

# PITT DENTAL MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SUMMER/FALL 2009 VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 2



*Reaching Out  
To Pittsburgh's Communities*



## Dear Alumni and Friends,

The School of Dental Medicine continues to experience extraordinary progress in a university that is setting the standard. Please let me provide a brief glimpse of the good things that are helping to define our School.

Rankings in terms of funding by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research of the NIH) reveal our School has jumped to 13th among all schools. This is due, in large part, to our devoted and successful scientists in the Center for Dental and Craniofacial Genetics, the Center for Craniofacial Regeneration, and the Center for Dental Informatics. Each of the directors is a recognized leader in his or her respective area. To accommodate research expansion, a research tower, to be shared with other schools of the health sciences, is scheduled to be built behind Salk Hall in the near future. This is one of the few new buildings scheduled for the Pittsburgh campus.

Clinical activity and teaching in the Multidisciplinary Implant Center and in the Center for Patients with Special Needs have accelerated at an impressive rate. Each of these centers and our faculty were highlighted on a recent public broadcasting special (WQED TV, Pittsburgh) examining dental care. The representation of the School of Dental Medicine by these faculty brought pride and acclimation to the School. Further, the outpouring of financial support for the Center for Patients with Special Needs is a testimony to the philanthropic heart of Western Pennsylvania and those associated with it.

The facilities at the School are constantly being upgraded. It is an understatement to note that it is a different School than it was just 10 years ago. This issue of the Pitt Dental Medicine magazine highlights Mr. Bill Steinhauser, our Director of Facilities and Operations. This year, Bill has overseen construction of each of the centers noted above, while replacing, in the first phase, half of all of the clinic units and chairs; and working to assure complete clinic computerization and placement of digital imaging



equipment, in addition to serving as a consultant for the School of Dental Medicine to the proposed research tower. Bill represents those individuals who have a long-standing commitment to the School of Dental Medicine and the ability to enhance it.

This year marked the ninth anniversary of our very successful Dean's Scholarship Ball held at the Carnegie Music Hall, and our student-claimed commencement ceremony held at the spectacular Pittsburgh Symphony's Heinz Hall. It is very gratifying to see the increasing impact of each of these events, which represent the contributions of time and energy by our alumni, faculty, staff, and students.

Several individuals from our School deserve special note for their accomplishments this past year.

- Mark Ochs, DMD, MD, Chair of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, received the prestigious ADA Golden Apple Award for Mentorship and Teaching presented to him by Dr. William Glecos, ADA Trustee and candidate for president, at our 2009 graduation ceremony. This award is highly competitive and only one is given each year in its respective category. It is especially noteworthy because it was entirely student-driven.
- Mr. Neil Robertson, second-year student, received the National First Place Basic Science Award by ADA/Dentsply and presented at the Chicago Mid-Winter Meeting.
- Ms. Elizabeth Cole, fourth-year student, was selected as secretary of the national American Student Dental Association (ASDA) delegation to the ADA's House of Delegates this fall in Honolulu. She will represent all students on a national level.

These three examples clearly illustrate how the School of Dental Medicine continues in a trajectory toward excellence. In the end, "our people" define our school and make it the institution it is recognized to be.

With deep appreciation,

Thomas W. Braun, DMD '73, PhD '77  
Professor and Dean



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**Cover stories:** see pages 2-8

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# SCHWEITZER FELLOWS HAVE LE

Sitting in the Sto-Rox Health Center waiting room with his bright blue Dell laptop in hand, fourth-year dental student Mr. Jon Misner is on a mission to educate patients on the hazards of smoking.

Mr. Misner spies a patient who has arrived a few minutes early for his appointment and seizes the opportunity, asking the man if he'll take a few minutes to hear some information about tobacco use.

"Why? Do I smell like I smoke?" is the middle-aged man's reply, although he does agree to listen to Mr. Misner's talk.

So, Mr. Misner, who tag-teams with classmate Mr. Charlie Miller in this effort, proceeds to review his PowerPoint presentation on the subject. He tells the patient not only how his health can benefit if he gives up cigarettes, but how his wallet will as well.

This scene unfolded as part of Mr. Misner's and Mr. Miller's participation in the Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellows Program (PSFP). The Schweitzer Program supports year-long community-based service projects by graduate students who generally come from health professional programs, but also from other relevant fields such as law and social work.

Since the beginning of the school year, Mr. Misner and Mr. Miller have visited the McKees Rocks-based health center regularly to warn its patients about smoking's perils.

Third-year students Ms. Elizabeth Cole and Ms. Andrea Goldin also participated in the Schweitzer Fellow program during the 2008-09 academic year.

Ms. Cole counseled mothers participating in the WIC food supplement health and nutrition program on various aspects of oral health in infants and young children and referred them to the Allegheny County Health Department free dental clinics for comprehensive care.

Ms. Goldin's project also took her to organizations that serve low-income women and children, including Sarah Heinz House and HEARTH. She pro-



*Ms. Aditi Jindal (left) will be a Schweitzer Fellow during the 2009-10 academic year. Mr. Jon Misner, Mr. Charlie Miller, and Ms. Andrea Goldin were Schweitzer Fellows this year.*

vided oral hygiene instruction to women and their children at those locations.

The experience is invaluable.

"It's one of the most rewarding experiences I've had in dental school," Ms. Cole said.

Named for noteworthy humanitarian Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the program supports service in a total of 11 regions throughout the United States.

Dr. Schweitzer was an acclaimed musician and philosopher early in his career, but when he reached his thirties, he decided to take a different path—medicine. His work as a physician took him to the then-French colony of Gabon in West Africa, where he built a hospital to provide medical care to the region's poor. In 1952, Dr. Schweitzer won the Nobel Peace Prize for his numerous humanitarian activities.

In recognition of Dr. Schweitzer's dedication to improving access to health care, program fellows undertake a year-long service project that addresses the health and social needs of a particular underserved population in their area.

"Dr. Schweitzer would have loved

what we are about," said PSFP Program Director Joan Haley.

In order to implement their projects, the Schweitzer Fellows partner with a local community-based agency. The program requires a minimum of 200 hours of direct service over the course of the fellowship year, which begins in April.

Fellows work with mentors at both their project sites and at their universities. Senior Associate Dean Dr. Dennis Ranalli was the mentor for Mr. Misner and Mr. Miller. Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich, chair of the Department of Pediatric Dentistry, worked with Ms. Goldin, while Ms. Cole worked with Department of Dental Public Health and Information Management Chair Dr. Robert Weyant.

As part of their projects, the Schweitzer Fellows submit monthly progress reports as well as a final document that offers recommendations for the project's long-term sustainability.

Many of those final reports discuss a project that differs drastically from the one proposed in the application process. Unanticipated obstacles, such as



# GACY OF SERVICE, OUTREACH

difficulties in finding a community partner, often necessitate changes.

“Our project definitely did evolve,” said Mr. Misner, who noted that he and Mr. Miller had originally intended to give their presentation to middle and high school students.

Ms. Cole, Ms. Goldin, Mr. Miller and Mr. Misner join an exclusive group of eight other SDM alumni who held Schweitzer Fellowships during dental school. Third-year student Mr. William Hull and advanced standing student Ms. Aditi Jindal will carry on that tradition next year as Schweitzer Fellows, with a project focus of patients with special needs.

The dental school’s Schweitzer Fellow legacy reaches all the way back to 1997. That’s the year that alumnus Dr. Joseph Ambrosino (DMD ’80) joined the staff of the Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center, the organization that hosts the local Schweitzer Fellows Program.

The program was in its infancy then. The first class of fellows entered in the fall of 1998 and included two dental students.

“We’re thrilled to have the dental school and the dental students involved,” Dr. Ambrosino said. “Being a dentist, I’m always aware of how oral health tends to be forgotten or marginalized, so having them as a part of the team is important.”

Dental student representation among the interdisciplinary group of students is also important, according to Dr.

Ambrosino.

“Sometimes it’s more eye-opening for the other fellows to see what the dental students bring to the table,” he said.

Networking is an important component of the fellowship. Monthly meetings allow the fellows to interact with each other and learn from their various experiences. Also, the fellows collaborate to develop symposia on health-related issues, and they work together on service projects outside of the health care realm, such as clothing drives.

Furthermore, the Schweitzer Fellowship Program embraces a philosophy that encourages that interaction and networking well beyond the program year.

“Once students graduate, they become Fellows for Life,” Ms. Haley said. “We take that phrase very seriously.”

The Fellows for Life network includes more than 2,000 past program participants who are able to stay connected through an annual conference, regional events, and an online community, in addition to other resources.

Additionally, many Schweitzer Program alumni choose to mentor new fellows, providing valuable advice from an experienced perspective. Ms. Cole will be taking on that role next year.

The enduring nature of the Schweitzer Fellowship reaches beyond the network, though. The experience often influences students throughout their careers.

“I think it gives them a better

perspective of what people are facing, in particular, people who are disadvantaged. It may even impact whether they seek treatment or not,” Dr. Ambrosino said. “I think it makes you a better clinician when you have that kind of perspective and that kind of understanding.”

“Volunteer service has always been a part of my life, and I have always envisioned giving back once I became a practicing dentist,” Ms. Goldin said.

Mr. Miller gained some new insights from his project.

“I never understood how hard it was to quit [smoking] because I had never started,” he said. “It’s amazing how people cling to this addiction.”

The Schweitzer Fellows also get an opportunity to witness how they can directly affect a patient’s behavior, which proves valuable in their chosen profession.

In Mr. Misner’s case, the anti-smoking presentation seemed to make an immediate impact on that Sto-Rox Health Center patient.

“I’m gonna talk to the doctor today about getting those [nicotine replacement] pills,” the man said as he walked back to see his physician.

*School of Dental Medicine alumnus Dr. Joseph Ambrosino is executive director of Southwest AHEC, the organization that hosts the Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellowship Program.*



## School of Dental Medicine Schweitzer Fellowship Program Alumni

**Dr. Andrew Thompson (DMD '08)**

**Dr. Shelly Abramowicz (DMD '02)**

**Dr. Sherri Chong (DMD '02)**

**Dr. Mohammed Ganni (DMD '02)**

**Dr. Aimee Todorovich (DMD '00)**

**Dr. Breyon Justice (DMD '00)**

**Dr. Catherine Kruljac (DMD '00)**

**Dr. Allison Satinsky (DMD '00)**



# DIVERSITY ON DISPLAY AT SC

## Dr. David Anderson Named Director of Diversity Initiatives

Certain racial and ethnic groups are underrepresented among health professionals. For example, only one percent of dentists are African-American, according to the Student National Dental Association, although that ethnicity represents 12 percent of the United States' general population.

This disparity's implications reach beyond diversity in dental schools themselves. Research suggests that practitioners who come from underserved populations are more likely to provide care for those populations, so a lack of minority dentists may exacerbate access to care issues.

The School of Dental Medicine is doing its part to address these concerns with the appointment of Dr. David A. Anderson as its first director of diversity initiatives. The position's focus will be broad, encompassing cultural, gender and ethnic diversity, and it will tie into the school's education, clinical and research missions.

Dr. Anderson, who has been a member of the dental faculty since 2008 as a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Prosthodontics, has been on his new job since January and emphasizes a multi-faceted approach to this new endeavor.

"This initiative will reach beyond student recruitment and faculty recruitment, although that is an important piece of what we hope to accomplish," Dr. Anderson said. "We'll foster an environment that embraces multiculturalism in all aspects."

School of Dental Medicine Dean Dr. Thomas W. Braun was working to develop new scholarships targeted to minority students when he realized that the dental school had an opportunity to foster diversity on a

larger scale.

"Diversity in culture, ethnicity and gender will only serve to enrich the School of Dental Medicine in all of its missions," he said. "We believe that adding this position will catalyze that process."

Dr. Braun collaborated with Ms. Paula Davis, assistant vice chancellor in the Office of Health Sciences Diversity at the University of Pittsburgh, and Dr. Kathy Humphrey, Pitt's vice provost and dean of students, to create the new position.

The diversity and inclusion goals included in the dental school's strategic plan also will provide a general framework for diversity initiatives. In addition to recruitment activities, continuing education and faculty development may be incorporated.

In shaping the Office of Diversity Initiatives, Dr. Anderson plans to use a variety of resources to guide his efforts. He also can turn to his vast network for suggestions and advice.

"Dr. Anderson has established numerous professional relationships locally and throughout the country, and those relationships, along with his outstanding reputation among his colleagues, will be an asset to the school's diversity efforts," Dr. Braun said.

A graduate of the Howard University College of Dentistry, Dr. Anderson completed a residency program and earned a Master of Dental Science degree in prosthodontics at Pitt. He has been in private practice since 1983. He accepted a commission in the United States Air Force in 1999, serving in educator, clinician, administrator, and service-wide policy review and revision roles in both active duty and reserve facilities. He was promot-



*Dr. David A. Anderson*

ed to Lieutenant Colonel in 2005 and completed his military service obligation in 2007.

His academic career spans two decades and has included appointments at area UPMC hospitals.

A past president of the Dental Society of Western Pennsylvania, Dr. Anderson has long been recognized as a leader in dentistry. He also is a past chair of the Pennsylvania Dental Association's political action committee and a former president of the Rotary Club in Pittsburgh's Lawrenceville neighborhood.

A chock-full schedule hasn't held Dr. Anderson back from pursuing various avenues for enhancing diversity at the dental school as well as his own development as a diversity professional.

"He's really paying the time and attention to the position that it deserves," Dr. Braun said.

Dr. Anderson recognizes that he will be devoting much more of his time and attention to that work as time goes on, as well.

"This announcement is a blast-off of the shuttle," he said.

"We're hoping to get to outer space."

# SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE

## Student Groups Raise Awareness of Cultures

### Asian Pacific American Dental Student Association

One of the newest student groups at the School of Dental Medicine, the Asian Pacific American Dental Student Association (APADSA), not only seeks to promote appreciation for Asian cultures, but it also strives to increase oral health awareness in Pittsburgh's Asian population.

Last November, APADSA members volunteered at a free medical clinic organized by a Pittsburgh-based group called the Organization of Chinese Americans. The clinic included a dental component, which allowed some fourth-year students to see patients. Also, one of the club's members was able to provide translation services.

APADSA, which has attracted nearly 30 members since it was officially sanctioned by the university last September, was the brainchild of second-year dental student Lydia Chang, who currently serves as the group's president.

Four different nationalities—Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese—are represented in the APADSA membership.

Any alumni who would like to get involved with this new group may contact Ms. Chang at [lcc15@dental.pitt.edu](mailto:lcc15@dental.pitt.edu).



*The Hispanic Dental Association participates in a number of outreach efforts and holds a popular lunch sale fundraiser each year. (Photo courtesy of HDA)*

### Hispanic Dental Association

The dental school's Hispanic Dental Association (HDA) chapter brings oral health care and education to the local Latino community. Once a month, HDA members visit the Birmingham Free Clinic, held on Pittsburgh's South Side, to provide dental exams to its patients.

"Without our group, there wouldn't be many dentists to treat Spanish-speaking patients," said fourth-year student and HDA President Ms. Kathy Snell.

The HDA also offers oral hygiene instruction and supplies to attendees at the annual San Jacinto health fair held at an Oakland church.

The group engages in a number of activities within the dental school, as well, such as teaching a class on communicating with Spanish-speaking patients.

Affiliated with the national Hispanic Dental Association professional organization, the Pitt chapter was founded

eight years ago and now includes 72 members representing various ethnicities.

Membership is not limited only to Latinos or even Spanish speakers. Anyone interested in Hispanic culture is welcome to join.

### Student National Dental Association

The Student National Dental Association (SNDA) is a nationwide organization that works to increase dental schools' recruitment and retention of minority students.

Affiliated with the National Dental Association professional organization, the SNDA originally had a Pitt presence in the 1990s. When fourth-year students Mr. Walter Ackah and Ms. Rachel Bell first arrived at dental school, they collaborated with Dr. Christine Wankiiri-Hale (DMD '02), a faculty member in Restorative Dentistry/Comprehensive Care, to re-establish an SNDA chapter here.

The new chapter began in 2006, and by the 2008-09 academic year, its membership included 32 students.

The SNDA helps to educate minority students about dental careers by hosting events such as "drill-and-fill" sessions, which allow students to experience filling a tooth using a practice model.

"I think it's important to reach out to people who haven't gotten to dental school yet," said SNDA President and second-year student Ms. Kanisha Campbell. "I wish I had that kind of opportunity when I was trying to decide between medical school and dental school."



◀The Asian Pacific American Dental Student Association held a food sale fundraiser in November. Photo courtesy of APADSA.

►The Student National Dental Association hosted a drill-and-fill event in March to give Pitt undergraduates an opportunity to learn more about dentistry. The group also holds an annual international lunch to celebrate diversity.





# FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUD



Providing free, sometimes extensive, dental care to more than 60 children over a mere two days is no easy feat. Just to prepare for the School of Dental Medicine's annual Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) event, the planning team must complete a host of tasks, ranging from scheduling appointments to securing supplies. That's before the first GKAS patient even sets foot in the building.

Yet, despite the logistical challenges that GKAS presents, a capable crew of students, faculty, and staff always comes forward to organize a successful event. The 2009 version maintained that tradition, providing nearly \$8,500 of free dental care to uninsured children, ranging from sealants to tooth extractions.

GKAS requires the coordination of more than 100 people, including faculty, staff, students, and residents from the Department of Pediatric Dentistry. Volunteers come from outside of the department as well. This year, residents from the Advanced Education in General Dentistry program, the general practice program at UPMC Montefiore, and the Pittsburgh Veterans Affairs Medical Center also took part in GKAS.

"It's definitely a lot of work, but it's all worthwhile," said Ms. Erin

Shope, the third-year dental student who led the GKAS coordination efforts. "Knowing that we're providing care to so many children in need is really rewarding."

Ms. Shope is the president of the SDM's student chapter of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), which has approximately 65 members, all of whom participated in the GKAS event.

Ms. Shope's fellow officers—Vice President Matt Hanna, Secretary Janel Marcelino, Treasurer Craig Bair, along with ASDA Representative Liz Cole—also were instrumental in spearheading GKAS.

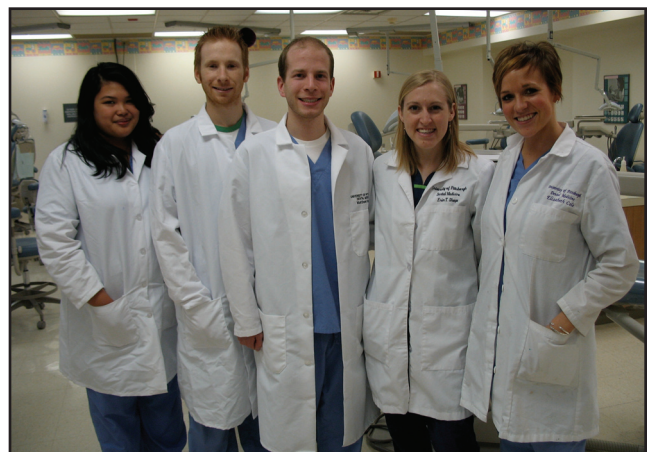
The day would not be nearly as successful without the contributions of Department of Pediatric Dentistry faculty and staff, including Chair Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich and Predoctoral Patient Coordinator Ms. Diane Cervi. In addition to her day-to-day scheduling duties on behalf of the department, Ms. Cervi is the primary patient contact for GKAS as well and capably handles an onslaught of calls that begins nearly two months in advance.

Another important piece of the GKAS puzzle is the in-kind support offered by a number of the dental school's departments.

▼ Ms. Diane Cervi, the predoctoral patient coordinator in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry, handles all of the GKAS scheduling duties.



► The officers of the student chapter of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry helped to coordinate the GKAS event. They are (L to R) Secretary Ms. Janel Marcelino, Treasurer Mr. Craig Bair, Vice President Mr. Matt Hanna, President Ms. Erin Shope, and ASDA Representative Ms. Liz Cole. (Photo courtesy of Ms. Erin Shope.)





# ENTS “GIVE KIDS A SMILE”

This was the second year that GKAS has been a two-day event. The children received dental prophylaxis on the first day and returned for any necessary restorative care on the second.

The school's Dental Hygiene Program, which first collaborated on the dental school's GKAS efforts last year, expanded its reach this year, providing services during three of the four sessions. The program made available six of the chairs in its area per session. Faculty and students offered patient education, placed sealants and applied varnish.

Because GKAS is traditionally so well-received, the Department of Pediatric Dentistry is exploring the possibility of a similar program that would be held in the summer. The expansion would allow GKAS patients to receive checkups every six months as is generally recommended.

“The goal of GKAS is to provide uninsured children with the same access to care as children from families with dental insurance,” Dr. Studen-Pavlovich said. “If we introduce another GKAS session, we can make more progress toward achieving that goal.”



▼ Dental Hygiene student Lindsay Brock helped to organize the Hygiene Program's GKAS activities.



## Students Pitch In at Dental Society GKAS Day

Dental and Dental Hygiene students also volunteered at the Dental Society of Western Pennsylvania's Give Kids a Smile event held at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh. The event, which was organized by Dr. Nicole Kotzan (DMD '06), allowed children who were visiting the museum to get a checkup. Pictured here (L to R) are: Ms. Michelle Mai, Ms. Julia Batres, and Ms. Erin Shope.





As I go through my day-to-day duties at Salk Hall, it can be easy to lose sight of the School of Dental Medicine's influence outside of these walls.

Developing this issue of the magazine presented the perfect opportunity to take stock of the many ways in which our students, faculty, and alumni reach out to the community in Pittsburgh and beyond. It is truly inspirational.

With all of our students' obligations in the classroom and the clinic, it's hard to imagine that they have much time left for eating and sleeping, let alone any extracurricular activities.

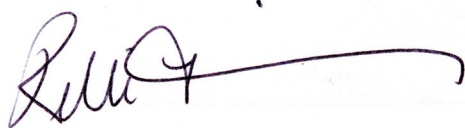
Somehow, though, they find a way to provide valuable oral health education to populations underserved by the current health care system. They devote their free time to promoting diversity at the school and throughout the dental profession as a whole. They contribute to the cutting-edge research taking place in our labs.

End-of-the-year events like the senior awards ceremony, the diploma presentation ceremony, and the dental hygiene graduation luncheon underscore our students' achievements as well. The diploma ceremony was particularly meaningful, giving friends and family a chance to celebrate along with our students.

It's no surprise that those same students will continue to accomplish great things long after graduating from dental school. Our annual Distinguished Alumni Awards offer a reminder of how the dental school's graduates shape the profession and, often, become influential in fields outside of it. This year's honorees not only are successful professionals within the field of dentistry, they branched out and thrived in different arenas as well.

We may present those awards to a small group of individuals each year, but we recognize that many, many more of our alumni are making important contributions to dentistry and to their communities. At Pitt Dental Magazine, we enjoy hearing about all of the achievements of our alumni, so please keep us informed! You can update your information and submit items for the magazine's Class Notes section via the alumni page on the School of Dental Medicine's Web site ([www.dental.pitt.edu](http://www.dental.pitt.edu)) or at the mailing address on the back cover of this issue.

Sincerely,



Kelli M. McElhinny  
Editor

**Dr. David Anderson** was appointed Director of Diversity Initiatives.

**Dr. Catherine Boyd** was appointed clinical instructor in the Department of Restorative Dentistry/Comprehensive Care.

**Dr. Ariadne Letra** was appointed research assistant professor in the Department of Oral Biology.

**Dr. Mark Mooney** was promoted to chair of the Department of Oral Biology.

**Dr. Luis Mota** was appointed clinical assistant professor in the Department of Periodontics.

**Dr. Gary Schultz** was appointed clinical assistant professor in the Department of Restorative Dentistry/Comprehensive Care.

**Dr. Renato Silva** was appointed research assistant professor in the Department of Oral Biology.

*Photo by Joe Kapelewski, University of Pittsburgh CIDDE*



*Dr. Mark Ochs, professor, associate dean, and chair of the School of Dental Medicine's Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, received the ADA's 2009 Golden Apple award for Inspiring Careers in Dental Education. The national recognition was presented to Dr. Ochs at the dental school's May 16 Diploma Presentation Ceremony by guest speaker Dr. William Glecos, ADA presidential candidate and District 3 trustee.*

*As dental student Ms. Liz Cole noted in her nomination letter, "it is obvious to us all that he deeply cares about the mastery of his craft, the patients he treats, and the students he teaches."*

*"The fact that this award emanated from the Pitt students and residents reaffirms my career in teaching," Dr. Ochs said. "I have been blessed with teachers and mentors in my life that prodded, patiently instructed, and, most importantly, inspired me. It's about developing young doctors' skills, challenging them and getting them to believe. I truly 'love the game beyond the prize.'"*

# KEEPING WITH FAMILY TRADITION

In the first nightmare he can remember, Mr. William Steinhauser dreamt that a dental air compressor was lumbering up the stairs toward his room, its exhalations growing louder with each step.

That early experience left no permanent scars, though, because Mr. Steinhauser went on to pursue a lengthy career in dental facility maintenance. For the past three decades, he has practiced his craft at the School of Dental Medicine, following in the footsteps of his father, also named William, who repaired the school's dental equipment during the 1960s and '70s.

"I've been around dental equipment since I was a baby, so it makes sense that I ended up in this field," Mr. Steinhauser said. "I'm very fortunate to have landed with a supportive employer like the School of Dental Medicine."

As the school's director of facilities and operations, Mr. Steinhauser has been central to Salk Hall's recent upgrades and renovations. In the past year alone, the dental school dedicated a new Center for Patients with Special Needs and a Multidisciplinary Implant Center that was enhanced and relocated to the first floor.

One of these projects alone entails an extensive process, and juggling multiple construction sites at once is even more demanding. At times, Mr. Steinhauser can be called upon to act as a project planner, site inspector, and dental system installation consultant, to name just a few of his responsibilities in major construction.

"He is the key person who makes the school run from a facilities and operations perspective," said Dean Thomas W. Braun. "He is very understated in terms of his capabilities."

In the case of the Center for Patients with Special Needs, for example, Mr. Steinhauser was a member of the team that developed the general plan. After construction began, he would check in on the contractors and participate in regular progress update meetings. He also served as a resource on the dental equipment being installed and worked with major stakehold-



*Mr. William Steinhauser (right), discusses a piece of equipment with Benco Dental Master Service Technician Mr. James Dougherty.*

ers to identify equipment needs and possible sources for funding those purchases.

Despite the major role he plays, Mr. Steinhauser is quick to give credit to others for much of the progress that has been made.

"Dr. Braun's vision for the school and his ability to provide resources are behind the sweeping changes that we see," he said.

Another of Dr. Braun's visions that has been keeping Mr. Steinhauser busy of late is the replacement of the school's 267 dental chairs, all of which will be exchanged for new ones over the course of a three-year cycle. One hundred new chairs were installed last year, and 100 more will be added this year.

Prior to coming to the dental school, Mr. Steinhauser had been an independent contractor and provided dental equipment support to the Allegheny County Health Department. His extensive experience in repairing and building dental equipment and designing dental offices has been an asset in his work at the dental school.

"I've helped design labs here. I've helped design dental clinics here. I've been involved in major equipment purchases," he said.

In the midst of managing all of these major projects, Mr. Steinhauser must

tend to day-to-day duties that range from routine maintenance requests to emergency response. He's also in the unusual position of taking on a supervisory role for people who don't report directly to him. For example, the housekeeping staff is actually employed by the University of Pittsburgh's facilities maintenance department, yet that area technically falls under Mr. Steinhauser's purview at the dental school.

That Mr. Steinhauser accomplishes so much with so little staff of his own—just one-half of one employee's time is dedicated to his department—is a testament to his hard-working nature.

Mr. Steinhauser also devotes some of his attention to keeping up with developments in dental equipment.

"Technologies are changing rapidly in the dental field," he said, citing the example of the school's recent transition to digital radiography. "They continue to grow in leaps and bounds."

Yes, the equipment needed in the practice of dental medicine has evolved rapidly over the past few years, continuing a trend that has followed Mr. Steinhauser throughout his tenure at the dental school. New equipment emerges while other tools are retired.

Dental appliances evolve, too—like air compressors, which no longer star in Mr. Steinhauser's dreams.



## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!



Mr. Chris Moore, an anchor on the Pittsburgh news-magazine show OnQ, interviewed School of Dental Medicine Dean Dr. Thomas W. Braun for a story on the school's care for patients with special needs. Dr. Braun was one of many faculty members interviewed by OnQ for a series on oral health care in the Pittsburgh region. Dr. Erik Scheifele and Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich also were interviewed for the special needs segment. Dr. Bobby Collins and Dr. Paul Moore appeared on a story about the oral-systemic health connection. For a segment on dental innovations, Dr. Anitha Potluri discussed the school's new cone-beam computed tomography unit, while Dr. Mark Ochs and Dr. Steven Kukunas provided an overview of the Multidisciplinary Implant Center. Dr. Robert Weyant also appeared on a segment that focused on oral health disparities.

## JAPANESE DENTISTS VISIT PITT



Photo by Paul Casey

The visitors, who came to see the Center for Patients with Special Needs, included (L to R) Ms. Miki Kambayashi, Mrs. Sandra Boody (RDH '74), Ms. Miho Kambayashi, Dr. Koichiro Matsuo and Dr. Souichirou Kawase, who work at Matsumoto Dental University Hospital in Nagano. They are pictured with (far right) Dr. Erik Scheifele, Center for Patients with Special Needs director. Mrs. Boody helped to coordinate the visit.



## Dental School Honored in Iraq

School of Dental Medicine Systems Support Specialist Mr. Douglas Waxler recently returned from a 120-day tour of duty in Iraq. While in the Middle East, Mr. Waxler, a senior airman in the Air National Guard, arranged for an American flag to be flown in the dental school's honor over Sather Air Base at Baghdad International Airport. When he came back to work, he presented the flag, along with a certificate, to Dean Dr. Thomas W. Braun.

The certificate read:

*This is to certify that this flag, a symbol of the freedom and resolve of the United States of America, was flown over Sather Air Base, Baghdad International Airport, Iraq, in your honor on  
26 February 2009*

*This flag is presented to  
Dr. Thomas Braun, DMD, PhD, Dean  
and the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine  
By Sr A Douglas Waxler  
in support of America's war on terrorism  
during Operation Iraqi Freedom*

"The Dental School has been very helpful and supportive, and I greatly appreciate that," Mr. Waxler said. "It's comforting to know I can continue to fulfill my military requirements and not have to worry about my job being here when I get home."



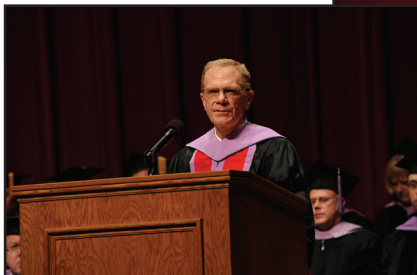
# 2009 DIPLOMA CEREMONY

At a May 16 ceremony held at Heinz Hall in downtown Pittsburgh, the newest group of School of Dental Medicine alumni received their diplomas. The group included a total of 84 dental students and 32 dental hygiene students, along with 21 dentists representing 10 specialties who were awarded certificates in advanced education.

Unless noted otherwise, photos by Joe Kapelewski, University of Pittsburgh CIDDE



◀The Diploma Ceremony speakers included (L to R) Dr. Lance Rose, immediate past president of the Dental Alumni Association; Dr. Moody Wassif, class of 2009 president; and Dr. Jennifer Hankle, class of 2009 valedictorian.



▲ School of Dental Medicine Dean Dr. Thomas W. Braun addressed the crowd.



◀Dr. William Glecos, ADA presidential candidate and Third District trustee, gave the keynote speech at the School of Dental Medicine's Diploma Ceremony.



◀Graduate Jason Ashcroft celebrates with his family at the reception.

▼The Dental Hygiene class of 2009 included 32 students. Class president Ms. Sherri Fulton-Boring (far right, fourth row), and valedictorian Ms. Erin Palermo (second from right, front row) spoke at the ceremony. Photo by Kelli McElhinny.



◀The Dental Alumni Association hosted a reception for graduates and guests following the Diploma Ceremony. Photo by Kelli McElhinny.



▲ Dr. Mark Ochs received the ADA Golden Apple Award at the ceremony. For more details, please see page 8.



◀Dr. Rachel Bell (right) was joined at the ceremony by Dr. Winsome Smith, her childhood dentist from Toronto, Ontario. Photo by Kelli McElhinny.



# DENTAL HYGIENE LUNCHEON

The Dental Hygiene Program honored its Class of 2009 at a luncheon held June 10 at the University of Pittsburgh's Bio-medical Science Tower One. Nine awards and special recognitions acknowledging clinical and educational achievement were presented to graduating students. The award winners are pictured below.



Western Pennsylvania Dental Hygiene Association Outstanding Student Award winner Ms. AnnMarie McGuire (left), with WPDHA president Ms. Valerie Jacobs (HYG '06)



Ms. Riccelli, Hu-Friedy Golden Scaler Award winner Ms. Nicole Palermo (center), and Ms. Judith Gallagher, assistant professor



Assistant Professor Ms. Patty Inks (left) with Sigma Phi Alpha inductees (L to R) Ms. Laura Grimm, Ms. Bastin, and Ms. Palermo



Dental Hygiene Program Director Ms. Angelina Riccelli (left) with Elliott (Steve) Brodie (Class of 1926) Award for Clinical Competence winner Ms. Brianna Shingledecker



Dental Hygiene Instructor Ms. Antonia Ambrosino with Dr. Clark J. Hollister Award for Dental Health Education winner Ms. Meghan Bastin



Table Clinic winners (front row L to R) First Place: Ms. Palermo and Ms. McGuire; (back row L to R) Third Place: Ms. Rebecca Nau and Ms. Danielle Miller; Second Place (tie): Ms. Jennifer Rinaldi and Ms. Shae Evans, and Ms. Sherri Fulton-Boring and Ms. Norma Woodruff. Ms. Inks is also pictured.



Dental Hygiene Instructor Ms. Elizabeth Onik (left) with Student Total Achievement Recognition (S.T.A.R.) Award winner Ms. Whitney Small-Riddell



Ms. Gayle Ball, assistant professor (left), with Dr. Ruth S. Friedman Award for Outstanding Periodontal Case Presentation winner Ms. Erin Palermo



Ms. Ambrosino (left) with Team Player Award winners, Ms. Nau, and Ms. Small-Riddell. Ms. Gallagher is also pictured. A third Team Player Award recipient, Ms. Alaina Lamothe, was not able to attend the luncheon.



# SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

In the National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research's funding rankings for fiscal year 2008, the School of Dental Medicine jumped four spots to No. 13. This latest ranking underscores the significant research progress made by the school, which was ranked 29th in 2002.

"This is a direct result of the school's commitment to innovative research, and it is a testament to our faculty's excellence," said School of Dental Medicine Dean **Dr. Thomas W. Braun**.

**Dr. David Anderson**, director of diversity initiatives at the School of Dental Medicine gave a talk titled "Health Care Ethics, Health Equity, and Our National Oral Health Care Agenda" on February 11 at Loma Linda University.

**Dr. Sean Boynes**, assistant professor and director of anesthesia research in the Department of Dental Anesthesiology, recently published the third edition of his book, *Dental Anesthesiology: A Guide to the Rules and Regulations of the United States*.

**Dr. Pouran Famili**, professor and chair of the Department of Periodontics/Preventative Dentistry, presented her research, titled "Two-Year Investigation of Periodontal Disease and Sickle-Cell Anemia," at the 87th General Session & Exhibition of the International Association for Dental Research.

Assistant Professor of Oral Biology **Karen T. Cuenco** was co-first author on a pair of recently published journal articles. "Uterine leiomyomata and decreased height: a common HMGA2 predisposition allele," appeared in *Human Genetics* in January 2009, while "Association of distinct variants in SORL1 with cerebrovascular and neurodegenerative changes related to Alzheimer disease" was included in the December 2008 issue of the *Archives of Neurology*.

At the annual meeting of the American Dental Board of Anesthesiology, **Dr. Joseph A. Giovannitti, Jr.**, associate professor of anesthesiology and director

of anesthesia for the Center for Special Needs, was elected the organization's president for 2009-2010.

Research Assistant Professor in Oral Biology **Dr. Manika Govil** has been selected to chair the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) Professional Development Committee. This committee recommends and carries out activities concerned with the training and career development of ASHG members.

In April, **Dr. Wilbert Milligan**, associate dean for clinical affairs, began a one-year term as chair of the Pennsylvania Dental Association's Environmental Issues Subcommittee.

**Dr. Adriana Modesto**, assistant professor in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry, and **Dr. Alexandre Vieira**, assistant professor in the Department of Oral Biology, co-authored two recently published journal articles: "Transforming growth factor- $\alpha$  gene (TGFA), human tooth agenesis, and evidence of segmental uniparental isodisomy," in the *European Journal of Oral Science*, and "Axis inhibition protein 2 (AXIN2) polymorphisms and tooth agenesis," in *Archives of Oral Biology*. Dr. Modesto and Dr. Vieira also presented the poster "Estimation of number of genes and contributions to tooth agenesis," at the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Research Poster Competition in Honolulu.

**Dr. Modesto** and **Dr. Dennis N. Ranalli**, professor of pediatric dentistry and senior associate dean, were co-presenters of "Dental trauma in athletes competing at the Para-Pan American games," in April at the Special Care in Dentistry Association meeting. "Dental trauma in athletes competing at the Pan American games," was presented in May at the Academy for Sports Dentistry meeting.

The Academy for Sports Dentistry has named **Dr. Ranalli** as a Distinguished Member. The recognition was presented in honor of Dr. Ranalli's significant and outstanding service to the Academy,

of which he is a past president and board member.

**Dr. Ranalli** and **Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich**, professor and chair, department of pediatric dentistry, wrote "Adolescent Oral Health: Perspectives for Dental Practitioners," for MetLife's Quality Resource Guides, which provide self-study continuing education opportunities for dentists and allied health care professionals.

**Dr. Heiko Spallek**, assistant professor in the Department of Dental Public Health and Information Management, was selected as a fellow of the ADEA Leadership Institute Class of 2010.

**Dr. Studen-Pavlovich** was a co-author on the article "Reversal of soft tissue local anesthesia with phentolamine mesylate in pediatric patients" published in the *Journal of the American Dental Association*.

"A Usability Evaluation of Four Commercial Dental Computer-Based Patient Record Systems," by **Ms. Thankam Thyvalikakath**, assistant professor in the Center for Dental Informatics, was published in the December 2008 issue of the *Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA)*. Dr. Titus Schleyer, director of the Center for Dental Informatics, was a co-author on the article.

**Dr. Vieira** authored "AXIS Inhibition Protein 2, Orofacial Clefts and a Family History of Cancer," which was published in the January 2009 issue of *JADA*. Dr. Mary Marazita, professor and chair, department of oral biology and associate dean of research, was a co-author of the article.

Six dental school students—**Ms. Ida Anjomshoaa**, **Mr. Pieter Heemstra**, **Mr. Timothy Mosher**, **Mr. Neil Robertson**, **Mr. Farhan Syed**, and **Mr. David Wilcox**—were selected for the University of Pittsburgh's Short-Term Access to Research Training Program (START UP), a summer research program for health sciences graduate students.



# BIODEGRADABLE METALS EYED AS SUPPORT FOR BONE REGENERATION

Pittsburgh's history may have been built on steel, but magnesium is poised to play a role in the city's future.

That magnesium is at the heart of a new Engineering Research Center (ERC) in which School of Dental Medicine researchers will collaborate with researchers from the Swanson School of Engineering to grow bone tissue on structures built from biodegradable metals. The work could lead to surgical devices, like joint replacements, plates, and screws, that eventually dissolve, leaving only regenerated new bone in their place.

"This novel approach holds exciting potential for craniofacial and orthopedic interventions," said Dr. Charles Sfeir, director of Pitt's Center for Craniofacial Regeneration and an associate professor of oral biology at the dental school. "The opportunity to contribute to this groundbreaking endeavor is a testament to Pitt's expertise in tissue engineering."

If successful, the research has a number of potential applications. Now, for example, surgical treatment is only considered in the most severe cases of TMJ disorder because the operation entails the insertion of a permanent titanium joint replacement. However, the biodegradable metals might be used to construct a temporary joint that eventually would be replaced by new bone, an area of research being explored by Dr. Alejandro Almarza, an assistant professor at the dental school.

The work has implications for orthopedics as well. The repair of broken bones, particularly leg bones, often requires the use of metal plates and screws. Those devices must be removed after the healing process is complete, requiring a second surgery that is costly

and exposes the patients to all of the risks associated with an operation. Plates and screws made of the resorbable metal would dissolve, eliminating the need for a follow-up surgery.

The ERC is supported by a five-year, \$18.5 million grant with the opportunity for a five-year renewal. The National Science Foundation's (NSF) prestigious ERC program supports large-scale collaborations between academia and industry in order to develop and, ultimately, commercialize next-generation technologies. In 2008, only five proposals out of the initial pool of 143 applicants received this category of NSF funding.

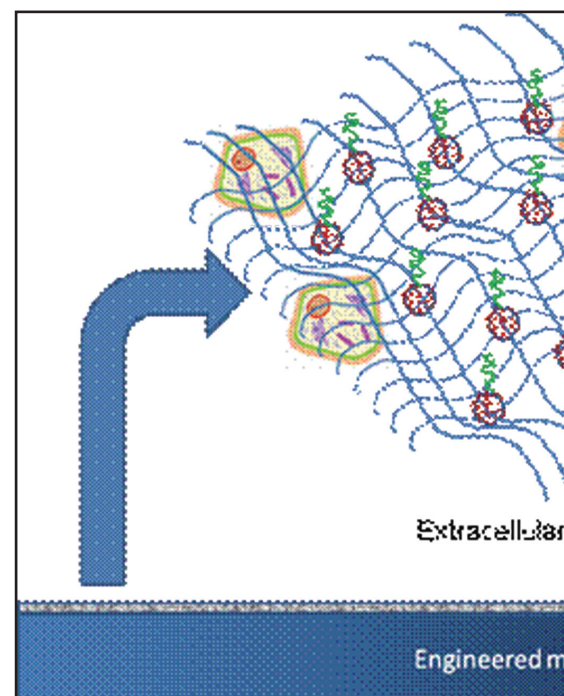
Dr. Sfeir is working with Swanson School faculty member Dr. Prashant Kumta to lead the ERC's craniofacial component.

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NCAT) and the University of Cincinnati are Pitt's main partners in the project, which is known as the Engineering Research Center for Revolutionizing Metallic Biomaterials. NCAT is the lead institution and the first historically Black college to receive ERC funding.

Scientists at NCAT are responsible for the ERC's first component, creating biodegradable metals that are flushed out of the body's system as they dissolve. No other research group in the United States is exploring the materials. Only two other groups in the world are.

Magnesium is the focus of those efforts because the metal is expected to be compatible with the bone cells and is lightweight, even lighter than titanium.

"You can take a huge amount of this metal and lift it with one finger," Dr. Sfeir said.



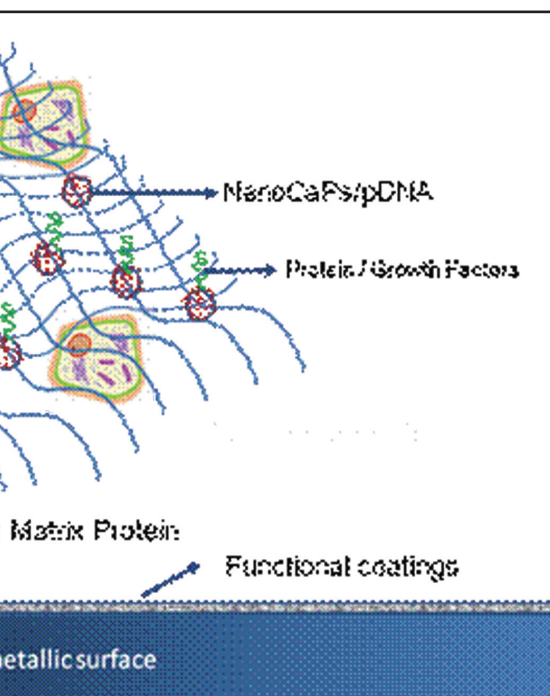
Furthermore, the magnesium alloy is stronger than other materials, such as polymer resins and ceramics, which are also often used as platforms for bone regeneration.

Dr. Kumta, who specializes in materials science, will also develop novel alloys and experiment with the metals developed at NCAT to create alloys that are biocompatible, biodegradable, and non-toxic.

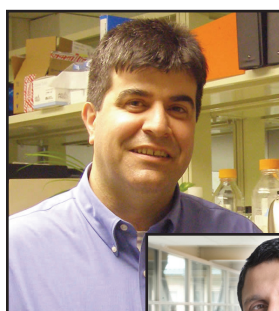
The Edward R. Weidlein Chair in Pitt's Swanson School of Engineering, Dr. Kumta holds a secondary appointment in the dental school's oral biology department.

Through a unique inkjet printing process, Dr. Kumta and his group will use these alloys to construct temporary scaffolding that mimics the body's biological structures and supports for bone regeneration.

The relatively new technique relies on an inkjet printer adapted specifically for this purpose. The basic printing mechanics are the same, but thin layers of powdered metal replace the paper and a liquid adhesive is substituted for the ink. An electronic file containing a three-dimensional image of the matrix is sent to the printer, and, layer by layer, the object is created. The adhesive "ink" binds the powdered



▲ This schematic illustrates the concept behind the biodegradable metallic material support for bone growth. The biometallic surface would be coated with extracellular matrix proteins necessary for bone growth, while nano-capsules of calcium phosphate would deliver other necessary components, such as growth factor. (Courtesy of Dr. Sfeir and Dr. Kumta)



Dr. Sfeir



Dr. Kumta

metal layers together in the prescribed shape to form a green structure.

The structure is carefully heated after the printing process in order to evaporate the adhesive material and strengthen the metal that remains.

As the result of interdisciplinary collaboration, the finished product will then make its way to Dr. Sfeir's lab, where it will provide the structural foundation for the bone regeneration that replicates the human body's process for healing after bone trauma.

"I think the combination of [Dr. Sfeir] and myself and this interface between bioengineering and the dental school is a perfect match for this project," Dr. Kumta said.

Bone growth will be stimulated through a process that Dr. Sfeir has already been working to perfect.

The researchers will coat the metal structures with extracellular matrix proteins that promote bone and dentin mineralization. They also add nanoscale particles of calcium phosphate to deliver other components, including growth factors, proteins, and DNA, to form a 'smart' biodegradable metallic scaffold that are necessary for bone regeneration.

Ideally, bone will form as the metal degrades.

Dr. Sfeir's group will have a number of questions in mind as it observes the bone regeneration process. Does the bone grow more slowly, faster or at the same rate on metal as it does when other materials are used as the platform? How do cells behave when the metals begin to degrade, and why do the metals seem to have no adverse effects on cells in biological systems while killing cells cultured in the lab?

"We're trying to simulate the in vivo and in vitro conditions so that we can better understand what's going on," he said.

The researchers also will focus on the strength of the forces that the scaffolding can withstand. Because the magnesium is so strong, the group expects that the biometallic devices may provide enough support that patients recovering from broken legs could begin walking within days, for example.

The researchers will need to overcome a daunting obstacle in this investigation. Unlike many other metals, which take years to degrade, the magnesium alloys break down over a matter of months. The matrix needs to last at least one year in order to support the bone growth.

Complicating the issue, the metals unleash a flood of hydrogen ions

into the system when they come into contact with water in the body, creating acidic conditions unfriendly to cells.

"The task is to make [the metals] degrade very slowly. If they do, there's no toxicity issue," Dr. Sfeir said. "That's a major challenge."

Identifying the proper alloy composition is instrumental, and the right mixture of metals will go far to address that issue.

"Only when we come up with an alloy that is good can [Dr. Sfeir] start studying how the cells react with it and what the cells are going to do," Dr. Kumta said.

Dr. Sfeir's work represents just one segment of the ERC. Another group at Pitt, led by Dr. William Wagner, professor in the departments of surgery, bioengineering, and chemical and petroleum engineering, will be focusing on cardiovascular stents made from the biodegradable metal alloys.

Collaborators at the University of Cincinnati, the third partner institution, will develop biosensors that will monitor pH levels as the metals degrade and transmit electronic signals to control the degradation rate.

Hannover Medical School in Germany will add an international piece to the ERC by extending study abroad opportunities to graduate students from participating labs. Researchers in Hannover's orthopedics department have been exploring degradable metals, putting them in position to give the students valuable guidance and provide valuable input on the overall research of Dr. Sfeir and Dr. Kumta.

Dr. Sfeir noted that the cooperation among the institutions is essential to the research.

"The only way you can do these things is through collaboration," he said. "You can't dissociate yourself from the team and say, 'Well, I'm doing this.' Whatever you do, it's going to impact the other groups."

"It is kind of tricky to get all these pieces working together, but that's what it's about."



# STUDENT WINS ADA/DENTSPLY AWARD

Scientists believe that stem cells are housed somewhere in the dental pulp, but their exact location remains unknown. A group in the dental school is investigating one possible source of those stem cells, and the work earned second-year student Mr. Neil Robertson first place in the 2008 ADA/DENTSPLY Student Clinician Research Award competition for basic science research.

The project focused on pericytes, which are cells surrounding the dental pulp's blood vessels and thought to be the stem cells in the pulp.

Mr. Robertson and his colleagues hypothesized that the pericytes could be coaxed into becoming various types of cells. To test that theory, the group cultured pericytes in three different types of growth media that would give rise to bone, cartilage, or fat cells.

"You need to demonstrate versatility to pinpoint stem cell populations," said Mr. Robertson, a native of Kutztown, Pa. "Nobody's going to believe you if you say, 'Oh, these are stem cells,' but they can only do one thing."

The groundwork for the project, which takes place in the lab of Dr. Charles Sfeir, director of Pitt's Center for Craniofacial Regeneration and an associate professor of oral biology, and was overseen by bioengineering post-doctoral student Dr. Bonnie Teng, involved obtaining, isolating, and culturing the pericytes contained in dental pulp of extracted third molars.

After the pericyte cultures had produced enough cells, the specimens were then stained with compounds that identified them as bone, fat, or cartilage and examined under a microscope. That imaging suggested that the pericytes could indeed adopt the characteristics of bone, fat, or cartilage cells.

Because the pericytes appear

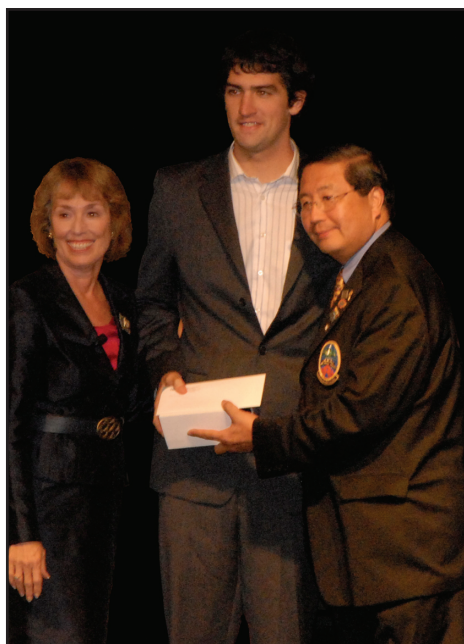


Photo by Dr. Alan Robertson

Second-year dental student Mr. Neil Robertson (center) won first place in the basic science category of the ADA/Dentsply Student Clinician Research Award competition.

to be adaptable, they may play a role in tooth repair. These findings raise the possibility that pericytes could someday be a useful tool for the treatment of tooth injuries.

This project was first recognized at the dental school's Research Symposium held last May, when Mr. Robertson walked away with the top prize, setting the stage for his national award.

Winners of similar research competitions held at each of the 54 U.S. dental schools, along with students from 12 international dental schools, entered the ADA/DENTSPLY competition, and their projects were divided into two categories: public health and basic science.

Mr. Robertson was somewhat surprised by his first-place recognition because he saw a number of other interesting projects on his walk-through of the posters.

"I just had a really good project," he said. "Research is largely serendipitous, so I think I got lucky there.

"It helps when you have good results."

Mr. Robertson's career in dental research began well before he entered dental school. When he was a junior at Pitt, he began to explore projects that interested him. He knew he wanted to pursue a career in dentistry, and he wasn't particularly interested in research in chemistry, his undergraduate major. So, he looked to opportunities at the dental school and discovered Dr. Sfeir's work

"I had some free time and I was interested to learn what was going on, so I just asked," Mr. Robertson said. "[Dr. Sfeir] put me in touch with Bonnie, who's been phenomenal with helping me."

Mr. Robertson started off working in the lab just four hours a week, gradually adding more hours as his class scheduled permitted and much more time during the summer. The summer before he started dental school, Mr. Robertson received the Dean's Summer Research Scholarship to continue to pursue his work.

Mr. Robertson's award represents just the latest chapter in the School of Dental Medicine's recent success at the ADA/DENTSPLY competition. Four students have placed first, second, or third in the competition in the past decade, the most of any dental school in the country during that timeframe.

The school's dedication to student research has been a major factor in these achievements, according to Mr. Robertson.

"I think it's nice that the dean awards summer research scholarships for people who want to learn more," he said. "I think that sort of attitude filters down. If the highest person values student research and that sort of commitment to continuing education, I think you can't help but notice a positive aspect of that."

# ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM CELEBRATES RESEARCH

The School of Dental Medicine's research achievements were showcased in a May 13 ceremony held in Scaife Hall. Student and faculty researchers discussed their work, and Dr. Rena D'Souza, professor and chair of the Department of Biomedical Sciences at the Baylor College of Dentistry, gave the keynote speech. Her talk was titled "Adventures from the Clinic to the Bench and Back."

The three 2008 Dean's Summer Research Scholarship recipients—first-year students Dr. Janice Kim (Ph.D.), Mr. Joseph Liu, and Mr. Samir Singh—presented their projects. Dr. Kim explored the role of integrins in the phosphophoryn signaling process in the lab of Dr. Charles Sfeir. Mr. Liu worked on bioinspired materials with Dr. Elia Beniash, and Mr. Singh examined the potential of TGF-B3 as a possible treatment for synostosis under the guidance of Dr. Mark Mooney.

Faculty members Dr. Alejandro Almaraz, Dr. Beniash, and Dr. Karen T.Cuenco also discussed their research.

Faculty and student posters were on display in Salk Hall following the symposium. Research awards were presented to 10 students at the event, as



▲ Invited speaker Dr. Rena D'Souza asks first-year student and Dean's Summer Research Scholarship recipient Mr. Joseph Liu about his project.

◀ Mr. Matthew Karski (center) won the School of Dental Medicine's 2009 ADA/DENTSPLY Student Clinician Program Award, which was presented by DENTSPLY's Mr. Michael Norton (left). Dr. Mark Mooney, director of student research at the dental school, is also pictured. Mr. Karski will present his work in an international competition held at the 2009 ADA Annual Session in Honolulu, Hawaii.

## FOURTH-YEAR STUDENTS EARN ACCOLADES

The School of Dental Medicine's Senior Awards Ceremony, organized by the Office of Student Services, was held immediately following the Spring Research Symposium. The following students received awards at the ceremony:

**Mr. Walter Ackah:** Delta Dental Student Leadership Award; Dr. Gilbert N. Robin Continuing Education Scholarship Award

**Mr. Jason Ashcroft:** Dr. Gilbert N. Robin Continuing Education Scholarship Award; Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Mr. Michael Atherly:** Robert Zugsmith Memorial Award

**Mr. Peter Barnard:** American Academy Of Cosmetic Dentistry

**Ms. Miriam Behpour:** American Academy Of Craniofacial Pain

**Ms. Rachel Bell:** American Academy Of Esthetic Dentistry; Dr. Gilbert N. Robin Continuing Education Scholarship Award

**Mr. Brendan Bernard:** Robert Zugsmith Memorial Award

**Ms. Shannon Cerra:** Dr. Gilbert N. Robin Continuing Education Scholarship Award

**Ms. Monica Contract:** American Academy Of Oral And Maxillofacial Radiology; Dr. Gilbert N. Robin Continuing Education Scholarship Award; Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Ms. Annapurna Deshpande:** American Association Of Endodontists; Northeastern Society Of Periodontists; Robert Zugsmith Memorial Award

**Ms. Shilpa Dhawan:** American Academy Of Oralfacial Pain

**Mr. Christopher Dindal:** W. Arthur George Prosthodontic Award; Whip Mix Corporation – West Hanau Best Of The Best Prosthodontic Award

**Mr. Ashkan Eskandari:** International Congress Of Oral Implantologists

**Mr. Dejan Golalic:** Quintessence Award For Clinical Achievement In Periodontics

**Ms. Anna Grinberg:** Dr. Gilbert N. Robin Continuing Education Scholarship Award

**Ms. Sara Haines:** American Academy Of Implant Dentistry; American Student Dental Association Award Of Excellence; Delta Dental Student Leadership Award; Herman H. Langkamp Award

**Ms. Jennifer Hankle:** Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity Certificate Of Academic Achievement; American Academy Of Oral And Maxillofacial Pathology; American Academy Of Oral Medicine; Elliott Brodie Award; Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Ms. Adriann Hooks:** Robert Zugsmith Memorial Award

**Ms. Emma Jeffrey:** American Association Of Public Health Dentistry

**Mr. Aaron Krance:** Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Ms. Jessica Krausz:** Dr. Gilbert N. Robin Continuing Education Scholarship Award

**Mr. Andrew Martin:** Elliott Brodie Award; Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Mr. Charlie Miller:** American Association Of Oral And Maxillofacial Surgeons Dental Student Award; Robert Zugsmith Memorial Award

**Mr. Jonathan Misner:** American Association Of Oral And Maxillofacial Surgeons Dental Implant Award; Robert Zugsmith Memorial Award

**Mr. David Adam Myers:** DENTSPLY International

**Ms. Megan Noll:** Robert Zugsmith Memorial Award

**Ms. Sejal Patel:** Quintessence Award For Clinical Academic Achievement In Restorative Dentistry; Robert Rapp Award Of Distinction In Pediatric Dentistry; Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Mr. David Pechersky:** Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Zachary Pitcher:** International College Of Dentists Award (USA Section); Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Ms. Kathy Snell:** Dr. Gilbert N. Robin Continuing Education Scholarship Award

**Mr. Troy Springer:** Pierre Fauchard Academy Certificate Of Merit; Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Mr. Andrew Steiner:** Robert Zugsmith Memorial Award

**Mr. Thomas Timothy Taylor:** American Association Of Orthodontists; Delta Dental Student Leadership Award; Gerald Orner Award; Quintessence Award For Research Achievement; Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Mr. Joel Tiffany:** Academy Of Osseointegration

**Mr. David Troynacki:** Omicron Kappa Upsilon

**Mr. Kurt Wallin:** American Academy Of Periodontology

**Mr. Peng Kevin Wang:** Dr. Gilbert N. Robin Continuing Education Scholarship Award

**Mr. Moody Wasif:** American Association Of Oral Biologists; Delta Dental Student Leadership Award

**Ms. Dara Weiner:** American Academy Of Pediatric Dentistry, Certificate Of Merit

**Mr. Zachary Wells:** Lathe Bowen Student Award; Robert Zugsmith Memorial Award



# Alumni Messages



I would like to extend greetings to all our loyal alumni of the University Of Pittsburgh School Of Dental Medicine. This is my final message to you as your President of the Dental Alumni Association.

As I noted in my remarks at the dental school's recent diploma ceremony, I've found my tenure as president of the Alumni Association to be particularly rewarding.

The Alumni Association Board of Directors accomplished much over the past year. In an effort to make it more effective and efficient, our Board has been revamped. The size of the Board as well as the term of service of the Officers has been changed. The by-laws were revised as well.

Graduation also offered a reminder that alumni relationships with the School of Dental Medicine don't need to end when they leave Salk Hall.

Homecoming is a perfect time to reconnect with your dental school, especially those graduates who will be celebrating their reunions (my 25th happens this year). You'll find a brochure highlighting all of the homecoming activities and reunion contacts in the center of this issue of the magazine. Be sure to save this brochure, as we won't be sending out another detailed list of the events.

Please remember that your Dental Alumni Association is only as successful as we all make it. I also told our newest alumni that the organization needs their insights, fresh perspectives, and energy to help it continue to grow and thrive. That goes for those of us who have been out of dental school for a few years now, too.

Thank you again for the honor to have served as your President.

Lance G. Rose (DMD '84, MS)



I am pleased and honored to be selected as the Dental Alumni Association President for the next two years. A change in the by-laws, approved by the Board of Directors, has changed all offices to two-year terms, beginning this year. It was decided that a one-year term did not permit the officers enough time to implement positive changes for the association.

This year I would like to see more involvement by dentists who have graduated within the past ten years. As with any organization, the recruitment of younger members is essential for the survival and rejuvenation of the organization. To this end, I will work to restart the mentoring program. I hope that recent graduates would consider being a mentor to a student in the incoming class, who would welcome the guidance and support of a dentist in practice.

Also, please consider becoming a member of the Board of Directors and becoming active in the Dental Alumni Association. It is important for the needs and concerns of graduates who are in private practice to be addressed by the board. As a member of the board, you would be able to keep the association informed about these concerns. Please contact me if you have an interest in serving as a member of the board.

Finally, homecoming weekend will be October 23-25 this year. Please mark your calendar and plan on attending. The Alumni Office is planning a wonderful weekend. Several classes are scheduling their reunions during this time. Also, if you are going to be in the area and would like a tour of the school, please give me a call. With all the changes that have been made at the school over the past several years, I'm sure you will become "Pitt Proud" once again.

Michael Dobos (DMD '79)



Once again, your Alma Mater is approaching the end of another academic year. The Dental Hygiene Program has been busy participating in community service this year. The students were volunteers for the Give Kids a Smile Program both at The Children's Museum and at the School of Dental Medicine. The dental hygiene students also have been presenting a dental health education program that includes a lesson plan and video that they made for the Allegheny County Health Department Sealants for

6th Graders Program. This endeavor has been very successful for both the students and the professionals.

Officers from the Student American Dental Hygienists' Association and the Dental Hygiene classes attended the Dean's Scholarship Ball in April. Their presence reminded us that they are beautiful as well as committed to their new profession. The distinguished Dental Hygiene Alumni award was presented to Barbara Egnot (RDH '75), and it is inspir-

ing to see the accomplishments of the members of our profession. Seven students also will be attending the American Dental Hygienists' Association Annual Session in Washington, DC this June. The theme of "Life Long Learning" will be the focus for their initiation into the organization.

We are surrounded by progress and change. The paperless chart has lead to an electronic grading system, and the program is piloting the system for clinical evaluations for the dental school this semester. National written board exams for dental hygiene are now to be taken via computer. There are changes emerging in the curriculum with the introduction of local anesthesia into the scope of practice for the hygienist in Pennsylvania. We must all keep our attention tuned to the progress of that issue in our state.

Please get involved in your Dental Alumni Association and professional organization. I hope to see you at future events. It is always such a pleasure to see a familiar face and meet with colleagues. There were 160 hygienists registered for the annual Bowser Lecture presented May 9. It was great to see so many alumni attend.

Judith E. Gallagher (RDH '72, MEd '75)

# ALUM, WIFE ENDOW WHITE COAT CEREMONY

As incoming students embark on their dental education each fall, they experience a plethora of firsts. First lecture. First simulation clinic session. First patient interview experience.

One of the most meaningful rites of passage, however, is the first time a student slips into his or her white coat. Symbolic of the practice of dentistry, the white coat emphasizes the student's commitment to upholding the profession's high standards.

In the late 1990s, the School of Dental Medicine established a formal White Coat Ceremony that underscores the significance of this milestone. At this ceremony, scheduled for August 31 this year, each incoming dental student and dental hygiene student receives a personalized white coat to wear throughout dental school.

Dr. Harry Zohn (DMD '84) did not get to participate in a White Coat Ceremony when he entered the School of Dental Medicine, but he appreciates the need for such an event.

"There's a lot of symbolism with the white coat," Dr. Zohn said. "It means a lot to the people you're serving and the people who are presenting it to you."

Beginning this fall, the White Coat Ceremony will receive partial support from an endowment that Dr. Zohn and his wife, Dr. Cecile Feldman, have established.

Dr. Feldman is the dean of the New Jersey Dental School at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and Dr. Zohn is a clinical associate professor of periodontics there.

This particular opportunity to give back to his alma mater in support of such an important event is special to Dr. Zohn.

"As far as I'm concerned, Pitt gave me the best tools possible to go out into the world and do the best and be the best that I can," Dr. Zohn said. "This year is the 25th anniversary of my dental



school graduation, so giving back in this way is even more meaningful to me."

While Dr. Zohn's and Dr. Feldman's generous gift does much to fund this annual tradition, additional support is needed. Do you remember the pride you felt the first time you put on your white coat? You could play a part in passing that gratification on to the next generation of dentists. Please consider a donation of \$50 to support the School of Dental Medicine's 2009 White Coat Ceremony.

*Checks can be sent to the Ms. Nancy Poe, University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine Alumni Office, 3501 Terrace Street, Suite 440, Pittsburgh, PA 15261. Donations by credit card can be made by calling the Alumni Office at 412-648-8910. The deadline is July 31.*

# ALUMNI GATHER AT PDA RECEPTION



An overflowing crowd attended the School of Dental Medicine's alumni reception at the Pennsylvania Dental Association annual meeting in April. The guests included (L to R) ADA President-Elect Candidate Dr. William Glecos, who is currently the ADA District 3 trustee; School of Dental Medicine Dean Dr. Thomas W. Braun; PDA Immediate Past President Dr. Thomas W. Gamba; and newly installed PDA president Dr. Andrew J. Kwasny (DMD '83, MDS '85).

More than 100 dental school alumni and friends were on hand for the reception, which was held at the Hotel Hershey.

Please visit the alumni page on the School of Dental Medicine's Web site to see the complete gallery of photos from the PDA reception.



# NINTH DEAN'S SCHOLARSHIP

School of Dental Medicine faculty, students, alumni, and friends gathered for an evening of dinner and dancing at the Ninth Annual Dean's Scholarship Ball on March 28. The event, held for the first time at the Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland, honored the scholarship recipients from the incoming class of 2013, as well as the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award winners and the Award of Appreciation winners. For more information on the award winners and scholarship recipients, please see pages 22-23.

Photos by Suellen Fitzsimmons



▲ The Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland provided a beautiful venue for this year's Ball.



Pictured (L to R) are Scholarship Winner Ms. Alexandra Jensen; Distinguished Dental Hygiene Alumna Mrs. Barbara Egnot; School of Dental Medicine Dean Dr. Thomas W. Braun; Award of Appreciation Honoree and FISA Foundation Executive Director Mrs. Dee Delaney; and Scholarship Winner Ms. Lya Sharpley.



▲ Dr. John Haines and his wife and fourth-year student, Mrs. Sara Haines



Visit the School of Dental Medicine's Web site to view the complete photo gallery from the Dean's Scholarship Ball.

◀ (L to R) Medical and Health Sciences Foundation President Mr. Clyde Jones, Mr. Ron Davenport, and 2007 Distinguished Alumnae Dr. Judith Davenport

▶ (L to R) Dr. Jacqueline Sohn-Costello, Dr. Bernard J. Costello, Mrs. Karyn Guevara, Dr. Peter Guevara, Dr. Edward Narcisi, Mrs. Megan Chung, and Dr. William Chung





# BALL RECOGNIZES AWARDEES



◀ Dean's Scholarship winners past and present (L to R). Ms. Alexandra Jensen, Ms. Erica Harvey, Mr. Brent Kanar, Ms. Melissa Fogel, Mr. Benjamin Benzio, Ms. Lisa Babb, Mr. Philip Mason, Ms. Mallory Troynacki, and Ms. Lya Sharpley



▲ Mrs. Adriana Klich and Dr. Richard Klich, United Concordia Vice President and National Dental Director



◀ Mr. George Pavlovich and Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich

▼ Mrs. Liz Braun, School of Dental Medicine Dean Dr. Thomas W. Braun, Award of Appreciation Winner Mrs. Dee Delaney, and Mr. Daniel Delaney

*The School of Dental Medicine extends its gratitude to the following Dean's Scholarship Ball sponsors for their generous support:*

## Premium Sponsors

- Highmark/United Concordia
- UPMC

## Corporate Sponsors

- Benco Dental
- EDIC
- PNC



◀ Dental Alumni Association President and Dean's Scholarship Ball Co-Chair Dr. Lance Rose (DMD '84) and Mrs. Peggy Rose



► Dr. Daniel Damratoski (DDS '72) and Mrs. Irene Damratoski.





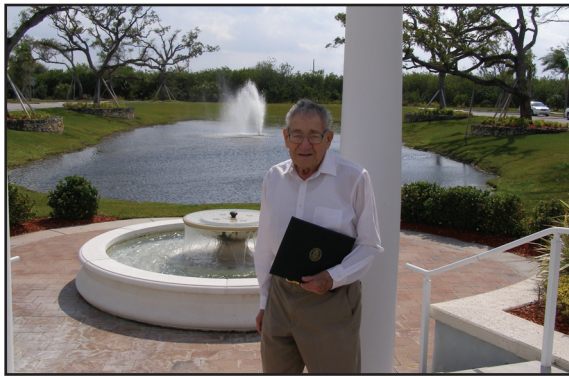


Photo by Paul Casey

## Distinguished Alumnus, Dental Medicine: Dr. Harold W. Posner (DDS '44)

After graduating from dental school in 1944, Dr. Harold Posner served his country in World War II as a U.S. Army dentist, and later at Andrews Air Force Base during the Korean Conflict as well. When he returned home, he established a thriving private practice in the New York City area.

In 1977, he retired from dentistry and turned his attention to a different side of health care—nursing homes. Approximately 10 years before his retirement, Dr. Posner helped to establish the Greenbriar Nursing Home in Florida and he and his late wife and fellow Pitt graduate, Ilse, moved there to be closer to that business, which was then sold in 1982.

Over the years, Dr. Posner has been most generous to the School of Dental Medicine. He established the Harold W. Posner Endowed Professorship in the First Professional Program at the School of Dental Medicine, which will honor his uncle, Dr. Frederick B. Jaffe, the man who raised him and inspired his passion for dentistry.



(L to R) Mrs. Angelina Ricelli, Mrs. Barbara Egnot, and Dr. Thomas W. Braun

Photo by Suellen Fitzsimmons

## Distinguished Alumnus, Dental Hygiene: Mrs. Barbara Egnot (RDH '75)

Mrs. Barbara Egnot graduated from the school's dental hygiene program in 1975 and has actively supported the school in the years that followed. As secretary of the Lawrence I. & Blanche H. Rhodes Memorial Fund, Mrs. Egnot has directed generous support to a variety of the dental school's initiatives. Through the Rhodes Memorial Fund, she was instrumental in creating the first endowed Dental Hygiene scholarship fund and a staunch supporter of the Dean's Scholarship Fund.

"I value the education I received," Mrs. Egnot said. "Without financial assistance, I never could have gone to school. Being the recipient of scholarships myself, I wanted to pay it forward."

Also through the Rhodes Memorial Fund, Mrs. Egnot and her husband, Dr. James Egnot—also an alumnus of the School of Dental Medicine—have supported the Center for Patients With Special Needs, renovations in the Simulation Clinic and many other initiatives at the school.

## Awards of Appreciation:

### Ms. Abby Sniderman Milstein and Mrs. Dee Delaney

Last September, the School of Dental Medicine dedicated its Center for Patients with Special Needs—a project that might not have come to fruition without contributions from Award of Appreciation recipients Ms. Abby Milstein and Mrs. Dee Delaney.

Ms. Milstein provided generous support to the Center to honor the memory of her father, Dr. Marvin Sniderman (D.D.S. '47), who pioneered the treatment of special needs patients in the Pittsburgh community. In his career as a dentist, Dr. Sniderman served as chief of dental services at the Rehabilitation Institute of Pittsburgh and donated time each week to treat patients at what is now known as the Children's Institute.

As director of the FISA Foundation, Ms. Dee Delaney has a long history of advocacy on behalf of the dental school's patients with disabilities and was instrumental in providing financial support to the Center. A central component of the FISA Foundation's mission is helping individuals with disabilities remain safe and healthy, and the Center helps to achieve this goal by directly improving access to dental care and training future dentists to care for patients with special needs.



Mrs. Sniderman Milstein

Photos by Suellen Fitzsimmons



Mrs. Delaney

# 2009 DEAN'S SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Each year, two outstanding students from the incoming first-year class are selected as Dean's Scholarship recipients. The 2009 winners, who were recognized at the Ninth Annual Dean's Scholarship Ball, are Ms. Alexandra Jensen and Ms. Lya Sharpley.

When she was growing up, Ms. Alexandra Jensen thought she would become a pediatrician. She chose to major in biochemistry at Grove City College and took all of the coursework required for admission to medical school.

As she progressed in her studies, she began to question her desire for medicine. So, upon a suggestion from her own dentist, she switched gears and chose a career in dentistry instead.

"It's the best decision I've ever made," she said.

Ms. Jensen, who hails from Wexford, Pa., has worked for an autism advocacy organization and grew up next door to a pair of brothers with the condition. She credits those experiences with sparking her interest in treating special needs patients.

"They're a special group of patients who just need the care that a good dentist can give," she said.

Pitt's dedication to treating special needs patients—and to training its students to do so—attracted her to the school.

"I think that it will give me a much more well-rounded education than I would get at other schools," she said.

Because Ms. Jensen was a relative latecomer to the field, her dental experience was a bit lighter than many of her peers, although she did spend last summer shadowing a local dentist.

"Alexandra has clearly demonstrated a commitment to the dental profession," said School of Medicine Dean Dr. Thomas W. Braun. "We have no doubt that she will enjoy great success both as a dental student and a practicing dentist. We look forward to having her as a member of the class of 2013."

"I am completely overwhelmed and humbled. I'm also tremendously grateful for the opportunity," Ms. Jensen said of winning the scholarship.



*Photo by Suellen Fitzsimmons*  
(L to R) Dean's Scholarship Ball Co-Chair and Past President of the Dental Alumni Association, Dr. Lance Rose, Scholarship Winner Ms. Lya Sharpley, Scholarship Winner Ms. Alexandra Jensen and Ball Co-Chair and Alumni Association President, Dr. Michael Dobos.

Just like many other freshmen, Ms. Lya Sharpley was undecided on both a major and a career when she first went to college.

She thought she knew what she didn't want to pursue—science—until one course changed that.

"I was thinking psychology, but then I took neuroscience and I realized that I'm really science-oriented," the Monroeville, Pa., native said.

Such a weighty subject area might scare off more students than it

entices, but that course led Ms. Sharpley down the path to a degree in biological sciences and, eventually, dental school.

"Once I really started getting interested, I tried to explore dentistry as much as I could," Ms. Sharpley said.

During her senior year, Ms. Sharpley volunteered at the Dental Center at UPMC Montefiore, where she had the opportunity to observe oral surgery procedures.

For the past year, Ms. Sharpley has worked assisting dental hygienists in the private practice of Dr. Frank Capetta and Dr. Daniel Koch (DDS '62) in Pittsburgh's South Hills suburbs. The experience reaffirmed her career choice.

"I didn't want to jump into it, figure out I didn't like it and then waste money and time," said Ms. Sharpley, who graduated from Pitt in 2008. "But I've really enjoyed my work there, so I feel like I made the right decision."

Ms. Sharpley chose to stay close to home, because the School of Dental Medicine impressed her with its updated technology and facilities. She also appreciates the hands-on experience she'll get in skills like placing implants.

The School of Dental Medicine was just as impressed with Ms. Sharpley.

"We are delighted to have Ms. Sharpley as one of our students," Dr. Braun said. "Her achievements both in and out of the classroom leave no doubt that she will continue to succeed in dental school and beyond."

— For more information about supporting the Dean's Scholarship Fund, please contact SDM Director of Development Paul Casey at [pbc8@pitt.edu](mailto:pbc8@pitt.edu) or 412-383-7544.



# FIFTEENTH ANNUAL T.F. BOWSER LECTURE

Although it may not be as high-profile as some other issues in dentistry, substance abuse is of great importance to dental professionals. The Fifteenth Annual T.F. Bowser Lecture, held on May 9, presented an opportunity for dentists, hygienists, assistants, and other personnel to become more informed on the many ways that addiction may affect their practices and their profession.

A crowd of 375 individuals attended the Bowser Lecture, which is the School of Dental Medicine's largest continuing education course each year.

Dr. John W. Martyniuk, the medical director of The Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society's Physicians Health Program; Mr. Kevin Knipe, program manager of the Professional Health Monitoring Program; and Dr. Penelope P. Ziegler, medical director emeritus and senior consulting psychiatrist at Williamsburg Place and the The William J. Farley Center in Williamsburg, Va., each discussed various aspects of addiction and dental medicine.

Dr. Martyniuk's talk was titled "Recognizing Professional Impairment," and Mr. Knipe explored the role of the Professional Health Monitoring Program. Dr. Ziegler gave an overview of the science of addiction.

▼ (L to R) Dr. F. Eugene Ewing, Dr. Dennis N. Ranalli, Dr. Bartley J. Morrow, Dr. Penelope P. Ziegler, Dr. Ellsworth T. Bowser, Mr. Kevin Knipe, and Dr. John Martyniuk.



## DENTAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING



Immediately following the 15th Annual T.F. Bowser Memorial Lecture, the Dental Alumni Association held its Annual Business Meeting. In recognition of his efforts as president during the 2008-09 academic year, Dr. Lance G. Rose (DMD '84) was presented with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Dental Alumni Association. Dr. Rose also passed the ceremonial gavel to Dr. Michael A. Dobos (DMD '79), who will serve as the Dental Alumni Association's next president.



Photo by Nancy Poe

# DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI GUIDELINES

The University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine Distinguished Alumni Awards may be presented in each of the following categories: Distinguished Alumnus-Dental Medicine; Distinguished Alumnus-Dental Hygiene; and Distinguished Alumnus-Advanced Education Program, to individuals who have excelled in one or more of the following areas:

1. One whose contribution of time and effort to the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine has been exceptionally significant, beyond that which would normally have been expected.
2. One whose significant attainments and high professional standards have been of such character as to have materially aided and advanced the art and science of dentistry.
3. One 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.
4. One who has contributed to original research in the dental profession.

1. A one-page biographical sketch of each candidate must accompany the nomination sent to the chairpersons of the awards committee.

2. In the event that the Awards Committee decides in any year that no nominee has attained the above stated criteria, it shall so report.

3. No member of the Awards Committee shall be considered eligible.

4. The deadline for submission of nominations shall be November 1.

5. The recipient of the Award shall be notified as soon as possible but no later than 60 days before the presentation.

6. The Dean, or a designee, shall make the presentation of these

awards at the School of Dental Medicine Homecoming Weekend.

7. Recipients shall be the guests of the Dental Alumni Association at the School of Dental Medicine Alumni Homecoming Weekend (or Dean's Scholarship Ball) during which the presentation is made.

8. The Awards Committee shall consist of six members:

-Two Co-Chairs as indicated by the By-laws

-A representative of the Faculty/Staff of the School

-The President of the Dental Alumni Association

-A previous recipient of the Award

-The Executive Director of the Alumni Association

The foregoing requirements and requests for nominees shall be outlined yearly in the Dental Alumni Association's publication.

Approved by the Executive Committee November 21, 1997.

Approved by the Board of Directors December 1, 1997.

Effective Date: January 1, 1998

Guidelines amended for 2009, approved by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors March 11, 2009.

## Please note that the Distinguished Alumni Award nomination deadline has been changed to Nov. 1.

### Alumni **Update** Form

Please send us information about your career advancements, papers presented, honors received, appointments, and further education. We will include your news in future issues of *Pitt Dental Medicine* as space permits. Please indicate names, dates, and location. Photos are welcome. Also note changes of address, phone, or e-mail.

Name:

Degree(s) and year(s) of graduation:

Home address:

Home phone:

Business address:

Business phone:

Preferred e-mail:

Preferred fax:

Position(s):

News (Please attach additional sheet, if needed):

Please complete and return to:

**Pitt Dental Medicine, Alumni News**  
**Kelli McElhinny, Communications Specialist**  
**School of Dental Medicine**  
**Office of Alumni Affairs & Development**  
**3501 Terrace Street, 440 Salk Hall**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15261**  
**tel: 412-648-9804**  
**fax: 412-648-8219**  
**kmm157@dental.pitt.edu**

\*Don't forget to register at the alumni section of [www.dental.pitt.edu](http://www.dental.pitt.edu) to make sure the University of Pittsburgh and the School of Dental Medicine have your most current contact information.



# Class Notes

Please visit the "Update Your Information" section on the School of Dental Medicine's alumni Web site to submit a class note.

## 1960s

The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) honored **Dr. Robert L. Coles** (DDS '67) with the 2008 AAOMS Presidential Achievement Award. He was recognized for his service as a member of the AAOMS Committee on Practice Management and Professional Allied Staff and his presentations on behalf of AAOMS at various practice clinics and professional allied staff mini-lectures.

**Dr. James A. Coll** (DDS '69) was inducted as a fellow of the American College of Dentists at the ADA annual meeting held in October in San Antonio.

## 1970s

The American Dental Association presented an ADA/Dentsply Research Award to **Dr. Jack Penhall** (DDS '73) in recognition of his service as head judge in the annual student research competition. For the past 10 years, Dr. Penhall has served as head judge of the clinical research/public health segment of the competition.

On August 1, 2008, after 37 years of military service, **Dr. David J. Szarell** (DDS '74) retired from the Pennsylvania Army National Guard at the rank of Brigadier General. Dr. Szarell has a solo practice of general dentistry in Carmichaels, Pa.

## 1980s

**Dr. William L. Hoch** (DMD '81) presented a lunch-and-learn lecture to third- and fourth-year dental students on dental implants and other professional development topics.

**Dr. Annette Merlino** (DMD '88) has led several groups of Pitt dental students on mission trips over the years. In April, she took 10 students to work in the Hill Country of Honduras. Dr. Merlino owns a private practice in Delmont, Pa.

**Dr. Carol A. Horkowitz-Tsaoussis** (DMD '89) is practicing maxillofacial prosthodontics in Miami, where she lives with her husband and her three sons. She completed her prosthodontics training at the University of Iowa in 1994.

## 1990s

**Dr. Timothy Temple** (DMD '90) is president-elect of the Dental Society of Greater Orlando and vice president of the Florida Association of Endodontists. In 2008, he was inducted into the American College of Dentists.

**Dr. Mohamed Khamis**, who received a certificate in maxillofacial prosthodontics in 1997, is a professor of prosthodontics at Alexandria University in Egypt. More information is available at his Web site: [www.moatazkhamis.com](http://www.moatazkhamis.com).

## 2000s

**Dr. Janice Yanni** (Cert Ortho '02) gave birth to her daughter Adalenna on December 2, 2007. Dr. Yanni is an orthodontist in private practice with three locations.

A study titled "A Multiplex Immunoassay Demonstrates Reduction in Gingival Crevicular Fluid Cytokines Following Initial Periodontal Therapy," authored by **Dr. Daniel Thunell** (DMD '05) was recently accepted for publication in the Journal of Periodontal Research. Dr. Thunell is the owner of Wasatch Periodontics in Salt Lake City.



Mr. Andrew R. Michanowicz (left), his father, Dr. Andrew M. Michanowicz (DMD '85, MDS '89), and grandfather, Dr. Andrew E. Michanowicz (DDS '55), combined to win the 2008 Gerald Dietz, Sr. Golf Tournament, and the School of Dental Medicine benefitted from their golf prowess. The trio donated their \$5,000 prize to the dental school's Endodontic Program. School of Dental Medicine Dean Dr. Thomas W. Braun was on hand to accept the check.

# IN MEMORIAM



## Dr. Frank Draus

Although he was not a dentist by training, Dr. Frank Draus influenced a multitude of School of Dental Medicine graduates. Dr. Draus, who held a variety of faculty and administrative positions in his 43-year career at the dental school, passed away on March 4.

Dr. Draus first joined the dental school faculty as a research assistant in 1956 while he was studying at Duquesne University for his doctorate in biochemistry. He rose through the ranks of the Department of Biochemistry and led the department from 1966 to 1977.

Later in his career at the dental school, Dr. Draus served the school as an administrator in admissions, student affairs, and academic affairs. He eventually became Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Draus also was instrumental in bringing the Alliance College Polish Collection, which covers areas ranging from Polish art to foreign relations, to Pitt. Established to educate students of Polish descent about their heritage, Alliance College closed in 1987. Dr. Draus, a member of the Alliance College board of trustees, was able to direct the collection to Pitt, a leader in education of Polish language, history and culture.

Preceded in death by his wife, Patricia, Dr. Draus is survived by sons John and Peter and daughters Julia Scott and Elizabeth Hennion, along with eight grandchildren.

Dr. George Park Gourley (DDS '32) 2/9/09  
 Dr. Thomas H. Lake (DDS '36) 2/19/09  
 Dr. Almo J. Sebastianelli (DDS '37) 2/25/09  
 Dr. Lloyd R. Knapp (DDS '43) 5/18/08  
 Dr. Donald L. Levine (DDS '43) 3/28/09  
 Dr. Joseph James (J.J.) Bonello (DDS '44) 3/3/09  
 Dr. John P. Chmura (DDS '44) 12/25/08  
 Dr. Robert P. Hofer (DDS '45) 12/30/08  
 Dr. Lester Roth (DDS '46) 3/24/09  
 Dr. Irving Shapiro (DDS '47), 2/08  
 Dr. Ray E. Reppert (DDS '48) 1/23/09  
 Dr. George B. Carson (DDS '50) 1/5/09  
 Dr. Alfred S. Fontanaro (DDS '50) 4/5/09  
 Dr. William E. Hall (DDS '51) 12/14/08  
 Dr. George E. Lowe (DDS '52) 2/2/09  
 Dr. C. Theodore Rishel (DDS '52) 10/8/08  
 Dr. George Yanchus (DDS '52) Date unknown  
 Dr. Dwight B. Hicks, Jr. (DDS '53) 3/11/09  
 Dr. Cyril Kanterman (DDS '53) 12/6/08  
 Dr. William Franklin Coole (DDS '54) 12/22/08  
 Dr. Ralph L. Weirich, Jr. (DDS '54) 12/26/08  
 Dr. Michael Simko (DDS '55) 12/31/08  
 Dr. Frederick R. Smith (DDS '55) 6/17/08  
 Dr. Robert J. Rylands (DDS '56) 6/13/09  
 Dr. Lawrence D. Vollmer (DDS '57) 5/16/09  
 Dr. James Hilton Greene (DDS '59) 1/26/09  
 Dr. Faber Little (DDS '60) 4/8/08  
 Dr. William E. Haines, Jr. (DDS '61) 2/10/09  
 Dr. Robin R. Weigel (DDS '63) 11/17/08  
 Dr. William Joseph Gradisek (DDS '65) 5/20/09  
 Dr. Steve V. Jastrzembski (DDS '65) 1/14/09  
 Dr. Thomas L. Perkins (DDS '65) 6/7/09  
 Dr. Ralph James Cato (DMD '76) 2/3/09  
 Dr. Barry Headings (DMD '78) 1/23/09  
 Dr. Richard A. Matthews (DMD '81) 12/25/08  
 Dr. Joshua Uram (DMD '85) 12/7/08  
 Dr. Karen Wolmark (DMD '88) 6/17/09  
 Dr. Gary Lee Allen, Jr. (DMD '95) 6/6/09  
 Dr. Frank Draus 3/4/09



# DONOR SPOTLIGHT: CENTER FOR

Recently, a patient came to the School of Dental Medicine's Center for Patients with Special Needs with such severe decay that her tooth broke in half as the dentists attempted to extract it. The incident prompted a call for assistance from the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, along with crossed fingers that the particular drill used to cut through bone—a drill that the Center did not have—was available.

Thanks to the **Highmark Foundation**, the Center will be able to purchase that specialized drill as well as a number of other important pieces of equipment necessary to treat patients with special needs.

As part of its "Improving Access to Oral Health and Dental Care for Underserved Populations" grant program, the Highmark Foundation awarded \$200,000 to the Center. The grant was one of the largest of the 21 awarded to nonprofit organizations that provide a safety net for populations that often struggle to find adequate oral health care.

The Highmark Foundation received 33 proposals for its oral health care funding program, which emerged when the organization identified a significant need for dental care among the patients of the Community Health Centers it has funded.

Only four of the submitted proposals focused on patients with special needs, a factor that weighed heavily in the School of Dental Medicine's favor.

"We thought it was one of our top priorities to support special needs clinics," said Highmark Foundation President Ms. Yvonne Cook. "We funded all four of those proposals."

"The School of Dental Medicine's proposal definitely demonstrated that the services were needed," added Ms. Christina Wilds, a senior program officer with the foundation. "The populations that didn't have access would be treated."



◀(L to R) Dr. Joseph Giovannitti, Director of Anesthesia Services for the Center for Patients with Special Needs; Highmark Foundation Senior Program Officer Ms. Christina Wilds; School of Dental Medicine Dean Thomas W. Braun; Highmark Foundation President Ms. Yvonne Cook; and Dr. Erik Scheifele, Center Director.

▶ Dr. Erik Scheifele gave a tour of the Center for Patients with Special Needs to Ms. Yvonne Cook and Ms. Christina Wilds of the Highmark Foundation.



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As alumni and friends of the School of Dental Medicine, you have a significant stake in the school's achievements. With such an eventful 2008-09 academic year, there is much to celebrate.

In the fall, we dedicated two new facilities, the Center for Patients with Special Needs and the Multidisciplinary Implant Center.

One of our student researchers won a national competition in basic science investigation. A dental school faculty member received a national education award from the ADA.

These are just a few of the highlights. A comprehensive list would be far

longer, filling much more than the allotted space.

The school's ability to maintain such a high level of performance, even in challenging economic times, is a testament to the generosity of many of our alumni and friends.

That generosity is highlighted in many ways in this issue.

Some of our donors choose to fund specific initiatives.

The Center for Patients with Special Needs, for example, has been tremendously fortunate to receive such widespread support from alumni, friends, community-based organizations, and

foundations. A few of their stories are told above.

Others choose to designate a gift in a way that directly impacts the student experience. Often such donors are alumni inspired by their own fond memories of their years in dental school.

Dr. Harry Zohn (DMD '84) is one such alumnus. Not only does Dr. Zohn have an appreciation for dental education through his own experience, he is also a faculty member at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He and his wife, Dr. Cecile Feldman, dean of the UMDNJ dental school, established the Dr. Harry Zohn and Dr. Cecile Feld-

# PATIENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Even as a dental student taking an anesthesia elective, **Dr. Frank Paletta** (DMD '95) recognized that patients with special needs had unique access-to-care issues.

When the time came to give back to his alma mater, he chose to support the Center for Patients with Special Needs because he felt that the school was doing important work in the field.

"I understood the need that those groups of patients had," said the Warwick, R.I.-based oral surgeon who rotated through the special needs clinic as a student. "I still see that need today in my own practice."

Dr. Paletta continues to treat patients with special needs in his private practice, MSL Facial and Oral Surgery.

A scholarship recipient during dental school, Dr. Paletta also has supported scholarships for current students.

"It was nice to give back because of the aid that was given to me," he said.



In many ways, **Delta Dental** helped to get the Center for Patients with Special Needs off the ground. One of the Center's primary goals is to educate community-based dentists both through the school's training of future dentists as well as its continuing education offerings.

In October 2007, nearly a year before the Center's dedication, Delta Dental generously sponsored a continuing education seminar titled "Oral Health Care for People with Disabilities." The highly popular day-long course was attended by more than 400 area dental professionals. It covered topics ranging from care for patients with disabilities to legal considerations to dental education in special needs dentistry.

*Pictured L to R: Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich, professor and chair, Department of Pediatric Dentistry; Dr. Cheryl Lerner, Delta Dental Vice President of Professional Relations; Dr. Erik Scheifele, director, Center for Patients with Special Needs; Ms. Fran Romeo, local Delta Dental representative. Photo by Suellen Fitzsimmons.*

man Endowment Fund in support of the White Coat ceremony. Their gift will support the ceremony for years to come and creates a permanent legacy in their name.

The Dean's Scholarship Ball is another cause that is popular with alumni donors. When the school can provide scholarships, it offers valuable assistance to the next generation of talented dental professionals, like Ms. Alexandra Jensen and Ms. Lya Sharpley, this year's recipients.

Still others want to nurture a student's budding interest in research, another important part of the school's mission and the dental profession. Each year, Dr. Jack Penhall (DMD '73) sponsors some of the awards presented to our student research contest winners at the Spring Research Symposium.

In addition to sponsoring initiatives that are close to their hearts, many of our donors choose to provide funding in order to get the ball rolling, to inspire others to give as well.

A gift in any amount can be put to good use, and you have a variety of options for structuring your gift to accommodate your personal financial situation. Trusts and charitable gift annuities can be good alternatives to more traditional options.

You can designate your support to a particular focus area, such as faculty or programming, based on your personal experiences and interests. Knowing that you're helping provide a service that is important to you can be so meaningful.

Like virtually every other organi-

zation, the university has felt the financial pinch of the current economic downturn, which makes your support more valuable than ever.

For information on funding priorities and how you can make a difference, please contact me at 412-383-7544 or email [pbc8@pitt.edu](mailto:pbc8@pitt.edu)

Sincerely,

Paul B. Casey  
Director of Development



# ALUMNI CALENDAR

- August 19** University of Pittsburgh Alumni Day at PNC Park, Pittsburgh Pirates vs. Milwaukee Brewers, 7:05 p.m. *(For additional details and to order tickets, please contact Brittany Ryce at (412)325-4494 or [brittany.ryce@pirates.com](mailto:brittany.ryce@pirates.com). The deadline for ticket orders is Friday, August 12.)*
- August 31** General Assembly and White Coat Ceremony, 3 p.m., Scaife Hall Auditoriums 5 & 6
- September 9** Alumni Association Executive Committee Meeting, 4:45 p.m., Salk 457  
Alumni Association Board of Directors Meeting, 6 p.m., Salk 457
- Sept. 30-Oct. 4** ADA Annual Session, Honolulu, Hawaii
- HOMEcomings 2009 - Please see insert in magazine for complete details on homecoming events.
- October 22** Steel City Dental Expo, Petersen Events Center  
Pathways to Professions: A Career Networking Event. 6-8 p.m., Connolly Ballroom, Alumni Hall
- October 23** Homecoming Continuing Dental Education Course, 8:30 a.m., Edward J. Forrest Continuing Education Center  
School of Dental Medicine Homecoming Reception and Mentoring Event, 7:30-9:30 p.m., University Club
- October 24** School of Dental Medicine Diversity Celebration, 9 a.m., Salk Hall  
Homecoming Football Game, Pitt vs. South Florida, time TBA, Heinz Field
- November 1** Distinguished Alumni Award Nomination Deadline
- December 9** Alumni Association Executive Committee Meeting, 4:45 p.m., Salk 457  
Alumni Association Board of Directors Meeting, 6 p.m., Salk 457

**SAVE THE DATE! The 2010 Dean's Scholarship Ball will be held on April 10.**  
(Location will be announced at a later date.)

School of Dental Medicine  
440 Salk Hall  
3501 Terrace Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15261

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