," Dr. Oakley points out. "The registration space is one of the most impressive—and most overdue—improvements. Our patients now have the luxury of sitting in private spaces with soft and soothing color palettes and oversized, comfortable seating."

A 21st-century-style enhancement leaves patients with no doubt that they have come to a contemporary health care facility that uses all the latest technologies. A text message app alerts waiting patients, via their cell phones, of their status in line. No cell phone? No problem: Handheld electronic pagers stand in quite nicely.



Before renovations took place, (left), the patient registration area was impersonal and cold. The thick glass window presented a barrier to communication. After renovations, (right), the patient registration area enables comfortable, face-to-face communication in a welcoming space.

Now there is no worrying that you missed hearing your name being called because you were distracted or had to visit the restroom.

Other significant technological advances that boost the clinic's efforts to put the patient front and center are taking place as well. A few years ago, the clinic migrated from paper charts to electronic health records (EHRs). Within a few short months, patients will have the convenience of logging in to portions of their EHR from home in a secure online environment. They can fill out forms, view their information, and make updates. "This can have the biggest impact in saving our patients and providers valuable appointment time," says Dr. Oakley. "In this day and age, efficiency and respecting our patients' time are top priorities."

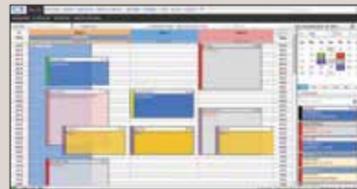
Rosendale sees the EHR portal as a terrific educational opportunity. "When patients make an appointment for a particular procedure, say a root canal, we can make educational videos and reading material about the procedure available through their EHR profile. The better educated our patients are, the better consumers they



are of our care. They'll be able to have more in-depth conversations with our students and our faculty members," he says. "Understanding the procedures that are being performed on them may also help to decrease their fear of dentists."

Patrick Hetherington, EHR manager, built logic into the electronic medical history and risk assessment forms that patients complete during their first appointment. These forms enable students to print out evidence-based recommendations that are unique to their patient's condition. Not only is the patient's current risk for disease identified, but advice also is offered on how to reduce the disease state and the overall risk for future dental disease.

"In other words, we will not only fix their dental problems, we also will teach them the tactics that will allow them to have improved oral health in the years to come," Dr. Oakley notes. "Then, of course, we follow up. I think a lot of times that risk is something that can easily be missed. You have a cavity, and we go ahead and fix it. Instead, we should be saying, 'You have a cavity. Why did you get that



The school's electronic health record (axiUm by Exan Group) is a computer-based system that allows for more efficient patient record keeping and enables the sharing of patient records with cooperating health care providers. Shown at left are screen images of patient education modules and scheduling systems from ICE Health Systems.

cavity, and how can we make sure you don't get any more?' That's a large educational piece."

Many dental clinic patients are longtime, loyal clients. Some travel from as far as 200 miles away. But, as with any practice, new patients must continually be cultivated. "We do have to ensure that there are patients in the chairs so that our students can have interactions with patients to experience real-life clinical issues," says Rosendale.

Operating a clinic where first professional students and residents gain essential experience under the close supervision of faculty members puts the dental school in a unique position among the six health science schools at the University of Pittsburgh. Students in the other

schools are able to engage in their clinical encounters at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center facilities. Students don't have to develop a patient base, per se, for their students. "We're the only Pitt school that runs its own clinic," says Rosendale. "This is done in the environment of an academic institution. That's an extra facet beyond most health science schools in that we have to create, manage, and promote a patient care area. It's also more distinct than if we were simply a dentist in a retail space."

Rosendale and Dr. Oakley have developed a vigorous marketing plan. One focus is attracting a diversity of patients so that dental students can have a great educational experience and feel that they're prepared for practice. A second, equally important, focus is on communicating the dental clinic's particular distinction of being staffed with regional experts in oral health care. The excellence of care provided by the dental clinic includes a mission to increase patients' knowledge of the services they are receiving as well as their understanding of their overall oral health. That's going the extra mile. Patient satisfaction and confidence are an integral part of this process.



Both DMD and dental hygiene students gain valuable clinical experience in the School of Dental Medicine dental clinic under the guidance of faculty members.

"We have this cadre of specialists at arm's length," says Dr. Oakley. "Four or five specialists can be right there, chairside, if necessary, to talk to the patient. That's a true benefit for our patients and students."

**"Dr. Oakley was interested in changing the perception of this being just a dental clinic into this being a welcoming resource where patients in the community can come to receive dental treatment."**

From the bottom up—that's the way the best organizations operate. Everyone at the Pitt dental clinic—from superlative support staffers to top-notch student practitioners to superb faculty members—works together to ensure that patients have an optimal experience and know that they've chosen the region's best and most comprehensive oral health care experts for their care. ●

## COHRI Links Information Resources to Improve Patient Care

Recently, the School of Dental Medicine joined the Consortium for Oral Health Research and Informatics (COHRI). In 2007, the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine proposed an idea to form a consortium to share data in order to facilitate clinical research in dentistry. The intention was to create an oral health data repository to share aggregate—depersonalized—information for the purposes of conducting better evidence-based research and providing better patient care. In effect, it's big data that's made available in its most useful format.

Instrumental to the school's decision to join the consortium was Dr. Heiko Spallek, associate dean for faculty affairs and associate professor of dental public health in Pitt's Center for Informatics in Oral Health Translational Research. "We collect a lot of information about our patients. This information is buried in our school's databases, and we don't pick it up again and look at our outcomes data because the electronic health record, in its current incarnation, can't deliver that information," says Dr. Spallek. "The database through COHRI allows us to easily drill down into data to see specific results from a combination of questions entered into it. Everyone in the school can look at the consortium's data repository, including the students."

COHRI's BigMouth Dental Data Repository is now available to faculty, residents, students, and other researchers at COHRI institutions that contribute their electronic health record (EHR) data. BigMouth currently contains data from more than 1 million patients and is updated every six months. The repository contains a limited data set in which all protected health information is removed, with the exception of dates and zip codes. It contains demographics, diagnoses, procedures, periodontal measurements, odontogram/tooth measurements, medical and dental histories, and information about the provider type (hygienist, dentist, dental student, or resident).

Overall, "Collaboration of data through EHRs across schools will open the doors to identifying new trends across broad demographics of patients. This type of research offers the most effective treatment options that can appeal to patients who present with similar symptoms in need of the latest and most effective techniques," says Dr. Marnie Oakley, associate dean for clinical affairs at the School of Dental Medicine.

For more information, please see the recent article published in the *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association* or visit [cohri.org](http://cohri.org). ●

# A CULTURE OF CARING:

FROM SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA TO CENTRAL AMERICA, PITT DENTAL MEDICINE STUDENTS AND FACULTY DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SERVICE

BY ELIZABETH ANNE MAY

First-year dental medicine student **DAVID J. COLE** veers to his right to get the basketball and misses—again. Both a high school and college athlete, Cole didn't expect to be dominated so completely by a bunch of teens when he woke up this morning.

Yet this is probably the most fun he's had losing.

As he struggles to get the knack of maneuvering the wheelchair he's in and handling the basketball at the same time, Cole smiles (though he has never steered a wheelchair before, let alone played basketball in one).

He smiles not only because these kids—dealing with everything from a muscular disease to a congenital birth defect—have adapted so well to their wheelchairs that they can thoroughly pound him in basketball but also because their smiles are contagious.

Cole grins because, even though he felt apprehensive last night (What if I do the wrong thing? What if I stare? How should I act? What should I say?), he realizes that the kids here at the Children's Institute in Pittsburgh may be kids with cerebral palsy or an autism spectrum disorder or muscular dystrophy, but they're still kids.

He also smiles because he had no idea he could have such a ball—literally and figuratively—while earning course credits.

**SCOPE (Student Community Outreach Program and Education) I, a nondental service learning program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine that spans 50 hours over the first two years of dental school, brought Cole to the Children's Institute to play "sharks and minnows" on the basketball court. While Cole's memorable wheelchair game took place nearly two years ago, it's still fresh in his mind along with the rest of his SCOPE I experiences—volunteering with the Special Olympics; hanging out with kids at a neighborhood Boys & Girls Club; playing dodgeball and eating pizza with highschoolers; and cleaning up trash in Verona, Pa., as part of Pitt Make A Difference Day.**

Today, Cole is a third-year Pitt dental medicine student; he'll graduate in 2016 with his DMD degree and hopes to secure an orthodontics residency.

SCOPE I and its clinical outreach counterpart, SCOPE II, are both housed within the Department of Dental Public Health, headed by Associate Dean for Dental Public Health and Community Outreach **DR. ROBERT J. WEYANT (DMD '82)**. While SCOPE I and II help students to fill credit hours (community outreach is so vital to the school's mission that it's been formalized into the course requirements), they also impact participants on a deeper level.

**RICHARD RUBIN, DDS**, personally witnesses profound perspective shifts in his students. As an assistant professor in the Department of Dental Public Health and director of SCOPE, he asks his students to write reflective journal entries as part of their SCOPE I and II experiences. By reviewing the journal entries, Dr. Rubin can trace his students' journeys of discovery.

Dr. Rubin finds one of many such entries he's read over the years: "My experience has changed my outlook not only on special-needs patients but also all other patients with different backgrounds from my own," says a student who has recently volunteered with the Special Olympics. "I have grown into a more accepting, less judgmental individual, and I am forever grateful for it. The fulfillment I got out of these

experiences has sparked an interest in me to work with patients with special needs in the future—something I had never even considered before."

"They start with knowledge and comprehension, then they begin to talk about being members of the community, then they start thinking about what being a professional in the community means," Dr. Rubin says. "Their perspective shifts from 'I could help these guys' to 'I should help these guys.'"

According to Dr. Rubin, who established SCOPE in 2001, the program's objectives are fourfold: to develop cultural competence and communication skills; to create more empathetic, personally committed dentists; to improve dentists' willingness to treat underserved populations; and to create an atmosphere of community-minded professionals.

In SCOPE I, dental medicine students head into Pittsburgh-area communities for nonclinical outreach activities. Over the years, they've worked with the American Red Cross, the United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Make-A-Wish Foundation of America, the Special Olympics, Ronald McDonald House Charities, the Girl Scouts of the United States of America, and the Boy Scouts of America as well as with local churches, community centers, schools, and more.

SCOPE II takes place in dental medicine students' fourth year. This mandatory two-week experience allows students to interact with underserved populations in a clinical setting. In the past two years, more than 5,200 patients were served by Pitt dental medicine students in federally qualified health centers located in areas ranging from Erie to Oil City to Uniontown, Pa.

There, students perform general dentistry work, including a variety of amalgam and composite preparations and restorations.

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs **DR. JEAN O'DONNELL, (DMD '90)**, sees four key benefits to the SCOPE programs. "They provide new practitioners with the tools necessary to assess information critically, they help them to stay abreast of changing knowledge, they assist them in adapting to continuous change, and they encourage reflection on the larger role and responsibilities of the profession in society," she says.

Dr. O'Donnell also mentions the predicted shortage of dentists in Pennsylvania and the role she and her colleagues at the School of Dental Medicine will play in helping to combat that shortage.

**"The mean age of Pennsylvania dentists is 55, meaning that roughly half will retire in the next 10 years," notes Dr. O'Donnell. "In particular, we need to foster student interest in practicing within rural and other underserved populations in our state."**

She explains that SCOPE II exposes students to the dental needs of underserved populations, teaches them about important loan repayment programs at federally qualified health centers, and helps students to see what it might be like to live in rural or underserved areas.

A small golden rectangle of fabric welcomed patients to the makeshift clinic. Taped to the rusty iron gates was something any Pittsburgher would recognize, and it made this school-turned-dental-clinic in the mountains of Honduras feel like a home away from home for the group of Pitt dental medicine faculty and students visiting there.



Welcoming the local community was the Terrible Towel — a symbol recognized by any Pittsburgh Steelers fan.

A patient asked third-year School of Dental Medicine student **MEGHAN BASTIN** if the words on the Terrible Towel were a symbol of their church. Bastin smiled and answered: "No, but some people think football is a religion where we're from."

Bastin joined 23 other volunteer Pitt dental students as well as Assistant Professor of Dental Anesthesiology and Pediatric Dentistry **MATTHEW COOKE, DDS, MD, MPH**, on this trip in 2013 to a remote part of Honduras, serving patients in a makeshift clinic four hours from the nearest airport. During the week, the dental team treated more than 600 patients (more than 12 percent of the county's population), completing 875 procedures—223 full-mouth cleanings, 425 tooth extractions, and 227 restorations.

"We didn't just drill out decay, extract teeth, drain abscesses, run intravenous devices, place sutures, and clean teeth; we demonstrated brushing and taught oral care to our patients in their native language," recalls Bastin. "And we also forged friendships, established trust, and embraced cultural differences."

# FEATURE STORY

Though Spanish-speaking skills varied within their group, Bastin recalls a wordless moment that needed no translation.



“I felt proud to be able to communicate procedures and educate patients in Spanish. However, one of the most memorable communications came simply from a hug. With a mouthful of gauze from the extraction of her remaining broken and decayed teeth, a grandmother stood up and hugged me,” says Bastin. “It was a

sobering fact that, for her, living without teeth was a better option than living with dental infection and pain.”

Bastin, who will graduate in spring 2015 with both DMD and MPH degrees, credits Dr. Cooke with providing students

with ample opportunity to take part in international outreach. Three volunteer mission trips are currently offered per year—spring trips to Jamaica and Honduras and a December trip back to Honduras.

Dr. Cooke first started going on dental missions as a student; today, he’s no less committed. He regularly travels to Honduras—where he’s established an ongoing friendship with Honduran dentist Dr. Adan Arita, who partners with Pitt dentists and students to provide care—but he also has traveled as far afield as Vietnam and China. In August, Dr. Cooke traveled to Guatemala with a group that included Senator (and ophthalmologist) Rand Paul. Dr. Cooke provided anesthesia services for the surgical team and comprehensive dental care for patients with special health care needs. Dr. Paul and other ophthalmologists focused on eye care.



Senator Rand Paul (left) and Dr. Matthew Cooke in Guatemala in August 2014

“The mission field provides an environment in which patients receive much-needed services and students gain experience. It’s a win-win [situation],” Dr. Cooke says, explaining why he makes time to routinely add volunteer efforts to his already-packed schedule.

Dr. Cooke notes that missions have become such an accepted extracurricular activity, that most students will take part in at least one mission trip during their time in the School of Dental Medicine.

“Mission trips are often referred to as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” says Dr. Cooke. “We always seem to get more than we give.”

In addition to fulfilling critical needs in underserved populations and exposing students to the tremendous need in other areas of the world, mission trips impact students professionally as well, Dr. Cooke says. “They always gain confidence and skill, which will help them to succeed as they complete dental school and move into the next phase of their professional life.”



School of Dental Medicine students (front, left to right) Matthew Brezinski, Braxton Henderson, and Ryan Burzese are pictured with faculty member Dr. Matthew Cooke (in back) in Honduras.

Talk to Dr. Rubin long enough about social responsibility, and you’ll end up hearing about **DR. WILLIAM GIES**.

One of the founders of modern dentistry, Dr. Gies wrote a landmark 1926 report, titled *Dental Education in the United States and Canada*, in which—among many topics—he tackled the idea of balancing professional education with cultural competence. It’s a concept as relevant in 2014 as it was 88 years ago.

“Dr. Gies believed that dental education should provide a ‘sound academic education [that] involves a thorough grounding in fundamentals: intellectual, moral, and spiritual discipline.’ He also felt there was a close, symbiotic relationship between academic and cultural development,” says Dr. Rubin, who wholeheartedly agrees.

Dr. Gies wrote: “The perspective of cultural study guards the mind and the spirit against the relative narrowing influences of a professional education and yet adjusts them to its exactions.” It’s a concept that Dr. Rubin

Mission trips are entirely voluntary in organization and execution. They are not sanctioned by either the School of Dental Medicine or the University of Pittsburgh.



Health care workers in Honduras welcomed faculty and students from Pitt Dental Medicine to bring high-quality dental care to the residents of the region.

and the School of Dental Medicine take seriously—seriously enough to have created the required outreach curricula of SCOPE I and II. And it’s a concept that helps to foster an overall culture of caring.

Dr. Rubin has seen how the school’s commitment to community outreach has transformed students for the better: “Our programs help to cultivate health professionals who are caring, socially responsible, and capable of behaving as patient advocates in all practice environments.”

Dr. Weyant agrees. “We can document the real value these programs provide. In particular, we see from students’ reflective journals a substantial change in their awareness of issues that surround the economically disadvantaged populations in our area,” he says. “And we also see a broader understanding about nondental health and social issues through SCOPE I. Students go from not really thinking about the problem to realizing they can become part of the solution.” ●

## Serving the Dental Health Needs of Pennsylvania Residents

Understanding and treating the dental health needs of residents of Pennsylvania is the focus of many of the community outreach efforts at the School of Dental Medicine.

Student Community Outreach Program and Education (SCOPE) aims to create a learning environment in which students are able to expand their personal and professional insights; enable development of their cultural competencies; and gain experience by working in a variety of cultural, community, and office settings.

SCOPE provides students with both nondental and clinical service experiences in community settings to encourage an understanding of the principles of service learning, improve their skills in

communication and cultural competency, gain an appreciation of community needs, create more empathetic and personally committed dentists, improve their willingness to treat underserved patients, and gain valuable clinical training experience in community-based clinics in rural or urban areas.

For more information about SCOPE, please visit [dental.pitt.edu/scope](http://dental.pitt.edu/scope).

Dr. Richard Rubin, director of SCOPE at the School of Dental Medicine, has been instrumental in developing partnerships with University-based programs and community service organizations in the region to facilitate student learning experiences. He is pictured here with Thistle Elias, director of the Bridging the Gaps program, an internship program in Pitt’s Graduate School of Public Health that gives students the opportunity to work directly with underserved populations of all kinds in order to better understand their health needs. SCOPE and Bridging the Gaps have been cooperating to create student experiences in community outreach for about a decade.



# FORM AND FUNCTION MEET *Artistry* AND **IMPACT**

Pitt's leading oral and maxillofacial surgeons not only correct facial and dental structure, they also improve lives.

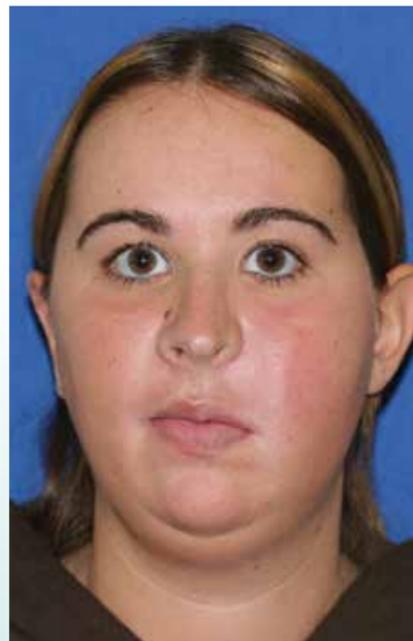
BY ELIZABETH ANNE MAY

When Amanda Smith first met Dr. Mark W. Ochs (DMD '82), MD, she could barely eat in public. She was always running to the bathroom to put more Fixodent on her awkward dental appliance. Sometimes, she opted not to eat at all. It was just easier that way.

A benign but aggressive tumor called a central giant cell lesion was responsible for the loss of eight teeth and part of the roof of her mouth when she was only 13 years old. The two surgeries that were required to remove the tumor (the first surgery removed the tumor, but it returned) left her face asymmetrical and her cheek sunken. She'd had a bone graft, which took multiple surgeries to place, that failed, requiring more surgeries to remove it.

"People would say, 'Oh, you look great!' but I knew better," says Smith, who would look in the mirror and see the initial after effects of her surgeries. "It definitely affects your self-esteem."

Smith, who is now 31, has had 18 surgeries over the past 19 years. The most recent surgery, in December 2013, was the last in a series of surgeries that took two years at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine and provided Smith with a highly sophisticated—yet comfortable and natural-looking—fixed prosthesis that marries both form and function.



Before



After

"Dr. Ochs was the first person who actually gave me hope," recalls Smith. "I call him my angel. If I hadn't met him, none of this would have happened."

## IMPACT

Dr. Ochs, professor in and chair of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and director of the Multidisciplinary Implant Center at the School of Dental Medicine, champions a three-pronged approach to the implant center's

cases, whether they're straightforward and simple, like a single implant and crown, or lengthy and complex, like Smith's case, a surgical and prosthetic reconstruction of the left hemimaxilla. The dental school realizes excellent surgical and aesthetic outcomes by employing a high-tech, interdisciplinary approach that combines novel techniques and technologies with the full range of dental specialties available at a major academic center. But equally important is the department's focus on personal attention and care.

"While we're treating occlusions and skeletal discrepancies for patients, it's really also about making a lifelong impact on the patient," Ochs says. "We don't miss the fact that there's a huge emotional component to all this."



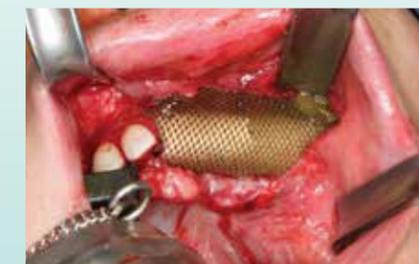
Before surgery

Smith's case offers an apt example of the department's combination of high-tech, interdisciplinary care with personal attention that results in satisfied patients who have had excellent aesthetic results from their surgeries. Her treatment began with Dr. Robert Mortimer, DMD, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopaedics. Over a period of eight to 10 months, Dr. Mortimer aligned Smith's teeth (which had supraerupted) with orthodontia. While the occlusal plane was being corrected by Dr. Mortimer, Dr. Ochs began rebuilding her upper jaw, which was missing due to multiple surgeries. After closing the defect in the roof of Smith's mouth, the team next turned its attention to how to reconstruct the missing bone.

Because Smith opted not to have any bone harvested, Dr. Ochs considered a bone regenerative technique.

Charles Sfeir, DDS, PhD, associate dean for research and director of the Center for Craniofacial Regeneration, was researching a novel bone regeneration technique and was able to provide some foundational research to validate this approach. The surgical team combined cadaveric donor bone particles with bone morphogenic protein-2 (rhBMP-2) and put this in a titanium mesh crib precisely fabricated for Smith based on computed tomography (CT) scans. The mesh crib was then inserted and left to mature for 10 months.

"This product [rhBMP-2] has been available for some time, but we're using it in new and innovative ways," says Dr. Ochs, explaining that rhBMP-2 is U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved for extraction socket grafting



During surgery

and maxillary sinus augmentation/grafting but had not yet been used for hemimaxilla regeneration. "That's what we call an extended clinical application," Dr. Ochs says. "That's what progressive universities do: They find ways to expand both techniques and applications of products to benefit patients."

After 10 months, Dr. Ochs removed the mesh and placed four implants. After the implants integrated, he then performed a vestibuloplasty to release Smith's lip from the ridge of her jaw and prepare the area for the final prosthesis. Working with additional members of the treatment team—prosthodontist Dr. Steven J. Kukunas (DMD '86) and prosthodontic senior residents Dr. Troy Eans (DMD '12) and Dr. Byungjoo Lee—Ochs inserted a temporary, fixed, implant-supported prosthesis to allow the gum tissues to heal and mature. (When the jaw was initially reconstructed, Dr. Ochs had to borrow tissue from the cheek, which pulled the upper lip down.) To ensure the highest-quality function and appearance for Smith, one of the premier dental and implant labs in the country, Jesse & Frichtel Inc., located in Pittsburgh, created a fixed hybrid prosthesis of zirconia overlaid with ceramic for her.

"If she damages any teeth, the prosthesis can be removed and repaired because the framework is screw retained and has individually cemented crowns," explains Dr. Ochs. "The beauty of this design goes deeper than its great appearance; it's an investment in long-term serviceability and stability."

Smith—who had rarely smiled for years because of her awkward obturator (a rudimentary pink plastic prosthesis, which would have been her only corrective option just 10 years ago)—smiles as big as she can these days. She is so pleased with her appearance since the surgeries that she cut

# FEATURE STORY



Prosthetic phase

off 9 inches of her hair. “I don’t need to hide behind my hair anymore,” she says with confidence.

“There are societal prejudices, and people do get teased or develop poor self-esteem because of these conditions. We know that,” says Dr. Ochs. “While we are correcting problems due to trauma or defects to allow our patients [to have] proper jaw function, the improvement in their appearance and the psychosocial



After surgery

impact is the benefit their families and friends notice first.”

Dr. Bernard J. Costello III, DMD, MD, professor and residency program director in the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery as well as chief of pediatric oral and maxillofacial surgery at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, agrees. “The appearance of your face is such a key factor in psychosocial interaction. It’s the most conspicuous area of the body,” he says. “It is your communication tool in many ways—many of the physical components of the face, head, and neck have to do with speech and smiling and communicating with others. It’s a varied and dynamic thing to address.”

That’s why Dr. Costello, like Dr. Ochs, works with a team. The team that Dr. Costello works with represents a variety of specialties and handles cases ranging from cleft lip or palate to facial trauma and including both common and unusual congenital deformities. Patients from outside the region have sought out Dr. Costello’s expertise in the correction and management of certain extremely rare birth defects.



Gage\*, shown here (top) at just a few months of age, was born with a cleft lip. About a year after the repair by Dr. Costello (middle), he was smiling and developing very well.



Gage, who is now a teenager (bottom), had the benefit of seeing an interdisciplinary



team made up of many specialists from Pitt and Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, including surgeons, speech pathologists, orthodontists, and others. The team works together to try to ensure that each child it treats grows up without stigma in spite of a facial difference like Gage’s. For Dr. Costello and others, it is a rare privilege to work with families from fetus to adulthood and solve issues like the one Gage has faced.

“I’m constantly working with not just the obvious medical professionals—orthodontists, implant reconstructionists, and oral surgeons—but also speech pathologists, pediatric neurosurgeons, ophthalmologists, and psychologists.”

Dr. Costello notes that while it’s incredibly beneficial for patients to have a full interdisciplinary team at their disposal because it provides them with the most comprehensive care possible, it also provides a huge benefit for dental medicine students and residents.

“To have the opportunity to train with someone with such a high level of skill, like our faculty at the School of Dental Medicine, and to see and participate in highly complex cases using the newest technologies—that’s a rarity,” he says. “For residents aspiring to do work in the craniofacial region, they get everything from basic implant reconstruction up to the most complicated reconstructive bite experiences you could imagine in conjunction with addressing congenital deformities. This is very attractive to residents.”

## ARTISTRY

“We’re always looking to take our work to the next level,” says Dr. Kukunas, clinical director of the Multidisciplinary Implant Center and director of implant prosthodontics. “Our goal is to get the implant to look as much like the natural tooth as possible. We strive to incorporate artistry into the function and form of the implants we create.”

Dr. Kukunas helps to create surgical guides for the placement of bone and dental implants as well as the implants themselves. He’s had a front-row seat to the progression of implant technology.

As one of the very first oral implantology fellows at Pitt in 1989, Dr. Kukunas has seen old-fashioned partial dentures—cold, hard, and with no personality or stability and minimal function—fall by the wayside as precisely engineered, highly functional oral implants constructed with milled titanium and zirconia—strong, aesthetic, and highly biocompatible—have become the new clinical standard.

“We’ve gone from a Chevy to a Mercedes,” he says of dental implants.

Along with ensuring proper fit and function of this new generation of prostheses and implants, prosthodontists also work with patients to calibrate their expectations and educate them on what works and what doesn’t to achieve the best aesthetic effect. “The worst thing you can do is set up teeth like a picket fence,” says Dr. Kukunas. “You have to have small imperfections so that proper natural aesthetics are achieved; you don’t want a canned look.”

He explains that the center’s technicians use artistry—along with skill and great attention to detail—to construct, shape, and shade dental implants that are virtually identical to real teeth. “Our porcelain is custom stained,” he says. “We use three shade variations on just one tooth.”

Dr. Richard E. Bauer III (DMD ’07), MD, assistant professor of oral and maxillofacial surgery, finds artistry in his work as well—particularly when planning a surgery with a patient.

“Everyone’s vision of a normal appearance is different, so I don’t box myself into my personal thoughts about what a person should look like,” says Dr. Bauer. “That’s where the artistry comes in. You need to be able to understand the patient’s perspective and expectations.”

In particular, though, he finds that a virtual planning session is worth a thousand words when it comes to helping his patients to understand what will work best for them. Dr. Bauer has been using this technology since he first came to Pitt as a student and has become one of the dental school’s resident experts. In fact, Pitt professionals have such long-standing experience using virtual planning that software companies solicit their feedback to improve the companies’ programs.

“I like to tell my patients, before we do the actual surgery, that we’re going to do it on a computer screen first,” says Dr. Bauer, noting how much they like knowing—and seeing—exactly what will happen ahead of time. “That brings them peace of mind.”

## “IT’S PERSONAL

## TRANSFORMATIONS LIKE

## THESE THAT MAKE IT

## ALL WORTHWHILE,”

## SAYS DR. OCHS.

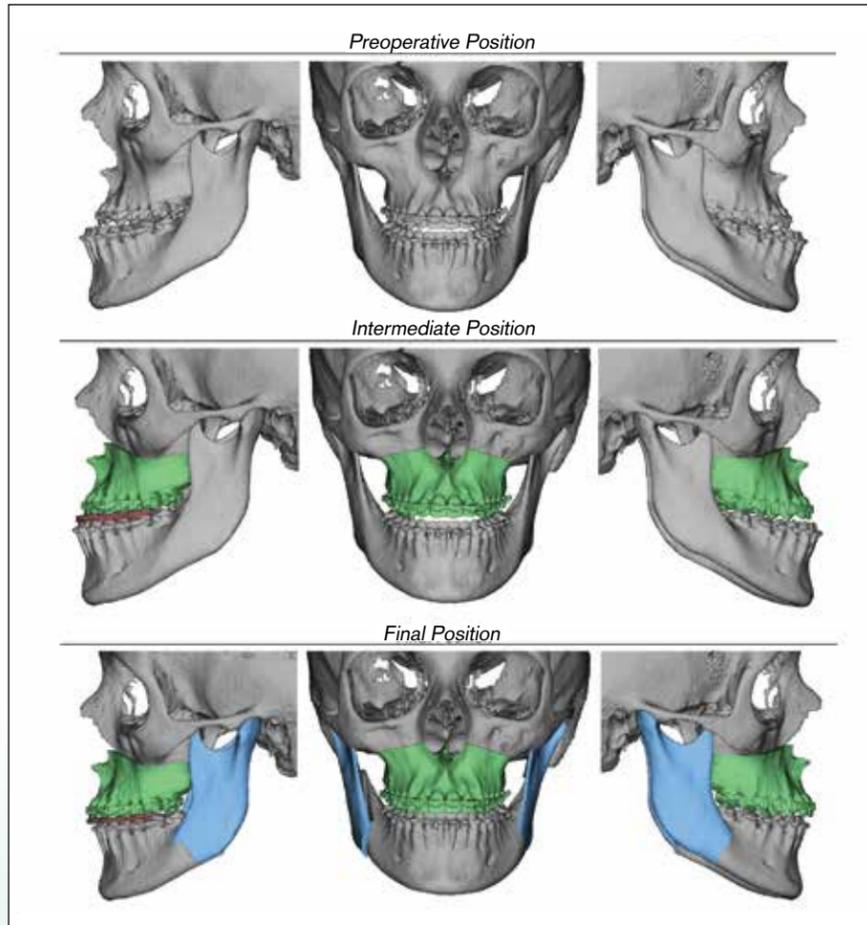
## “THIS IS WHY WE TRAIN

## AND STUDY SO HARD.

## THIS IS WHY WE WORK

## SUCH LONG HOURS.

## THIS IS THE BEST PART.”



Planning



Pre-op



Post-op



Post-op



Before



After

## EMPATHY

The Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery has become known for its uniquely caring dentists, surgeons, and staff, who help patients and their families to go through often difficult and lengthy treatments with relative ease.

“My patient coordinators, receptionists, and surgical assistants regard my patients as their patients and my practice as their practice,” Dr. Ochs says. “They take ownership, and that makes all the difference.”

“Everybody treated Madison\* and me not just as patients but as friends,” recalls Debra McCullough\*, whose 18-year-old daughter underwent a year-and-a-half-long process to treat a Class III skeletal deformity due to both maxillary retrusion/hypoplasia and mandibular prognathism/hyperplasia. “Every time we’d come in, they’d all fuss over her; they really brought her out of her shell.”

And Smith, whose two-year craniofacial aesthetic reconstruction at the School of Dental Medicine provided such dramatic results, can’t say enough about the department. She works as a medical support assistant at the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center in Altoona, Pa., and gives away much of her modest income to help veterans and others in need. Thanks to the generosity of her doctors, she received most of her extensive and costly services

at the School of Dental Medicine pro bono. Drs. Mortimer, Ochs, and Kukunas “didn’t charge me a penny beyond what my insurance covered,” says Smith, while master technician Sven Jesse of Jesse & Frichtel fabricated her sophisticated prosthesis at cost.

While the effects of patients’ aesthetic transformations are obvious—as is their gratitude—these surgeries have a significant impact on the faculty and residents as well.

“I love seeing a final post-op check on my schedule,” says Dr. Bauer. “There’s nothing more gratifying than seeing that patient,” he says, explaining how much he enjoys seeing the new functionality after his patients’ craniofacial reconstructions, the attractive physical appearance their surgeries helped to create, and the way their outlook on life changes.

“She smiles all the time now,” says McCullough of her daughter, Madison. “She’s happy and she’s gained so much confidence because of her new appearance.”

“It’s personal transformations like these that make it all worthwhile,” says Dr. Ochs. “This is why we train and study so hard. This is why we work such long hours. This is the best part.” ●

\*Names have been changed to protect patient and family privacy.

## PURSuing THE BEST PATIENT CARE BY TRAINING AND SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF DENTISTS

When Dr. Brian Paterson, MD, DMD, chief resident in the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, enters the fourth-floor conference room in Salk Hall, he’s ready to walk the dental medicine team through an upcoming surgery.

Today, he’s presenting a case—advancing the maxilla and mandible of a sleep apnea patient with an underlying jaw discrepancy—using detailed virtual planning software. Here, complex presurgical measurements, photographs, and a specialized cone-beam computed tomography (CT) scan all come together to help the team to plan the surgery and generate a 3-D model of the final treatment plan.

“First, we compare the clinical measurements to the virtual ones to be sure everything is accurate. Next, we plan the surgery,” explains Dr. Paterson. “This is where we can virtually move the jaws and evaluate the changes this will have on the facial anatomy.”

Dr. Paterson, who’s in his final year of Pitt’s six-year oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMS) residency, notes that many of his peers in residency programs at other universities don’t have access to the 3-D imaging and planning technology that he is fortunate to use on a daily basis.

“Not only does it allow us to see the little intricacies,” says Dr. Paterson, “but it’s also a great opportunity for residents to learn about the latest technologies available.”

Thanks to the generosity of School of Dental Medicine donors, OMS residents like Dr. Paterson benefit from programmatic support that makes technological advancements like this sophisticated virtual surgical planning possible—as well as scholarship funding to help reduce the substantial financial burden of the 10 additional years of education that oral and maxillofacial surgeons require beyond an undergraduate degree.

In addition to scholarship and technology funding, the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery is seeking to improve resident education by updating its informational infrastructure in order to enhance connectivity between surgical locations and improve access to patient records. If you would like to learn more about the School of Dental Medicine Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery residency program, please contact Dr. Richard Bauer at 412-648-8645. ●

# RESEARCH

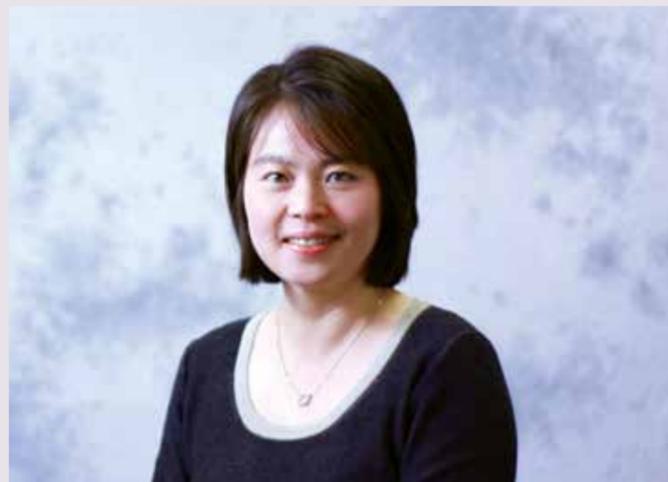
## PITT SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE AWARDED \$2 MILLION NCI GRANT TO STUDY HOW CANCER DESTROYS BONE

A \$2 million five-year grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health, has been awarded to researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine to examine the molecular mechanisms that allow certain cancers, particularly multiple myeloma, to destroy bone. The project could lead to new interventions to prevent such bone destruction and perhaps slow down primary tumor growth.

Multiple myeloma has a 100 percent bone metastasis rate and is one of the most devastating bone diseases. The disease also tends to prefer craniofacial bones. Because of this, nearly 30 percent of patients suffering from multiple myeloma are identified through routine dental exams. Dentists who perform a very comprehensive exam beyond the teeth and gingiva can be the first line of defense against this disease, says the project's principal investigator, Hongjiao Ouyang, DMD, PhD, DDS, associate professor of restorative dentistry/comprehensive care and oral biology and a faculty member in the Center for Craniofacial Regeneration at the School of Dental Medicine.

When the patient's pain is not relieved through dental treatments for the teeth, underlying bone destruction may be the cause of the jaw pain. One of the messages that Dr. Ouyang, an endodontist and bone biologist, hopes her research helps dentists to be aware of is that the patient's pain may be from a source other than his or her teeth. "It is imperative that the next generation of dentists understands that dental medicine means treating more than just teeth and extends to the whole head and neck region and even diseases resulting from and affecting other systems, such as multiple myeloma as a hematopoietic system disorder," adds Dr. Ouyang.

"This bone destruction is a significant cause of pain and mortality in this disease," says Dr. Ouyang. "A better understanding of the molecular pathways that underlie this process could lead us to novel targets for treatment. This could be helpful not only in treatment of multiple myeloma but also in other cancers that spread to bone, such as breast, prostate, and lung cancer, as various cancers induce similar inflammatory responses in bone.



Dr. Hongjiao Ouyang

I am delighted that our research will benefit not only dental patients but also those affected by many other diseases."

Multiple myeloma tumor cells promote bone absorption by osteoclasts but eliminate bone production by osteoblasts. This leads to numerous osteolytic lesions, which appear as bubble-like pockets within the bone on radiographs and rarely heal, even long after the eradication of tumor cells. "Cancers create their own strong and sustained inflammatory environment by recruiting the patient's own cells to do damage. In multiple myeloma, the cancer cells hijack the bone-related cells, such as bone marrow stromal cells, which were extensively studied in our research, to create this inflammatory environment to support their growth and destroy bone," states Dr. Ouyang. After years of research, this is the first study to identify endoplasmic reticulum stress signaling, a cellular adaptive response to cope with misfolded and unfolded proteins, in bone marrow stromal cells as the pathological mediator that assists cancer in destroying bone. The new research that Dr. Ouyang is performing will test this pathway using various genetic and pharmacological modalities. It is hoped that her research will be able to be translated to multiple myeloma and its bone complications in the search for a treatment, but there is a great deal of research and testing ahead. ●

## PITT RESEARCHERS AWARDED GRANT TO STUDY CAUSE OF CLEFT LIP AND CLEFT PALATE



Pictured from left to right are Seth Weinberg, PhD, and Mary Marazita, PhD.

The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, part of the National Institutes of Health, has awarded researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine an \$11.8 million five-year grant to explore the genetic basis of cleft lip and cleft palate, which occur in approximately one in 700 individuals worldwide.

Mary Marazita, PhD, is a professor in and vice chair of the Department of Oral Biology and director of the Center for Craniofacial and Dental Genetics (CCDG). She has been studying cleft lip/cleft palate since about 1987 and has had a significant impact on research into the genetic cause of these birth defects. Seth Weinberg, PhD, assistant professor of oral biology and director of the CCDG imaging and morphometrics lab, has joined Dr. Marazita to lead the coordinating center for this study. The international study includes researchers from the University of Iowa, the Newborn Screening Reference Center in the Philippines, the Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic, Nigeria's



University of Lagos, Colombia's Foundation Clinica Noel, and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium. Other Pitt collaborators on the project include Dr. Alexandre Vieira, a pediatric dentist and geneticist at the School of Dental Medicine, and Drs. John Shaffer and Eleanor Feingold, faculty members in the Graduate School of Public Health's Department of Human Genetics.

The new grant will enroll more than 1,500 families (more than 6,000 individuals) with a history of cleft lip with or without cleft palate or of cleft palate alone from both low- and high-risk populations in the research areas. Included will be genetic data collected from 2,000 unrelated individuals with no history of cleft lip or cleft palate.

"Minor dental abnormalities, facial shape differences, altered speech patterns, and other less obvious changes in the mouth could all be part of a spectrum of defects that have the same genetic causes as cleft lip and palate," says Dr. Marazita. "If we can unravel those relationships and identify the biological pathways that cause them, we will gain insights that may lead to better treatments and better long-term outcomes for affected individuals." ●

## WEYANT SELECTED AS 2014 AADR/ADA EBD FACULTY AWARD RECIPIENT

**D**r. Robert J. Weyant (DMD '82), associate dean for dental public health and community outreach, has been selected as this year's recipient of the American Association for Dental Research/American Dental Association (AADR/ADA) Evidence-Based Dentistry (EBD) Faculty Award. The award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to evidence-based dentistry.



Dr. Robert J. Weyant

Dr. Weyant joined the School of Dental Medicine faculty in the 1990s. At that time, evidence-based dentistry was beginning to take hold at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Dr. Weyant instructed Pitt dental residents in the technologies of evidence-based dentistry, which was then called clinical epidemiology.

The selection committee chose Dr. Weyant in acknowledgment of his numerous achievements, including:

- serving as chair of the ADA topical fluoride expert panel,
- disseminating knowledge about EBD to the University of Pittsburgh beyond the School of Dental Medicine,
- teaching an EBD course for dental students and presenting a faculty development course in EBD, and

**"I am deeply honored to receive this award," says Dr. Weyant. "To be recognized by my peers and colleagues is humbling."**

- teaching courses in evidence-based medicine at the University of Oxford.

The AADR/ADA EBD Faculty Award also is presented in recognition of Dr. Weyant's work on numerous other research projects and published articles. His work is both influential and forward thinking and secures him a place among other leaders in dental medicine. ●

Dr. Weyant recently led the American Dental Association Council on Scientific Affairs' Expert Panel on Topical Fluoride Agents in presenting and publishing a manuscript detailing and updating the systemic review and evidence-based clinical recommendations of topical fluoride treatments. The original report, published in 2006, made recommendations for clinicians about providing professionally applied topical fluoride for prevention of caries. The revised publication updates the evidence and adds newly available treatments, expanding the options for caries prevention.

To read the full report, please visit [dental.pitt.edu/ada-topical-fluoride-update](http://dental.pitt.edu/ada-topical-fluoride-update).



Pictured from left to right are John Voskuil, vice president and general manager at DENTSPLY; Brent Baux, sales manager at DENTSPLY; Kim Livesay, senior industry relations manager, endodontics, at DENTSPLY; Herbert L. Ray Jr., assistant professor at the School of Dental Medicine; John Werner, national sales account manager at DENTSPLY; and Kurt Van Hofwegen, director of sales at DENTSPLY.

## A SPECIAL THANK-YOU TO DENTSPLY

**D**ENTSPLY Tulsa Dental Specialties has made a significant donation to the School of Dental Medicine in the form of a \$100,000 educational grant. This grant will be used to improve resident educational programs, to support and improve patient care, and to help fund the school's research interests.

## University Dental Health Services Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Service

For more than 40 years, the **Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Service** has conducted consultation and tissue diagnostic services for the dental and medical communities of Western Pennsylvania.

Our board-certified oral and maxillofacial pathologists provide a rapid, accurate diagnosis of your biopsy specimens.

- Call or e-mail to request your free biopsy kits.
- Your detailed pathology report will be sent by fax or mail.
- The patient will be billed directly.

[dental.pitt.edu/oral-and-maxillofacial-pathology-biopsy-service](http://dental.pitt.edu/oral-and-maxillofacial-pathology-biopsy-service)

We also provide the following:

- Oral Medicine Services 412-648-9100
- Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology Services 412-648-8612

We accept Medicare and many commercial insurance programs, including Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and UPMC.

**412-648-8629**  
[pittsburghoralpathology@dental.pitt.edu](mailto:pittsburghoralpathology@dental.pitt.edu)

## MESSAGE FROM THE DENTAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

The academic year is half over, and we have seen much activity from the Dental Alumni Association. The association worked with the School of Dental Medicine to welcome the entering Class of 2018 at the annual white coat ceremony on August 25. Generous donations from alumni provided our students in dental medicine and dental hygiene with their first white coats, the universal symbol of entering the health care professions.

The association once again addressed the need for dental professionals in underserved and rural areas of Pennsylvania by sponsoring a mentoring event for our students

and alumni at the University Club in August. This event was jointly sponsored by the school's Department of Dental Public Health and the Pitt Alumni Association. In September, an event for new and old alums to gather was held at the Rivers Casino with the joint support of the Dental Alumni Association (DAA) and PNC Wealth Management and PNC Healthcare Business Banking.

Beginning in October, a series of three lectures by the school's clinical faculty members was held and was sponsored in part by DAA. All are welcome to attend a similar series that we hope to support in the spring.

We look to our alumni for feedback regarding the school's curriculum in an effort to continually update and improve it. Your responses to the Five Years Out from Graduation alumni survey are much appreciated and will help us in this effort.

We look forward to seeing you at some of our upcoming events. As always, in an effort to serve you, we welcome any suggestions or questions you may have.



Dr. Jean O'Donnell (DMD '90)  
President, Dental Alumni Association,  
and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

## MESSAGE FROM THE DENTAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION VICE PRESIDENT

GREETINGS, DENTAL HYGIENE ALUMNI.

We are pleased to share some noteworthy achievements by current dental hygiene students. Ashlee Antoszyk, a member of the Class of 2015, has been awarded the new United Concordia Scholarship for the 2014-15 academic year. The award is based on academic performance, clinical skills, and financial need. Additionally, four of our dental hygiene students' table clinic presentations received honorable mention recognition at the Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists' Association annual conference in November. Lucy Stone and Holly Reeves, members of the Class of 2015, were recognized for their table clinic, titled "Sleep Apnea Screening in the Dental Office." Marisa Witwer and Grace Rudy, also members of the Class of 2015, were recognized for their presentation, titled

"Radiation Therapy to the Head and Neck: Oral Health Care and Education."

Building on the enthusiasm generated by our 50th anniversary celebration this past May, we are planning a dental hygiene alumni luncheon immediately following the T.F. Bowser Memorial Lecture on Saturday, March 21, 2015. We will provide lunch and tours of the dental hygiene clinic. In addition, you can receive two continuing education credits by viewing our senior students' table clinic presentations. A portion of your \$25 attendance fee will go toward the dental hygiene scholarship fund. Please mark your calendars, contact your classmates, and join us this spring!

**Dental Hygiene Alumni Luncheon**  
**Saturday, March 21, 2015**  
**Dental Hygiene Suite, Salk Hall**  
Immediately following the Bowser Lecture

Questions? Please contact Ms. Nancy Poe at 412-648-8910.

To make your reservation, please send your address, phone number, e-mail address, and a check for \$25 (made payable to the University of Pittsburgh) to:

University of Pittsburgh  
School of Dental Medicine  
Ms. Alycia Maltony  
440 Salk Hall  
3501 Terrace Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15261-1933



Ms. Susan Ban (DH '80)  
Vice President, Dental Hygiene,  
Dental Alumni Association

## 2015 T.F. BOWSER MEMORIAL LECTURE

### "DIET AND DENTISTRY IN THE 21ST CENTURY"

Join us as David Meinz, MS, RD, FADA, CSP, shares the latest information on what you need to know about the oral and systemic health connection, sugar substitutes, vitamin supplements, and the future potential role of dental professionals in total patient care. You'll learn about the best and worst foods for teeth, how to increase your personal energy, and much more.

**Saturday, March 21, 2015**  
**8:30 a.m.–1 p.m.**  
**University of Pittsburgh**  
**School of Medicine**  
**Rooms 5 and 6, Scaife Hall**  
**3550 Terrace Street**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15261**



David Meinz

Meinz will present practical information to help dental professionals practice in the 21st century. Upon completing this lecture, participants will:

- be able to explain the cases for and against the oral and systemic health connection;
- understand sugar substitute options and identify which have direct, whole-health implications;
- differentiate between basic vitamin supplement needs and marketing claims;

- grasp the concept of lumenology vs. arteriology in cardiovascular disease prevention; and
- appreciate the potential for dentistry in preventive total patient care.

Visit our Web site at [dental.pitt.edu](http://dental.pitt.edu) to register today.

The University of Pittsburgh is an American Dental Association (ADA) Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) recognized provider. ADA CERP is a service of the American Dental Association that assists dental professionals in identifying quality providers of continuing dental education. ADA CERP does not approve or endorse individual courses or instructors, nor does it imply acceptance of credit hours by boards of dentistry. The University of Pittsburgh designates this activity for the number of continuing education credits listed with each course summary.

The T.F. Bowser Memorial Lecture Series was established in 1995 by Dr. Ellsworth T. Bowser (DDS '60) to honor his father, Dr. Theodore F. Bowser (DDS '24). The series has featured notable speakers on a variety of topics and is the School of Dental Medicine Edward J. Forest Continuing Education Center's most well-respected and well-attended continuing education event.

## SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE WINTER/SPRING CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

**Saturday, January 31, 2015**  
**Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support Renewal Course**  
John Brewer, NREMT-P  
8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

**Friday, February 6, 2015**  
**Local Anesthesia Review for Dental Hygienists**  
Limited Attendance  
Matthew Cooke, DDS, MD, MPH  
Marie George, RDH, MS  
Paul Moore, DMD, PhD, MPH  
9 a.m.–noon

**Friday, February 6, 2015**  
**Clinical Refresher Program for Local Anesthesia Injection Techniques**  
Limited Attendance/Hands On  
Matthew Cooke, DDS, MD, MPH  
1–4 p.m.

**Saturday, February 7, 2015**  
**Advanced Anesthesia Update: A Review for Permit Renewal**  
Joseph Giovannitti Jr., DMD  
8:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

**Saturday, February 21, 2015**  
**Pediatric Advanced Life Support Renewal Course**  
John Brewer, NREMT-P  
8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

**Saturday, March 7, 2015**  
**Update in Medical Emergencies and Advanced Airway Techniques: A Review for Permit Renewal**  
Peter M. Winter Institute for Simulation, Education, and Research  
Michael Cuddy, DMD  
8:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

**Friday, March 20, 2015**  
**Interdisciplinary Clinical Case Presentations: Radiology, Pathology, and Surgical Management**  
Richard Bauer, DMD, MD  
Elizabeth Bilodeau, DMD, MD, MSEd  
Anitha Potluri, BDS, DMD, MDS  
8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

**Saturday, March 21, 2015**  
**Diet and Dentistry in the 21st Century**  
David Meinz, MS, RD, FADA, CSP  
8:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

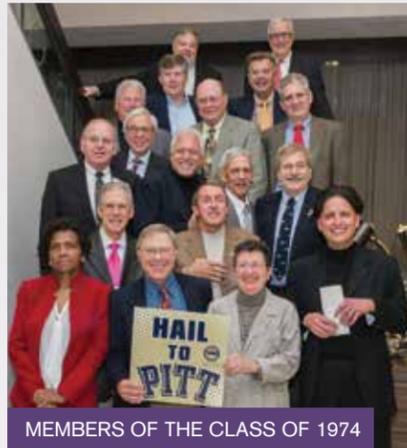
**Friday, March 27, 2015**  
**Medical History Myth Busters: Yes, You Can Treat the Medically Complex Patient**  
Timothy J. Halligan, DDS  
8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

# ALUMNI

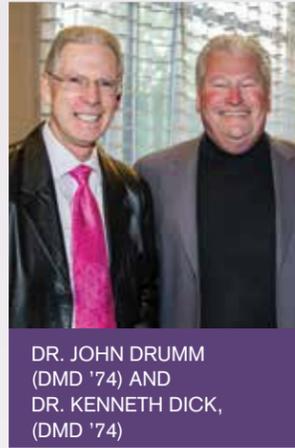
## HOMECOMING 2014



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1964



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1974



DR. JOHN DRUMM (DMD '74) AND DR. KENNETH DICK, (DMD '74)



DR. DEL SHOFNER (DMD '99), LEFT, AND DR. VAN P. SHOFNER (DMD '99)



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1984



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1999



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1989



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 2004



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1964



GOLDEN ALUMNI

## HOMECOMING HIGHLIGHTS

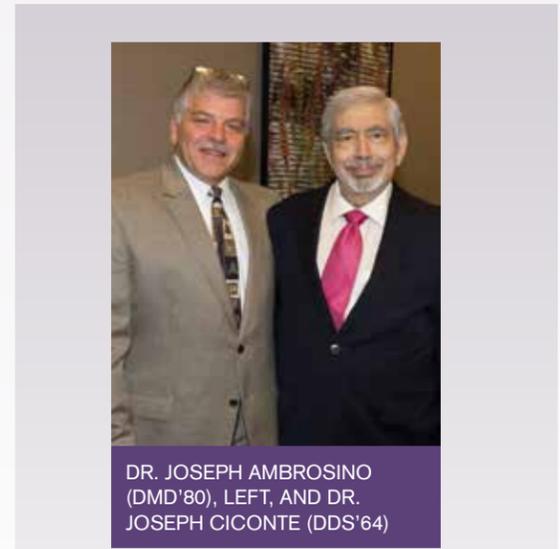
The School of Dental Medicine had a wonderful turnout for Homecoming this year.

Homecoming events kicked off on Friday, October 24, with the all-day continuing education course Concise, Up-to-Date Information on Treating Patients with Cardiovascular Disease—Plus Treating Yourself to a Healthier Life. The course, presented by James Lichon, RPh, DDS, NCCM, was a success with more than 100 people in attendance. Despite the impressive technological advances in the field of medicine, atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (CVD) remains the leading cause of death in the United States. Recently, dental professionals have been seeing many more patients with CVD. In fact, more than one third of adult patients have one or more types of CVD and it is the most common medical condition that dental professionals confront. This course presented many of the crucial issues that dentists face when treating patients with CVD.

Also on October 24, the Dental Alumni Association accepted a Gold Banner award from the Pitt Alumni Association during a luncheon at Alumni Hall in recognition of outstanding service provided to alumni. Later in the evening, alumni and guests gathered at the Wyndham Pittsburgh University Center for a reception and dinner. This year marked reunions for the Classes of 1964, 1974, 1984, 1989, 1999, and 2004 as well as our Golden Alumni, those who graduated prior to 1963. Dr. Ted Rohn presented a gift to the School of Dental Medicine from the Class of 1959. It was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with classmates and even view the timeless Class of 1984 skits from the Tooth Ball. We thank all of the reunion organizers for making the event a success.

As the evening came to a close, alumni and guests gathered outside for an excellent view of the homecoming fireworks and laser show. Most of the classes also planned tailgating events and luncheons the following day for the Pitt football game against Georgia Tech.

We are saddened to report that Dr. Joseph Ciconte (DDS '64), organizer for the Class of 1964's 50th reunion, passed away after the reunion dinner. Homecoming reunited Dr. Ciconte not only with his classmates but also with Dr. Joseph Ambrosino (DDS '80), who served with him in the U.S. Army and was stationed with him at Fort Bragg in North Carolina from 1981 to 1984. We extend our sympathy to his wife, Edilma Ciconte, and his friends and classmates from the Class of 1964. He will be missed. ●



DR. JOSEPH AMBROSINO (DMD '80), LEFT, AND DR. JOSEPH CICONTE (DDS '64)



## THANK YOU TO OUR 2014 DONORS OF DISTINCTION

The School of Dental Medicine gratefully acknowledges its newest Donors of Distinction. Each year, the names of donors whose lifetime giving to the School of Dental Medicine is \$10,000 or more are added to the Donors of Distinction plaque during homecoming weekend.

Donations to the School of Dental Medicine help in a variety of ways. Whether your contributions are directed toward scholarships, facility updates, or the general fund, please know that you are making a real difference here at the school and that your gifts are truly appreciated.

To learn more about your giving history to the School of Dental Medicine and what contributions may be needed to have your name added to this display, please contact Mr. Paul Casey at 412-383-7544 or [pbc8@pitt.edu](mailto:pbc8@pitt.edu).

### 2014 DONORS OF DISTINCTION

- Dr. Mitchell A. Chun (DMD '85)
- Mrs. Janet Cole
- Dr. James G. Desetti (DDS '52)
- Dr. H.S. David Mock II (DMD '78)
- Dr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Nowak
- Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Strange
- Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich (DMD '80)

## HIGHMARK FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVES VISIT DENTAL ANESTHESIA SUITES

President Yvonne Cook and Senior Program Officer Christina Wilds of the Highmark Foundation visited the School of Dental Medicine on Monday, June 9, 2014. They are shown below with faculty members representing the Center for Patients with Special Needs (CPSN). During their visit, Cook and Wilds were updated on the work of CPSN and toured the center's new dental anesthesia suites, which were made possible through the kind support of the Highmark Foundation.



Pictured from left to right are Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich, Dr. Lynne Taiclet, Yvonne Cook, Christina Wilds, and Dr. Joseph Giovannitti.



A new dental anesthesia suite

## ALUMNI INDUCTED INTO ICD AND ACD IN 2014

Congratulations to the following School of Dental Medicine alumni who recently were inducted into the International College of Dentists (ICD), USA Section, and the American College of Dentists (ACD):

### ICD INDUCTEES

- Dr. Kathryn Horutz (DMD '98)
- Dr. Michele M. Rich (DMD '01)
- Dr. Joseph E. Ross (DMD '83)

### ACD INDUCTEES

- Dr. Richard M. Celko (DMD '89)
- Dr. Lon Kessler (DMD '86)

## IN MEMORIAM

- Dr. Roya Azizi (DMD '99) • December 10, 2013
- Dr. Richard Barrickman (DDS '51) • March 22, 2013
- Dr. James F. Brede (DDS '51) • June 5, 2014
- Dr. Andrew Choby (DDS '41) • May 1, 2014
- Dr. Joseph A. Ciconte (DDS '64) • October 25, 2014
- Dr. Paul A. Eckert (DDS '58) • September 18, 2014
- Dr. Benjamin J. Haas (DDS '44) • July 26, 2014
- Dr. Paul C. Howard (DMD '75) • September 9, 2014
- Ms. Debra L. Johnson (DH '71) • July 8, 2014
- Dr. Ronald E. Kerby (DMD '79) • July 26, 2014
- Dr. Calvin Kramer (DDS '48) • October 8, 2013
- Dr. Robert J. Neeson (DMD '62) • November 6, 2014
- Dr. Michael L. Pawk (DDS '64) • October 7, 2014
- Dr. Fred S. Read (DMD '72) • November 6, 2014
- Dr. Warren M. Sacripant (DDS '60) • September 21, 2014
- Dr. Peter Saker (DMD '79) • June 9, 2014
- Ms. Cecelia A. Sassak (DH '71) • September 20, 2014
- Dr. William G. Savage (DDS '64) • September 23, 2014
- Dr. C. Rebecca Shelby (DMD '94) • November 22, 2014
- Dr. C. Ray Sheppard (DMD '77) • October 22, 2014
- Dr. Joseph R. Stauff (DMD '63) • November 20, 2014
- Dr. Thomas H. Watson Jr. (DDS '61) • October 17, 2014

### DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD GUIDELINES

The University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine is seeking nominations for its Distinguished Alumni of the Year Awards. Awards may be presented in the categories of dental medicine, dental hygiene, and advanced education program to individuals:

- who have contributed exceptionally significant time and effort to the School of Dental Medicine, beyond that which would normally have been expected;
- whose significant attainments and high professional standards are of such character as to have materially aided and advanced the art and science of dentistry;
- whose public life and activities have been of such a nature as to reflect great credit upon the profession and the School of Dental Medicine; and
- who have contributed to original research in the dental profession.

**A one-page biographical sketch of each nominee must accompany the nomination.**

Please send your nomination and biographical sketch to:

University of Pittsburgh  
School of Dental Medicine  
Distinguished Alumni Awards Committee  
440 Salk Hall  
3501 Terrace Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15261

**The deadline for nominations is Sunday, November 1, 2015.**

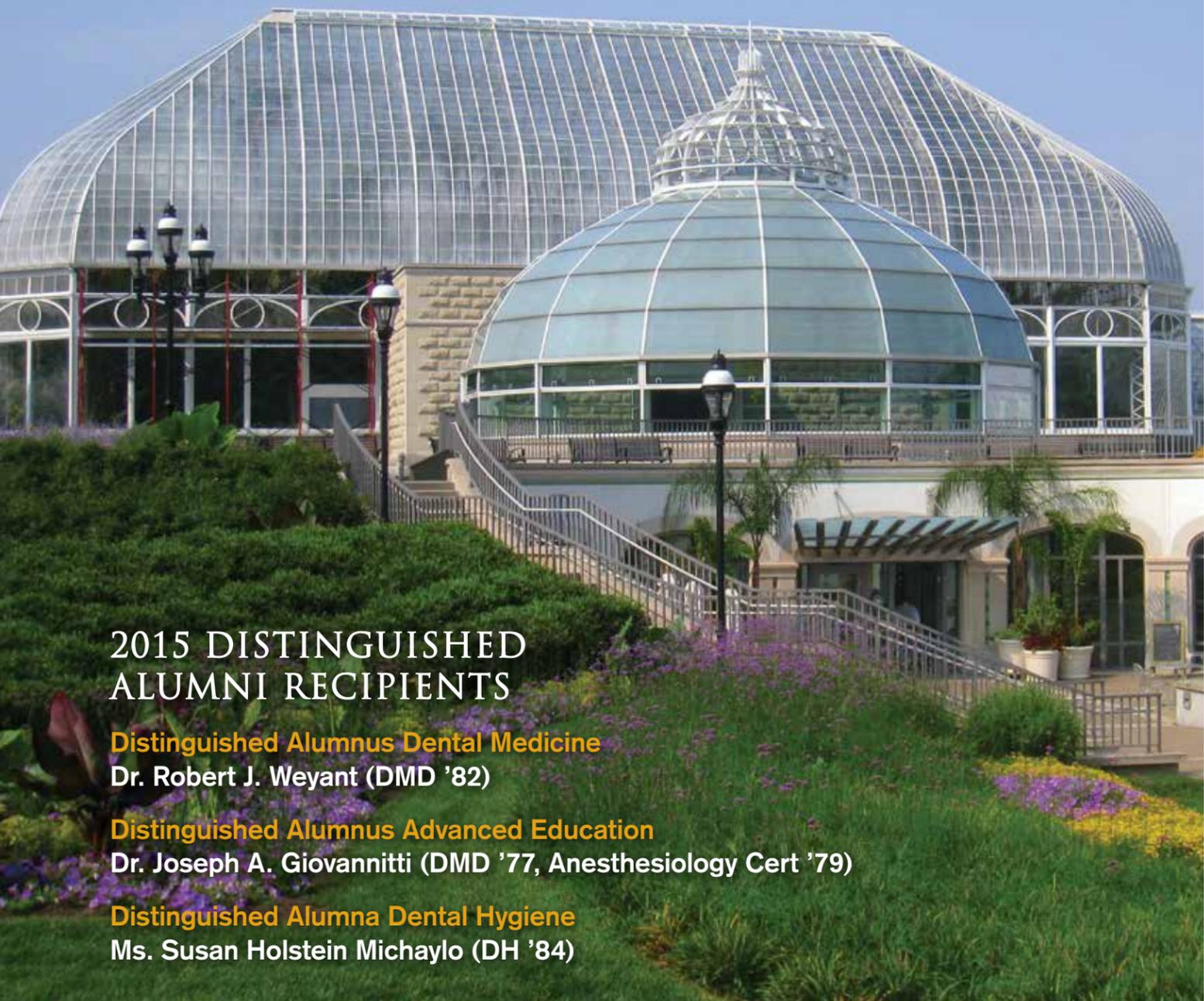
### Former Faculty and Staff Members

- Ms. Maryann Harrington • November 15, 2014  
Ms. Harrington worked in the registration area at the School of Dental Medicine from 1987 to 2006.
- Dr. Herbert L. Langdon • November 12, 2014  
Dr. Langdon held a BA from St. Lawrence University and a PhD from the University of Miami School of Medicine. In 1998 he retired from his position as associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine.
- Mr. Norman E. McMullen • November 10, 2014  
Mr. McMullen was employed as an equipment technician at the School of Dental Medicine from 1967 to 1992.
- Dr. Salvatore A. Migliore Sr. (DDS '61) • December 7, 2014  
Dr. Migliore served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and earned his DDS from the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine in 1961. He was a faculty member at the school from 1964 to 1972.

# ALUMNI

SAVE THE DATE!

## 15TH ANNUAL DEAN'S SCHOLARSHIP BALL



### 2015 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI RECIPIENTS

#### Distinguished Alumnus Dental Medicine

Dr. Robert J. Weyant (DMD '82)

#### Distinguished Alumnus Advanced Education

Dr. Joseph A. Giovannitti (DMD '77, Anesthesiology Cert '79)

#### Distinguished Alumna Dental Hygiene

Ms. Susan Holstein Michaylo (DH '84)

Please join us to support dental medicine scholarships, recognize distinguished alumni, and enjoy an evening at Phipps Conservatory.

**Saturday, April 11, 2015**

**Phipps Conservatory**

Cocktails at 6 p.m. • Dinner at 7 p.m.



### KEEP US POSTED

Please remember to tell us about your recent educational pursuits, career advancements, presentations, honors, and appointments. Your news and updates will be shared in future issues of *Pitt Dental Medicine* as space allows. Your photos are welcome.

Please let us know if you have changed your address, phone number, or e-mail so that we can be sure to update our files. You also may update your information online at [www.dental.pitt.edu/alumni/update\\_info.php](http://www.dental.pitt.edu/alumni/update_info.php).

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DEGREE(S) AND YEAR(S) OF GRADUATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PREFERRED E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION(S): \_\_\_\_\_

NEWS: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please mail your completed form to University of Pittsburgh, School of Dental Medicine, Office of Alumni Affairs and Development, Ms. Nancy Poe, 440 Salk Hall, 3501 Terrace Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15261. You also may e-mail it to [poen@pitt.edu](mailto:poen@pitt.edu) or call 412-648-8910.

### WHAT OUR ALUMNI ARE DOING

GEORGE J. SHIA (DDS '55) has retired and closed his office after 58 years of dental and orthodontic practice.

WILLIAM M. TRENTLY (DMD '86) published his third book *Yes, You Are Home: A Novel Presented in Memoir and Film*, in May 2014.

### Cutting Edge Imaging

University Dental Health Services  
ORAL AND  
MAXILLOFACIAL

### Radiology Imaging Service

Revolutionize your practice with Digital 2-D imaging and cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) 3-D imaging.

CBCT is a valuable diagnostic tool in treatment planning for implants, maxillofacial trauma, orthodontic and orthognathic procedure planning, TMJ analysis, and sinus pathology.

Our board-certified oral and maxillofacial radiologists provide both imaging and interpretation for four volume sizes: single site, single or double jaw, and full volume.

[dental.pitt.edu/radiology-imaging-service](http://dental.pitt.edu/radiology-imaging-service)

**412-648-8612** | [anp60@pitt.edu](mailto:anp60@pitt.edu)

- Qualified radiology technicians perform all the scans.
- We offer quick turnaround time on imaging and reporting.
- Our prices are very reasonable and competitive.

We also provide the following:  
**Oral Medicine/Clinical Pathology Services**  
**412-648-9100**

**Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Services**  
**412-648-8629**

## PROUD PITT ALUMNI

In a continuing effort to encourage dental students to consider practicing in Pennsylvania, the Dental Alumni Association (DAA) and the Department of Dental Public Health hosted an event on August 27, 2014, at the University Club. Dental alumni from 11 Pennsylvania counties were in attendance to share their perspectives with students. DAA has held similar mentoring events in the past to focus on the shortage of dental professionals in the state. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, which is now called the Department of Human Services, "Fifty-five areas in Pennsylvania are experiencing a shortage of dental professionals. Thirty-one percent of dental professionals in Pennsylvania are between the ages of 50 and 60. Twenty-six percent of the dental professionals are between the ages of 30 and 40. From 1999 to 2001, the number of licensed dentists has decreased by 700."

The students appreciated the range of insights they gained from alumni in attendance, including Dr. James Mancini (DMD '87), clinical director of dental services for the Salvation Army of Pennsylvania, and Drs. Stephen Radack (DMD '86), Joseph Ross (DMD '83), and Dennis Charlton (DMD '81), who all practice in Pennsylvania and have held leadership positions in the Pennsylvania Dental Association.

The event was supported in part by a grant from the Pitt Alumni Association. Mr. Gary Pollock, director of constituent relations for the alumni association, spoke to the group about the benefit of staying connected to Pitt through the Dental Alumni Association and the Pitt Alumni Association. The dental alumni in attendance echoed this message and talked about the positive impact they have experienced through their lifelong relationship with the University. ●



Dr. Stephen Radack (DMD '86), left, talks with Kenton Andryc, Class of 2015.



Pictured from left to right are Jake Shirk and Mark Clayton, Class of 2015, with Dr. Dennis Charlton (DMD '81), and Dr. Joseph Ross (DMD '83).



David Cole, Class of 2015, and Dr. Lisa Babb (DMD '11)

## PNC SPONSORS ALUMNI NETWORKING EVENT

Approximately 70 School of Dental Medicine alumni, residents, and students from the Class of 2015 who are interested in practice transition and/or associate positions attended an alumni networking event sponsored in conjunction with PNC Healthcare Banking and PNC Wealth Management at the Rivers Casino on September 30, 2014.

The event provided financial guidance to dentists at various career stages. Heidi Danko and Melissa Kwiatkowski, both



Pictured from left to right from PNC Healthcare Business Banking and PNC Wealth Management are Kendra Kasznel, Heidi Danko, Frank VanHorn, Melissa Kwiatkowski, Theresa Malmstrom, and Evan Durst.

vice presidents of healthcare business banking at PNC, gave a brief presentation that included information about building and sustaining a successful practice, improving cash flow, avoiding practice

pitfalls, and preparing for succession planning. In addition, there were break-out sessions for networking between dental alumni from the Pittsburgh area and students and to answer questions about healthcare banking. ●

## DENTAL SCREENINGS A BIG HIT

United Concordia Dental and Visionworks partnered to provide free dental and vision screenings to 137 children, ages 5–15, at PNC Park on July 23, 2014.

In addition to having the screenings, the kids met the Pirate Parrot, received a personal tour of PNC Park, had lunch in the press room, and received free tickets to a future Pittsburgh Pirates baseball game.

This year, two Pitt Dental faculty members, Dr. Adriana Modesto Vieira (DMD '09) and Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich (DMD '80), and four dental students—James Gravener, Sarah Ogburn, Katie Polley, and Lauren Sterner—volunteered to conduct the dental screenings. ●



Faculty, residents, and students from the Department of Pediatric Dentistry provided dental screenings at the PNC Park event.



Even the Pirate Parrot received a dental screening.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2014 CHARITY SOFTBALL GAME CHAMPIONS

The School of Dental Medicine's Team America was led by team captain Jake Shirk, Class of 2015. Other team members were Dr. Michael Clopp (DMD '96), Radhika Patel, Doug Porr, Angie Rentschler, Nicholas Shirey, Stephen Streiff, Richard Vargo, and Louis Wenger. Their victory enabled them to donate \$225 to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC Free Care Fund.

Thanks to everyone who helped to make this event a success!



## PITT DENTAL TEAM COMPETES IN ROWING LEAGUE

A group of School of Dental Medicine students, staff members, and faculty members who are collectively known as the Pitt Dental Incis-oars participate in the Three Rivers Rowing Association Corporate Rowing League. The league meets throughout the summer to learn the basics of rowing and participates in two races, including the Head of the Ohio Regatta, one of the largest one-day regattas in the country. ●

Photo credit: Spencer Hua, Class of 2016



## 2014 WHITE COAT CEREMONY

On August 25, 2014, members of the incoming first professional Class of 2018 and dental hygiene Class of 2016 received their white coats during the 2014 White Coat Ceremony. This signature event welcomes first-professional and dental hygiene students into the beginning of their professional career.

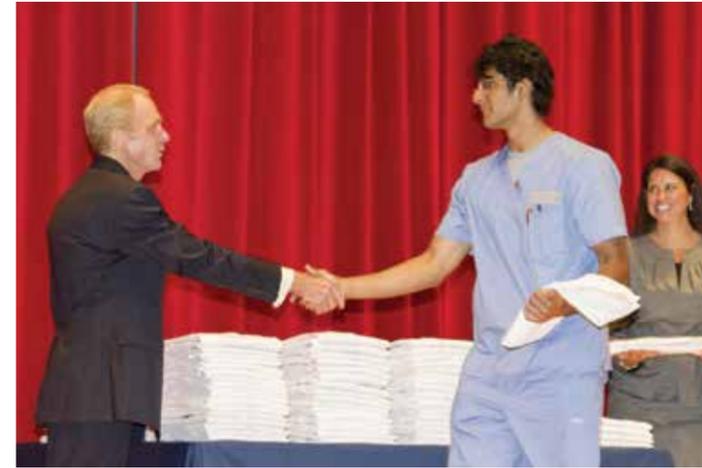
Dean Thomas Braun welcomed new students, families, faculty members, and staff to the event. Dr. Stephen Radack (DMD '86), president of the Pennsylvania Dental Association, welcomed students to the profession. Welcomes and introductions also were offered by Dr. Jean O'Donnell (DMD '90), president of the Dental Alumni Association; Dr. Michael Dobos (DMD '79), secretary and treasurer of the Beta Chapter of Omicron Kappa Upsilon; and Ms. Angelina Riccelli, director of the Dental Hygiene Program. Dr. Alexandre Vieira, director of clinical research, introduced the Class of 2018 to clinical research at the school.

If you weren't able to attend the event, you can still watch it by visiting our Web site at [dental.pitt.edu](http://dental.pitt.edu) and selecting the Students menu option. ●

The White Coat Ceremony receives support in part from the Harry Zohn and Cecile Feldman White Coat Endowment Fund; and contributions from our alumni and friends. Dr. Harry K. Zohn (DMD '84) and his wife, Dr. Cecile A. Feldman, dean of the Rutgers School of Dental Medicine, established the fund in 2009 to provide support for the annual ceremony.



Pictured with her parents are Sara Barna, Class of 2018 (center), Dr. Gerald J. Barna (DMD '74), and Dr. Diane M. Falsetti (DMD '83).



Dr. Thomas Braun and Dr. Marnie Oakley welcome Karunesh Chakote, Class of 2018.



Greg Sencak, Class of 2015, and his sister Regina Sencak, Class of 2018, are joined by their parents.



Faculty members Dr. William Young (DMD '87), far left, and Dr. Steven Kukunas (DMD '86), far right, celebrate as their sons, William Young and Paul Kukunas, join the Class of 2018.



Dental Hygiene Class of 2016



Samantha Linkowski and Farhad Zonoozi, Class of 2017, welcome the Class of 2018.



Arielle Forbes, Class of 2017



First Professional Class of 2018

## TAU SIGMA CLUB HELPS TO ACCLIMATE STUDENTS TO LIFE IN THE MILITARY

**T**au Sigma Military Dental Club is the newest student club at the School of Dental Medicine. It was developed by Dr. Robert Engelmeier, chair of the Department of Prosthodontics and a Vietnam War veteran, to support veterans and educate students about their upcoming life in the military.

The club, which was started in 2012, carries on Dr. Engelmeier's passion for giving back to the military and his experience in the U.S. Air Force. The club includes about 30 military-sponsored Pitt dental students and joins them together with a sense of pride for the commitment they have made to serve their country. Student members become familiar with aspects of their future military life through workshops and presentations on deployments, benefits, and educational opportunities given by recruiters, active reservists who were recently deployed, and alumni who have retired from active duty and may have been deployed in past wars.



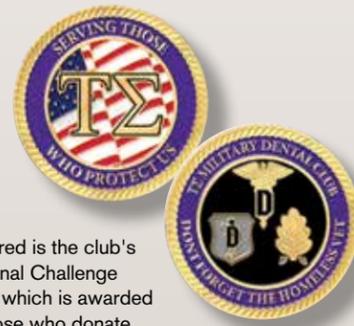
Dr. Robert Engelmeier, far right, and Lauren Ervin, publicity officer for Tau Sigma, first row, far left, along with club officers and members, present 65 gift cards to Ms. Mary Frances Pilarski, first row, center, coordinator, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's Homeless Veterans Program, in December 2013.

Shortly after the club's formation, other dental schools across the country expressed interest in creating their own local chapters of the club. This movement now has spread

to 28 schools nationally that are connected through Tau Sigma.

Each year, during the months of October and November, the club raises funds in support of homeless veterans. The funds that are collected are used to purchase gift cards that are given to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program.

If you would like to learn more about Tau Sigma or make a donation to the club in support of veterans, please contact Dr. Engelmeier at 412-648-8675. Also, be sure to like the club on Facebook at Tau Sigma Military Dental Club. ●



Pictured is the club's National Challenge coin, which is awarded to those who donate \$25 or more.

## UNITED CONCORDIA AWARDS DENTAL SCHOLARSHIPS

**U**nited Concordia Dental is committed to assisting aspiring dental professionals with their education costs and is very proud to partner with the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine to offer scholarships to students in good academic standing who are in need of financial aid.

Congratulations to the recipients for the 2014-15 academic year: dental hygiene student Ashlee Antoszyk and DMD student Colby Sowers. To read more about, Mr. Sowers' story, see page 39. ●

## DENTAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SPONSORS CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY RECEPTION

**A**n October 8, the Dental Alumni Association sponsored a diversity reception in conjunction with the American Experience Distinguished Lecture Series featuring William Strickland and cosponsored by the University Honors College and the Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law & Public Policy. Dr. Christine Wankiiri-Hale (DMD '02) welcomed alumni, current students, residents, and faculty members to come together to share stories and experiences. Attendees also discussed the importance of enhancing diversity at the School of Dental Medicine.

Some of the guests in attendance included alumni from near and far, including Dr. Terri Jones Matthews (DMD '81), who traveled from Washington, D.C., and Dr. Judith Davenport (DMD '79), who serves on the Board of Visitors for the School of Dental Medicine. Dr. Davenport, who has been recognized as a distinguished alumnus and a University of Pittsburgh Legacy Laureate, recently was appointed by President Barack Obama to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Board of Directors. Dr. Jones Matthews and Dr. Davenport, along with Dr. David Anderson (MDS '84), advocate for enhanced diversity efforts at the school and encourage other alumni to become involved with such efforts as well.

The sentiments of these alumni are shared by members of the school's administration, namely Dr. Elizabeth Bilodeau, director of admissions and chair of the First Professional Admissions Committee. The school has been working to ensure a diverse student body under the direction of Dr. Thomas Braun, Dr. Bilodeau, and Dr. Wankiiri-Hale and seeks to continue to attract high-caliber underrepresented students. Dr. Bilodeau encouraged those in attendance to consider new ways in which we all can help to foster a diverse culture for future classes at the School of Dental Medicine in addition to continuing current outreach efforts.

"A diverse school community not only improves the educational experience for all but also improves access to care for the community at large," remarked Dr. Wankiiri-Hale during the reception. While she advocates for all students, Dr. Wankiiri-Hale also is committed to establishing pathways to foster a



Pictured from left to right are former Pennsylvania Governor Dick Thornburgh, Pitt Chancellor Patrick Gallagher, and Dr. Christine Wankiiri-Hale.



Pictured from left to right are Dr. Terri Jones Matthews (DMD '81), Mrs. Tara Melissa Matthews, and Dr. Judith Davenport (DMD '79).



Pictured from left to right are Mr. William Strickland, Dr. Wankiiri-Hale, Mrs. Rose Strickland, Mrs. Ginny Judson Thornburgh, and Mr. Thornburgh.

culture of diversity at the school. She added, "I believe that all those who are here this evening support our efforts as the beginning of a much larger movement to cultivate role models, mentors, and partners in creating a diverse dental community." ●



## ASDA STEEL CITY DENTAL EXPO 2014 A SUCCESS

On September 25, 2014, the University of Pittsburgh chapter of the American Student Dental Association (ASDA) hosted its seventh annual Steel City Dental Expo at the Wyndham Pittsburgh University Center in Oakland. Students, residents, and faculty members were invited to attend a seminar, a vendor fair, and a networking event.

The morning seminar featured guest speaker Robert Lowe, DDS, a general dentist from Charlotte, N.C., who spoke on “Practical Dentistry for the Restorative Practice” to more than 350 attendees. Dr. Lowe’s presentation included information about dental materials, crown and bridge techniques, advances in direct composites, and creative treatment planning for the real-world patient.

The afternoon vendor fair, one of the largest in the expo’s history, included 32 vendors and featured premier sponsors Stryker and Nobel Biocare.

Finally, the day concluded with a networking event organized by the Pennsylvania Dental Association (PDA). Current PDA President Dr. Stephen Radack (DMD ’86) and American Dental Association delegate Dr. Andrew Kwasny (DMD ’83, MDS ’85) spoke to students on the importance of organized dentistry and the need for young practitioners to stay involved.

Pitt ASDA extends its gratitude to all the vendors, students, residents, and faculty members who made this year’s event a great success. It extends special thanks to Dr. Robert Lowe, to its friends in PDA for a wonderful networking event, and to both Dr. Mark Ochs and Dr. Thomas Braun for their dedication and support of this annual event. ●

## SNDA CHAPTER WINS THIRD PLACE IN ANNUAL COMPETITION

The University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine Student National Dental Association (SNDA) chapter was recently recognized as the third-place small chapter of the year in SNDA’s Chapter of the Year competition. The award was accepted at the association’s annual national convention in New Orleans, La., in July 2014 by the chapter’s immediate past president, Braxton Henderson, Class of 2015. The Pitt chapter was recognized specifically for its outstanding community outreach efforts as well as for having a positive impact on the School of Dental Medicine.

“The annual SNDA Chapter of the Year competition encourages full chapter participation on local and national levels. Winners are selected in the small, medium, and large chapter categories. Selection is based on participation of the local chapters in nationally recognized events,” said Mr. Henderson.

For information about SNDA, visit [www.sndanet.org](http://www.sndanet.org). ●



Pictured from left to right are Braxton Henderson, Class of 2016, treasurer; and Steven Lemmon, Class of 2016, president.

## A GIFT IN SUPPORT OF SCHOLARSHIPS

The School of Dental Medicine is committed to excellence in education, research, and community outreach. The school continues its mission of providing superior dental education and training and high-quality clinical dental services to the people of the region.

Our students truly appreciate the support they receive and are dedicated to succeeding during their time at the School of Dental Medicine and beyond. However, the cost of a dental education can be a tremendous burden on students and may be a limiting factor to entry into the profession. Scholarships and awards are of increasing importance to our students, the school, and the region.

When choosing where to give this year, please do not forget those dental students who are in need of your assistance. By making a gift in support of scholarships, you’re giving every dental student the opportunity to succeed.

Please visit [giveto.pitt.edu](http://giveto.pitt.edu) to learn more about our school and to make your gift. For more information about how you can support the School of Dental Medicine, please contact Mr. Paul Casey at 412-383-7544 or [pbc8@pitt.edu](mailto:pbc8@pitt.edu). ●

### STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

Residents of rural Pennsylvania are fully aware of the economic hardships faced by citizens of more populous areas of the state. In fact, small farm towns are just as prone to the devastating effects of an economic downturn. Unfortunately, it often seems that less attention is paid to economic conditions in rural settings compared to urban settings. My dedication to oral health in rural settings qualifies me as a very deserving scholarship candidate.

I am from a very rural area in Pennsylvania called Fulton County, a place that fewer than 15,000 people call home. There is a need for dentists in this area, as there are only three dentists currently practicing in the county, two of whom are only practicing part time. Obviously, it’s difficult for patients to see a dentist when there are not enough to serve them, and many of the people in the area cannot afford to see a private-practice dentist. Fortunately, a dental clinic is nearby to serve lower income families. Shadowing in this clinic helped me to realize my responsibility to be as involved in rural community service as possible. In the future, there is nothing I would rather do than return to my hometown to practice



Colby Sowers

as a general dentist. As clichéd as it may sound, my hometown has helped to mold me into the person I am today, and I refuse to pass up the opportunity to give back to my community, especially while doing something I love.

Also exciting to me is the prospect of volunteering at the dental clinic that reinforced my enthusiasm for dentistry, standing in the shoes of the professionals who helped to guide me. Being selected to receive a scholarship is an investment in me and my contribution toward improving rural public health and is a true blessing that I am extremely grateful for. I am happy to have the opportunity to use my passion for dentistry in my small community. ”

**We need your help so that access to a dental education is never denied because of financial difficulties.**



# University of Pittsburgh

## School of Dental Medicine

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## ALUMNI EVENTS CALENDAR WINTER/SPRING/SUMMER 2015

2015	
February 4	Dental Alumni Association Executive Committee meeting, 5:30 p.m., Salk Hall, Room 457 Dental Alumni Association Board of Directors meeting, 6 p.m., Salk Hall, Room 457 Mentoring session for first-year students, 6:30 p.m., Salk Hall, Room 457
March 21	21st Annual T.F. Bowser Memorial Lecture: "Diet and Dentistry in the 21st Century," presented by David Meinz, MS, RD, FADA, CSP, 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m., four (4) hours of continuing education credit; for more information, please contact <b>Diane or Lori</b> at <b>412-648-8370</b> Dental Alumni Association Annual Business Meeting, immediately following the Bowser Lecture Dental Hygiene Program luncheon, immediately following the Bowser Lecture; call <b>412-648-8432</b> for more
April 11	15th Annual Dean's Scholarship Ball, 6 p.m., Phipps Conservatory
April 24–25	Pennsylvania's Dental Meeting and Expo, Hershey, Pa.
April 26	University of Pittsburgh Commencement Convocation
May 13	Spring Research Symposium, 8 a.m., Scaife Hall, Auditoriums 5 and 6
May 15	Senior Awards Assembly, 2 p.m., Salk Hall, Room 402
May 16	School of Dental Medicine Diploma Ceremony, 1 p.m., Heinz Hall
August 31	General Assembly and White Coat Ceremony, 3 p.m., Scaife Hall, Auditoriums 5 and 6

For more information, please visit our online calendar at [dental.pitt.edu](http://dental.pitt.edu).



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- Pitt Dental Young Alumni