

UBDentist

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE

SUMMER 2026

A NEW ERA FOR ORTHODONTICS

Inside the clinic renovation that's transforming education, training and patient care at the UBSDM. **PG 10**



FROM THE DEAN



**We are intentional
about cultivating
environments
where bright
minds can thrive.**

Dear UBSDM family,

In August 2025, when I wrote to you in UB Dentist, preparations for our accreditation site visit were in full swing. Parts of Squire Hall were blocked off for construction. Our D4s were heading into their last year of dental school, catching the first glimpse of the light at the end of the tunnel.

One year later, and we've made it to the other side. We passed accreditation with flying colors, opened a beautiful new orthodontic clinic and graduated yet another talented class. Reaching these milestones brings a special kind of energy to the school. We're building on our strengths while moving forward, always focused on shaping the future of oral health.

Our new clinic may be the most obvious proof. This spring, we opened the Dr. C. Brian Preston Orthodontic Clinic, a state-of-the-art clinical facility for advanced training in orthodontics. The \$2.9 million renovation provides our students and faculty with the space they need to innovate, collaborate and grow. It's beautiful. The next time you're in Buffalo, be sure to check it out on the first floor of Squire.

Shortly after, we celebrated commencement. This, too, symbolizes our investment in the future. We are responsible for preparing the next generation of alumni to carry our profession forward. Over four years, we work

tirelessly to ensure our DDS students are not just clinically competent, but also compassionate. The Class of 2026 possesses these qualities and more. I am confident the future of our profession is in good hands!

Together, these successes demonstrate that we are intentional about cultivating environments where bright minds can thrive. Our efforts are guided by the same spirit of commitment and community that shaped your time at the UBSDM. It will continue to guide us as we advance our mission, with even more exciting milestones on the horizon.

Your role in our story cannot be underestimated. As mentors and leaders in the dental community, you set a powerful example for our students to follow. Thank you for continuing to support our school. Our future is stronger because of you!

Marcelo W. B. Araujo, DDS, MS '99, PhD '03
Dean and Professor
School of Dental Medicine

ON THE COVER:

From left: UB Provost A. Scott Weber, Dr. Paul Ziarnowski, '77, Ortho Cert. '82, Bridgette Preston Gianturco, Dr. Thikriat Al-Jewair, Ortho Cert. '12, MS '13, MBA, FRDC, and Dean Marcelo Araujo, MS '99, PhD '03, cut the ribbon in the new orthodontic clinic in spring 2026.

Photo by Douglas Levere

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Publication of UB Dentist is made possible by the generous support
of the University at Buffalo Dental Alumni Association.

1 School of Dental Medicine receives \$3.7 million from New York for Special Care Clinic

BY LAURIE KAISER

The UB School of Dental Medicine is receiving a \$3.7 million state award to fund a new Special Care Clinic that will serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The clinic is projected to open in Squire Hall in 2027.

"This grant allows the UB School of Dental Medicine to take a meaningful step forward in advancing our mission to improve oral health in our community, especially among a population that has been underserved for so long," said Dean Marcelo Araujo. "Through our Special Care Clinic, we will expand access for individuals with developmental disabilities, including those with cognitive, behavioral and physical challenges who may have difficulty accessing dental care in the traditional setting."

The UB award is one of 30 awards totaling \$25 million from the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). The OPWDD prioritized the awards based on projects related to expanding access to dental care, improving physical diagnostic space to better accommodate people in wheelchairs, creating sensory-friendly areas for neurodiverse patients, and improving access in health care deserts.

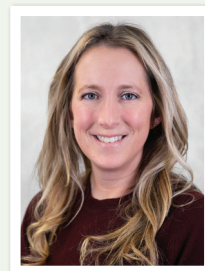
UB received the second-highest award among the 30 institutions.

"We're taking steps to close the health equity gap for New Yorkers with disabilities," said Gov. Kathy Hochul when the awards were announced in April. "This funding allows New York's providers to make life-changing upgrades to facility equipment and space to address some of the most difficult dental and preventative health access needs."

The UB award will cover the entire cost of construction of the clinic and its equipment, which includes eight operative units, a wheelchair tilt, wheelchair-accessible panoramic X-ray machine, sensory-friendly rooms, and extra-large restrooms that can better accommodate patient needs.

"This Special Care Clinic has been our vision for a long time, and we are thrilled to receive the award that will bring it to fruition," said Elizabeth Kapral, DDS '13, clinical professor in the Department of Oral Diagnostic Sciences, who will oversee the clinic.

"It will provide a welcoming space for adults and children who may have mobility issues,



DR. ELIZABETH KAPRAL

complex medical conditions and developmental disabilities, such as autism."

Kapral, who has taught at UB since 2014 as part-time faculty, joined the dental school faculty

full time last November and has extensive experience working with patients with disabilities, including collaborating with People Inc. and Developmental Disability Advocates of Western New York for treatment of patients and residents.



AN ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING OF THE SPECIAL CARE CLINIC, WHICH WILL IMPROVE ACCESS TO ORAL HEALTH CARE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

"THIS SPECIAL CARE CLINIC HAS BEEN OUR VISION FOR A LONG TIME, AND WE ARE THRILLED TO RECEIVE THE AWARD THAT WILL BRING IT TO FRUITION."

DR. ELIZABETH KAPRAL

Kapral said the clinic will help narrow a gap in care, noting that only 56% of adults with a disability had a dental visit in the past year, compared to 70% of adults without a disability.

"Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have a statistically higher rate of untreated dental caries and periodontal disease than their neurotypical peers," she said, adding that many patients in this population also have sensory challenges.

The Special Care Clinic also will prepare dental students to expertly treat patients with disabilities before they begin their professional practice.

"By improving the educational experiences of the next generation of dentists," Kapral said, "future barriers for individuals with disabilities will be further reduced by increasing the number of competent dental providers."

2 School of Dental Medicine ranks among top 10 for dentistry in the U.S.

BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI

The School of Dental Medicine has been ranked No. 9 for dentistry in the U.S., according to the 2026 QS World University Rankings by Subject, placing the school among the top dental institutions globally and reinforcing its reputation for excellence in education, research and patient care.

The 2026 rankings showed an improvement of three places from last year in the U.S. rankings. The UBSDM was also ranked 28th in the world, up 11 spots.

The annual QS World University Rankings by Subject evaluate universities across a range of academic disciplines, on factors such as academic reputation, employer reputation and research impact, measured through Citations per Paper and h-index measure.

The University at Buffalo was ranked among the top 50 in the U.S. in several other subject areas, including library and information management (No. 16), geography (No. 21) and pharmacy and pharmacology (No. 27).

TOP

10

3 Making an Impact, One Smile at a Time

Outreach initiatives throughout the spring semester connected students with meaningful opportunities to serve.

BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI AND LAURIE KAISER | PHOTOS BY CASS MCALLISTER AND DOUGLAS LEVERE

Throughout the spring semester, our students, faculty and staff strengthened the school's commitment to service through a wide range of outreach initiatives. Here's a look at three events that made a meaningful impact on our local communities.

FEBRUARY: GIVE KIDS A SMILE

The UBSDM hosted 48 young children from three Buffalo schools on Feb. 6 during the 25th annual Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) event. Dental students, residents and faculty members teamed up to provide the visitors, ages 3 to 8, with free checkups, fluoride treatments, cleanings and X-rays in the clinic inside Squire Hall. Meanwhile, another group of dental school volunteers oversaw educational activities in Harriman Hall that turned brushing and flossing into a game.

GKAS is a nationwide initiative sponsored by the American Dental Association. Held on the first Friday of February, the event kicks off National Children's Dental Health Month and is intended to provide quality dental care and oral hygiene education to underserved children.

This year, participating schools included Holy Cross Head Start Main School, Holy Cross Head Start Northwest School and Buffalo Public School 99 (Stanley M. Makowski Early Childhood Center).

Seventy-two volunteers participated, leading flossing simulations with jump ropes and Play-Doh, helping the kids dress up as dentists, and dancing to music from a student DJ.

"The best part was getting to see smiles on all the kids' faces, hopefully making the dentist a less scary place for them," said Andee Wik, outreach coordinator in the Department of Pediatric and Community Dentistry. "The DJ and dance floor were a huge hit, and the kids loved the educational games. Many asked if they could come back next year!"

DENTAL STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS WORKED TOGETHER TO GIVE THE CHILDREN A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE AT THE DENTIST.

CHILDREN GOT TO PRACTICE FLOSSING USING LARGE LEGOS, PLAY-DOH AND TWINE!



HELPING CHILDREN BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE TOOLS USED DURING A DENTAL EXAM CAN MAKE THE WHOLE VISIT LESS SCARY. HERE, A DENTAL STUDENT SHOWS A PATIENT HOW HIS TOOTHBRUSH WORKS.

THE ENTIRE UBSDM COMMUNITY WORKED TOGETHER TO MAKE VETERANS FEEL WELCOME.





MARCH: DENTISTRY SMILES ON VETERANS

The UBSDM opened its clinic to local veterans in early March during the 11th annual Dentistry Smiles on Veterans event.

The school provided free dental services and oral health education to over 100 veterans. Treatments were valued at approximately \$50,000 in private practice fees and included 49 cleanings, 46 extractions, nine restorations, and treatment of one case of periodontal disease. Providers also aimed to help veterans find a dental home if they didn't already have one. Over 70% of this year's attendees made follow-up appointments at the UB Dental clinics, where they can continue to receive quality care.

Dental residents from the Erie County Medical Center (ECMC) provided care alongside UB's dental students, residents, faculty and staff, while representatives from UB's other schools, such as pharmacy and public health, provided veterans with educational materials and services focused on their overall wellness.

Danielle Sudol, DDS '26, served as one of the event's student coordinators. "As dental students, being able to give back to people who have given so much is really impactful," she said. "We get to hone our skills while helping other people. It's a great day where we get to do a lot of great work."

The school is planning another event for veterans later this year.

VETERAN PATIENTS RECEIVED FREE DENTAL TREATMENT, INCLUDING CLEANINGS, EXTRACTIONS, RESTORATIONS AND MORE.



THE TURF TURNED INTO A DENTAL CLINIC FOR THE TEAMSMILE EVENT!

THE UBSDM'S PEDIATRIC DENTISTS AND RESIDENTS TAKE A MOMENT TO SHOW OFF THEIR TEAM PRIDE!

APRIL: TEAMSMILE @ THE BUFFALO BILLS

The UBSDM posted a win on April 2 when it provided over 250 local schoolchildren with free oral health care at the Buffalo Bills field house in Orchard Park.

The event was run in partnership with TeamSmile, a national nonprofit that pairs oral health professionals with athletic organizations to provide dental care to underserved children in communities across the country. This was UB's third year partnering with the organization.

The patients, ranging from K-12, received a mix of preventive and restorative care in units stationed across the practice field. Forty of the children participating were identified as having developmental disabilities, including communication disorders and autism.

Elisabeth Thompson, clinical instructor and occupational therapist in the Department of Pediatric and Community Dentistry, organized this year's event. "Our first [goal] is to get children the dental care they need that day. In every city in which we hold this event, we see children who are actually in pain," she said. "Second, we want to combat any kind of fear the children have of the dentist. We really work with the volunteers to make the event welcoming and offer as many activities as possible to make the kids happy. Third, for the kids who don't have a dentist, we want to connect them with one after the event is over."

In addition to the dental school's volunteers, faculty and students from UB's occupational therapy (OT) program, SUNY Erie's dental hygiene and dental assisting programs, and D'Youville University's speech-language pathology and OT programs also participated.

Presenting partners of the Buffalo event were Colgate, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and United Concordia Dental Insurance Co.

REACCREDITED & READY FOR THE

Dean Araujo discusses the School of Dental Medicine's recent accreditation success and its continued commitment to excellence.

Q: What exactly is accreditation, and why is it important for a dental school like the UBSDM?

Dean Araujo: Accreditation is an essential process that ensures our dental education programs meet the highest national standards set by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). It's how we demonstrate our commitment to excellence in dental education, not only in the way we educate our students, but also in how we deliver patient care, conduct research, and engage our community. Accreditation provides assurance to our students, faculty, and alumni that the UB School of Dental Medicine meets the high standards of our profession.

Q: What does the accreditation process involve? How did the school prepare for it?

Dean Araujo: The process is both rigorous and rewarding. For us, it involved three years of preparation, including gathering data, evaluating our programs, and engaging faculty, researchers, staff, and

students in a comprehensive self-study. The CODA site visitors then reviewed everything, met with members of our community, and assessed our performance across all educational and clinical areas. What made the process so powerful was the collaboration across our entire community, from the CODA Steering Committee to our chairs, program directors, faculty, staff and students. Our people banded together to show the best of the UBSDM — who we are and how deeply we care about our mission.

Q: What were the results of this most recent accreditation review?

Dean Araujo: I am proud to share that the UBSDM achieved full reaccreditation with no reporting requirements. This outcome reflects not only the quality of our programs but also the dedication and professionalism of our faculty, staff, and students. The reviewers recognized our strengths in evidence-based education, clinical excellence, innovation, and research, all of

which are integral to our identity as a global leader in oral health education.

Q: What did you personally take away from this process as dean?

Dean Araujo: For me, this experience reinforced the incredible leadership we have throughout the school. I saw firsthand how our chairs, directors, faculty, and staff approach every challenge with integrity, collaboration, and a shared commitment to our mission. It strengthened my confidence that we have the right leadership in place and the right culture to move us forward over the next seven years until our next accreditation.

Q: How does this reaffirm the UBSDM's position among the top dental schools nationally and globally?

Dean Araujo: Accreditation affirms what our students, faculty, and alumni already know: That the UBSDM is an institution defined by excellence. We are proud to be

recognized among the top dental schools in the United States and around the world. Our impact is visible in our graduates who lead in clinical practice, our research that is transforming oral health care, and how we serve communities both locally and globally.

Q: Looking ahead, how will this accreditation shape the school's future?

Dean Araujo: The next seven years present an exciting opportunity to build on our strong foundation and focus on the strategic plan. We are committed to advancing our curriculum, expanding research and innovation, and integrating new technologies, like digital dentistry and artificial intelligence, into education and patient care. Most importantly, we are preparing the next generation of oral health professionals for a rapidly evolving field, ensuring they are ready not just for today's challenges but for the innovations that will define oral medicine a decade from now.

FUTURE

Q: Any final reflections for our alumni and partners?

Dean Araujo: Our successful reaccreditation is more than a milestone. It symbolizes our shared commitment to excellence. I am deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this achievement and to our alumni who continue to champion our mission. Together, we are defining the future of oral health care, and I couldn't be more confident in where we are headed.

DEAN ARAUJO, 15TH DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE, LED THE SCHOOL THROUGH A SUCCESSFUL SITE VISIT AND REACCREDITATION.





University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine



BY LAURIE KAISER; EDITED BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI
PHOTOS BY DOUGLAS LEVERE

A NEW ERA FOR ORTHODONTICS

Inside the clinic renovation that's transforming education, training and patient care at the UBSDM.

Since the School of Dental Medicine's orthodontic clinic opened in 1986 in Squire Hall, it has provided the path to beautiful smiles for roughly 25,000 children and adults.

Forty years later, the clinic is entering a new era.

THE UBSDM HOSTED
A RIBBON-CUTTING
EVENT ON APRIL 1,
BRINGING TOGETHER
ALUMNI, FACULTY,
STAFF, STUDENTS AND
DR. PRESTON'S
FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

The orthodontic clinic recently underwent a two-year, \$2.9 million transformation into a state-of-the-art facility for training, education and patient care. It was officially unveiled on April 1.

The 4,184-square-foot renovated clinic boasts a well-lit, inviting, open-concept design, brand-new equipment and the latest advancements in digital technology. Other updates include two consultation rooms and a dedicated room for residents.

"With 20 modern dental units and dedicated support areas, we now have a true one-stop clinical environment," says Thikriat Al-Jewair, DDS, Ortho Cert. '12, MS '13, MBA, FRDC, L.B. Badgero Endowed Chair and associate professor in the Department of Orthodontics, who oversees the clinical program. "This allows us to improve workflow, increase efficiency and, most importantly, enhance the patient experience."

"The orthodontics department was guided by the strong foundation Dr. Preston built over his career in the School of Dental Medicine," Araujo says. "His legacy lives on, not just in the beautiful space named in his honor, but in our orthodontists who take what they accomplish here in this outstanding learning environment and use it to improve patient lives."

BRINGING THE VISION TO LIFE

Paul Ziarnowski, DDS '77, Ortho Cert. '82, an alumnus and former UB faculty member, spearheaded the naming campaign in memory of his good friend and colleague.

Ziarnowski, who took over as interim department chair when Preston became ill in 2015, recalled the lasting impact Preston's leadership had on the department, as well as the family atmosphere he developed within it.



The space was officially named in honor of C. Brian Preston, who chaired the Department of Orthodontics from 1997 to 2014. He passed away in 2015 at age 77.

Dean Marcelo Araujo noted that the impressive new clinic will allow the School of Dental Medicine to continue to advance its reputation for excellence and innovation, two qualities that Dr. Preston deeply valued.

During the 1990s, orthodontics programs required mandatory recertification and more rigorous clinical standards, Ziarnowski explains.

"Brian took this opportunity to expand the program. The clinic got bigger, and we went from five residents to 16. But the family atmosphere of our department didn't change."

AN ORTHODONTICS INNOVATOR — AND PILOT

Al-Jewair saw Preston's innovative leadership firsthand as one of his students and mentees.

"He was an inspiring leader — a world-class researcher — and a firm believer in the future of orthodontics," she recalls. "But beyond his remarkable professional accomplishments, he taught us something even more lasting: the importance of approaching both our work and our lives with curiosity, discipline and purpose."

“Brian took this opportunity to expand the program. The clinic got bigger, and we went from five residents to 16. But the family atmosphere of our department didn't change.”

DR. PAUL ZIARNOWSKI
ALUMNUS AND FORMER UB FACULTY MEMBER

ABOUT DR. C. BRIAN PRESTON

Dr. Preston joined the UB faculty in 1997 as a professor of orthodontics and department chair and worked to establish its reputation for graduate studies. He traveled extensively as a lecturer and was the author and editor of numerous professional publications in several languages. Dr. Preston was a fellow of the College of Surgeons in South Africa and was a founding member of the International Functional Association, a group of professionals focused on expanding the scope of dentistry. The new clinic is a meaningful tribute to his legacy and vision.



She notes that Preston was more than an orthodontist and educator. He was also a pilot.

"Dr. Preston often drew a parallel between orthodontics and aviation," Al-Jewair says. "Just as a pilot charts a course before takeoff, an orthodontist develops a thoughtful plan to guide patients toward their best outcomes. In both fields, small, precise adjustments can make a profound difference."

During the clinic's ribbon-cutting ceremony, Preston's daughter, Bridgette Preston Gianturco, acknowledged the many people who made the naming campaign possible.

"It is a tremendous privilege ... to have this beautiful, progressive clinic named for my father," she said. "It was truly a place he loved to be."

DR. C. BRIAN PRESTON AWARD ESTABLISHED IN MEMORY OF THE LONGTIME CHAIR

The School of Dental Medicine is pleased to announce the creation of the Dr. C. Brian Preston Award, an endowed fund that will support high-achieving residents within the Department of Orthodontics in perpetuity.

Bridgette Preston Gianturco, Dr. Preston's daughter, recently made a commitment to establish the fund. "We are grateful to Bridgette Preston Gianturco for her generous support," says Neil Dengler, senior director of advancement for the School of Dental Medicine. "The timing of this gift couldn't be better," Dengler adds, as the newly renovated orthodontic clinic, which was named for Dr. Preston, opened in spring 2026.

"I encourage alumni from the Preston era to consider supporting this fund. Gifts are tax-deductible, and there are plenty of tax advantaged ways to support this fund, which helps our residents," says Dengler.

For more information on how you can support the Preston Award, please contact Neil Dengler at 716-881-7486 or ndengler@buffalo.edu.

UB researchers to engage in 4-year, \$1.6 million study as part of Human Virome Program

BY LAURIE KAISER

FOR DECADES, scientists have focused primarily on the viruses that cause human illness, including influenza, chickenpox and COVID-19. Much less is understood about the numerous viruses in our bodies that are not associated with any type of disease.

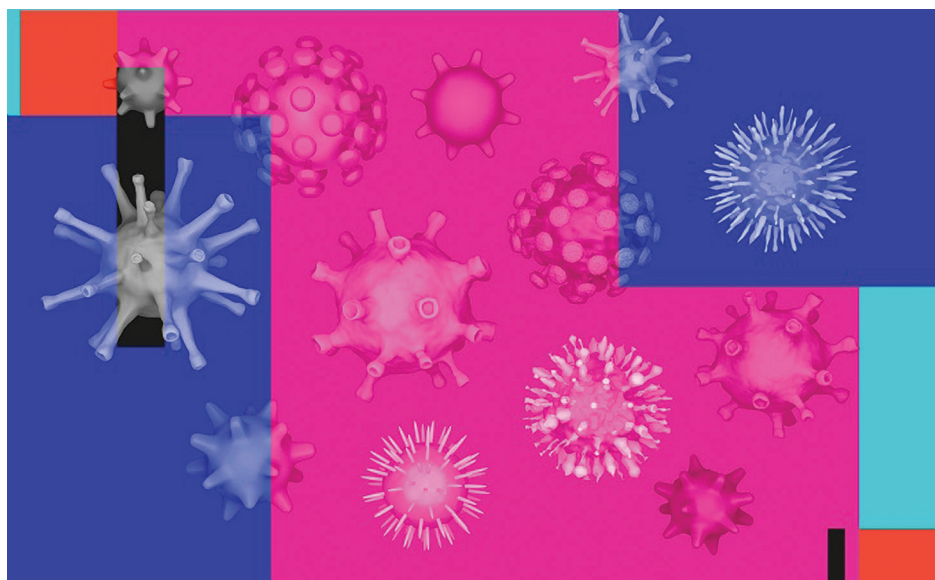
Researchers representing three schools and a center within UB are studying these very viruses and how combining laboratory methods and artificial intelligence (AI) can help identify them.

Their project “Hiding in plain sight: Integrating AI with targeted bench methods to discover and characterize viruses in the human body” recently received a \$423,366 grant from the National Institutes of Health. It’s a four-year renewable grant totaling \$1.6 million.

Their research is part of the NIH Human Virome Program (HVP), a consortium involving more than 300 researchers across the country who are working to improve scientists’ understanding of the role viruses play in the healthy human body. The virome is the entire collection of viruses living within the human body.

“Healthy humans are full of trillions of viruses. Studying them is challenging because they are far more diverse than bacteria, and it can be hard to see ‘who’ is there and discern what they are doing in the body,” says Kathryn Kauffman, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Oral Biology in the School of Dental Medicine.

She is co-leading this multiple-principal-investigator project with Libusha Kelly, PhD, associate professor of microbiology and immunology, and systems and computational biology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. The UB team also includes Yinyin Ye, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Jun Qu, PhD, professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences in the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and the New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences (CBLS).



UNCOVERING HIDDEN VIRUSES

The HVP has awarded more than \$100 million to multiple institutions, including teams at five Virome Characterization Centers across the U.S.: the University of Pennsylvania, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Vanderbilt University, Stanford University, and the University of California, Los Angeles.

There are also teams focusing on the areas of functional studies, data coordination across the consortium and development of new tools and methods. UB is focusing on developing methods for uncovering and identifying viruses that are usually missed in virome studies.

To ferret out the hidden viruses, the UB team will collect viral samples and process them in a way that removes a dominant group of viruses that normally “swamp out” the signal from other viruses.

During her doctoral and postdoctoral work at the MIT-Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Kauffman helped discover a new kind of virus.

“It revealed features that we are building off of with this project,” she says. “By the end of this project, we may say, ‘Here are hundreds of new types of viruses we hadn’t been able to see before! Now we can look for their sequences in all the human sample datasets generated across the HVP consortium.’”

The UB team will use wastewater, a source of viruses that is plentiful and rich in diverse viruses present in healthy humans. Using wastewater accelerates the development of tools for general study of the human virome, and it also holds potential future benefit for public health studies.

Kauffman notes that the UB and Einstein teams are in regular conversations with others across the HVP consortium.

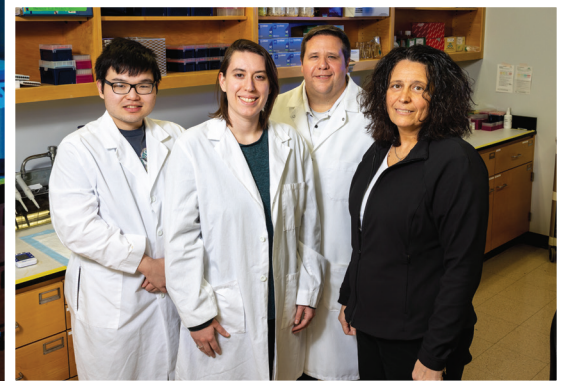
“A central goal of the HVP is to gain a fuller picture of viruses in the ‘healthy’ human virome,” Kauffman says. “And we have brought together an exceptional team here at UB and Einstein to be a part of making that happen.”

UB oral biology and biochemistry professors receive NIH grant to study salivary gland regeneration



LEFT DR. ROSE-ANNE ROMANO IN HER LAB IN THE BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH BUILDING.

BOTTOM MEMBERS OF THE ROMANO LAB, FROM LEFT: PHUC DUONG, THERESA WRYNN, JASON OSINSKI AND ROSE-ANNE ROMANO.



BY LAURIE KAISER

SALIVARY GLANDS ARE ESSENTIAL for everyday human functions, yet they do not fully recover once they are significantly damaged. An estimated 20% of people around the world are affected to some degree by salivary gland disorders.

"Medication use—especially in older adults—is one of the most widespread contributors," says Rose-Anne Romano, PhD '08, associate professor of oral biology. "Overall, salivary gland dysfunction represents a significant and often underrecognized global health burden."

Romano recently received a two-year, \$440,275 grant from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research to explore how salivary glands repair and regenerate after injury. The co-primary investigator is Satrajit Sinha, PhD, professor in the Department of Biochemistry in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

The two researchers are bringing their expertise together to solve what has seemed like an intractable problem.

"Despite the clear clinical need," Romano says, "we still do not fully understand how salivary glands maintain their normal physiological function and secrete saliva as and when needed upon the right stimulus."

The funding for this study will allow them to investigate how the stem cells of the salivary glands facilitate recovery and regeneration of the organ after damage or disease to ensure proper saliva production and other functions, Sinha explains.

UNDERSTANDING ROLES OF SPECIFIC GENES

When an organ such as a salivary gland gets damaged, stem and

progenitor cells help rebuild it. In the ideal scenario, these cells can replicate, decide what kind of cell they should become and grow into a fully working tissue with restored function.

In prior studies, Romano, Sinha and other oral biology researchers have used genomic and epigenomic data to decode salivary gland identity and the molecular blueprints of tissue homeostasis and regeneration. These studies led them to discover a gene called *Six1*, which likely plays a key role in these processes.

To follow up on these observations, Romano and Sinha will study what happens when *Six1* is selectively turned off in a mouse model. This approach will allow them to determine how essential *Six1* is for proper regeneration of the tissue.

In the long term, this study will allow them to submit a larger multiyear NIH grant proposal where they can follow up and validate these findings, Sinha says.

"The hope is to generate a clearer and more complete picture of how salivary glands regenerate after injury, which will ultimately inform new strategies to restore gland function in patients suffering from chronic dry mouth and salivary gland dysfunction," Romano says. "Ultimately, this knowledge could help us design new treatments to restore salivary gland function in people affected by conditions such as autoimmune disease, radiation therapy for head and neck cancer, medication side effects and aging."

UB study led by oral biology professor shows that key protein can slow aging



DR. KEITH KIRKWOOD

BY LAURIE KAISER

THE UNITED STATES is a rapidly aging country. By the year 2050, nearly 1 in 4 Americans will be 65 or older, and many will live into their 90s and beyond. This leads to health care and social support concerns.

Despite advances in medicine and the eradication of many diseases, it's hard to escape the downfalls of advanced age: lower immunity and increased chronic inflammation, which can result in arthritis, fatigue, weaker bones and decreased strength, among other maladies.

This chronic activation of inflammation associated with aging has been coined "inflammaging," says Keith Kirkwood, DDS, PhD '97, Perio Cert. '95, senior associate dean for research and Centennial Endowed Chair in the Department of Oral Biology.

"These age-related changes, known as immunosenescence, lead to a decline in immune resilience and an increased susceptibility to age-related chronic inflammatory diseases," he explains.

Kirkwood recently led a lengthy study looking into a way to decrease age-related frailty in mice. He and his team, which includes two top geriatric experts and a former postdoc in Kirkwood's lab, focused on tristetraprolin (TTP), an RNA-binding protein that essentially puts the brakes on inflammation. As people age, TTP levels drop, especially in immune cells, leading to more inflammation.

The team genetically manipulated one group of elderly mice so that TTP was stabilized. Their

findings — that these mice had reduced physical frailty scores compared with control mice — were published in the January 2026 issue of *Aging and Disease*.

"This protein really targets RNA for rapid degradation," says Kirkwood, whose decades-long research has focused on the role of obesity and aging in myeloid cell biology as it relates to oral inflammation in periodontal disease and oral cancer progression. "Most pro-inflammatory mediators have a very short half-life, meaning they only last for minutes, not hours."

Funded by a \$2.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, the study took place over the past six years at both UB's South and Downtown campuses.

The mice, which were 22 months old, were tested on grip strength, gait speed, treadmill endurance and energy levels. The frailty score was significantly lower in the male mice with the TTP increase and somewhat lower in the

female mice compared with the controls.

"The increase in TTP resulted in better grip strength, better walking, endurance and overall physical performance," Kirkwood explains. "These mice had healthier bones and reduced bone breakdown. They exhibited a more youthful-looking immune profile."

Female mice with increased TTP didn't fare quite as well as their male counterparts. Kirkwood attributes this to their smaller physical size and estrogen declines, which may restrict tissue responsiveness to anti-inflammatory modulation. However, both sexes with the enhanced TTP expression had stronger bones.

While this study shows amazing results in mice, Kirkwood points out that clinical trials for humans are a long way off. In the more immediate future, Kirkwood plans to collaborate with the research team on a study of how TTP can control the neuroinflammation associated with aging, such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease.



UB orthodontics researchers evaluate microplastics' effect on immune system



DR. THIKRIAT AL-JEWAIR



DR. STEPHEN WARUNEK

BY LAURIE KAISER

IN A GROUNDBREAKING STUDY, orthodontics researchers at the UBSDM recently discovered how synthetic polymers, including clear aligners, retainers and sleep devices, may affect the immune system.

Dr. Thikriat Al-Jewair, Ortho Cert. '12, MS '13, MBA, FRDC, L.B. Badgero Endowed Chair and associate professor, and Stephen Warunek, DDS '80, MS '88, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Orthodontics, collaborated with medical researchers at the University of Pittsburgh's Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute to explore how plastic orthodontic devices could affect the oral cavity and overall health.

They found that these devices, particularly aligners, release microplastics and the even-smaller nanoplastics (MNPs), which are then ingested by macrophages, specialized immune cells that live inside organs and are meant to clear foreign debris and protect against infection and inflammation.

"Because microplastics do not biodegrade, they can persist inside macrophages," Al-Jewair explains. "Over time, this may trigger chronic inflammation, weaken the body's ability to fight infection and interfere with proper wound healing."

Their study, the first to capture live cell imaging of macrophages ingesting aligner-derived MNPs, was published in the February 2026 issue of *Progress in Orthodontics*.

"It's not only that the macrophages ingest them and just sit there," Warunek says, "but that the microplastics are skewing their immune responses."

INVESTIGATING MICROPLASTIC SHEDDING

For the past two decades, scientists have increasingly sounded the alarm regarding microplastics — fragments smaller than 5 millimeters that form when plastic products degrade. They infiltrate the water we drink, food we eat and air we breathe, posing dangers to both the environment and human health.

While there are still many unknowns about the level of harm to our bodies, these tiny plastic particles have been detected in human tissues. Some studies have linked microplastics exposure to cardiovascular problems, gene damage and fertility issues. The smaller the particle, the likelier it will stay inside tissues and organs.

For the study, the team evaluated six orthodontic devices manufactured by different companies — a mix of clear aligners, retainers and

sleep appliances for temporomandibular joint disorders (TMD) — to determine the severity of the microplastic shedding, along with what happens when immune cells encounter these plastic particles.

Three of the materials were produced using traditional thermoforming, while three were 3D-printed. They submerged all of them in artificial saliva, incubated and put them through a vortex mixer daily for one week. Particle release was quantified by flow cytometry and imaged by scanning and transmission electron microscopy.

They discovered that the direct-printed polymers shed a larger amount of microplastics than the thermoformed ones. Both types, however, shed measurable MNP fragments that are readily internalized by macrophages.

ALIGNERS, A BILLION-DOLLAR BUSINESS

The study comes at a time when the market for clear aligners, valued at \$6.39 billion in 2024, is exploding.

On average, patients require 20 to 50 sets of aligners. Conservatively, 100,000 patients are undergoing treatment with an average use of 30 aligner sets, according to the study. This adds up to approximately 3 million clear aligners in use worldwide every day, according to the study.

In many orthodontic circles, 3D-printed aligners are considered the future for their speed, precision and efficiency.

"Direct-printed aligners offer greater customization and production efficiency," Al-Jewair says. "The digital workflow may help streamline treatment, enabling same-day delivery and reducing appointment frequency in some cases."

While aligners are here to stay, manufacturers and researchers should continue evaluating the materials used in their production to ensure safety and performance, Al-Jewair and Warunek say.

Al-Jewair says the team hopes to continue its research and, eventually, move into clinical trials. In the meantime, she emphasizes that the findings are based on preliminary in vitro studies and will need to be validated through well-designed clinical studies before any conclusions can be drawn.

"There are still many unanswered questions," she says, "and I hope to continue this line of research to help address them."



Recognizing Faculty Excellence

BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI

The **UBSDM** continues to build momentum across research, education and patient care, with faculty earning recognition at every level. While each achievement may represent a single project, presentation or milestone, together they tell a much bigger story of excellence. Here are some recent highlights from across the school.

BUFFALO'S EXCELLENCE WAS ON DISPLAY AT THIS YEAR'S IADR GENERAL SESSION AND EXHIBITION IN SUNNY SAN DIEGO.



Dr. Keith Kirkwood, PhD '97, Perio Cert. '95, Centennial Endowed Chair, Department of Oral Biology, was elected a 2025 Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Being named an AAAS Fellow is one of the highest honors in the scientific community. Dr. Kirkwood was elected for his contributions in the areas of periodontal osteoimmunology.



Dr. Ashu Sharma, professor, Department of Oral Biology, received the 2026 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities. Dr. Sharma was selected for his significant contributions to the study of oral biology and his innovative and groundbreaking research.

Dr. Praveen Arany, associate professor, Department of Oral Biology, was selected for the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program for 2026-27 for India. Dr. Arany will use his expertise in photobiomodulation to develop policy around using light therapy for treatment of oral cancer, the most prevalent form of cancer in India.

LEADERS IN ORAL HEALTH



Dean Marcelo Araujo received

the ADEA Section on Pride Award for Research and Scholarly Achievement at the 2026 ADEA Session and General Exhibition.



Dr. Ahmed AlMozayen, Oral Sci. MS '24,

Pros Cert. '24, clinical assistant professor, Department of Restorative Dentistry, was elected a prosthodontic fellow of the Royal College of Dentists of Canada.



Dr. Robert Bochiechio, '92, clinical assistant

professor, Department of Restorative Dentistry, became a fellow of the International College of Dentists and was nominated to the American College of Dentists.



Dr. Grace De Souza, chair, Department

of Restorative Dentistry, received the Outstanding Alumni Award from the State University of Campinas, Piracicaba School of Dentistry.



Dr. Rose-Anne Romano, PhD '08,

associate professor, Department of Oral Biology, was selected as the 2026 IADR Salivary Researcher of the Year at the 2026 IADR/AADOCR/CADR General Session and Exhibition.

Care beyond the chair:

How dental students are making a difference

BY ALLI HAUGH '27, AMELIA KOZLOWSKI '27, AND JOSEPH DELUCA, DDS '07

Volunteering is a defining part of the student experience at the UBSDM. This year alone, over 300 students volunteered their time at over 200 local outreach opportunities. From educational programs to large-scale community clinics, our students make a meaningful impact wherever they go.

PHOTOS BY DR. DELUCA



Remote Area Medical (RAM) Trips

Forty students and six faculty traveled to Cookeville, TN, in March to provide free dental care to underserved patients during a two-day RAM trip. UBSDM students and faculty delivered more than \$65,000 in treatment to 209 patients, offering critical care while promoting service, access and community engagement.

Buffalo Outreach and Community Assistance (BOCA) Events

The BOCA organization provides oral health information and education to organizations across Western New York. This year, BOCA members handed out oral health kits at schools and shelters, spent time with nursing home residents, and volunteered with a bowling league that accommodates individuals who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. These are just a few volunteer opportunities coordinated by BOCA!



Chasing Healthy Smiles 5K

This spring, BOCA hosted the Chasing Healthy Smiles 5K, a community-centered event dedicated to promoting oral health and supporting impactful outreach initiatives. The event brought together over 250 students, staff and community members. The School of Public Health and Health Professions' Health on Wheels van was open for oral cancer screenings and blood pressure readings. Tables offered oral hygiene supplies such as toothbrushes, denture brushes, floss and toothpaste. Organizers distributed at-home oral cancer screenings kits containing gauze, a mirror, and instructions for self-screenings. The event raised \$3,000 toward purchasing oral hygiene supplies that will be distributed at future outreach events!



PHOTOS BY EMILY MORRIS



COMMEN



COMMENCEMENT 2026

PHOTOS OF THE CLASS OF 2026 BY GRAD IMAGES

Meet the **GRADUATES** of 2026

CEMENT

DOCTOR OF DENTAL SURGERY

ENTERING GENERAL PRACTICE RESIDENCY OR ADVANCED EDUCATION IN GENERAL DENTISTRY PROGRAMS

Haley Elizabeth Abbott

NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn
Methodist Hospital
Brooklyn, New York

Julia O. Aziz

University of Rochester Eastman
Institute for Oral Health
Rochester, New York

Maxwell Christian Balko

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Paul Anthony Bargnesi

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Laureen M. Bazzi ♦

Veterans Administration—
John D. Dingell Medical Center
Detroit, Michigan

Olivia Margaret Bird ♦

NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn
Methodist Hospital
Brooklyn, New York

Alejandro Caraballo IV

University of Rochester Eastman
Institute for Oral Health
Rochester, New York

Sabrina Carter

University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Jordan Warner Chatelle

Mount Sinai Hospital Medical Center
New York, New York

Karen Chen

Columbia University
New York, New York

Alexander Griffin Dengel

Veterans Administration Medical
Center—Sepulveda
Sepulveda, California

Brianna Rose Distler ♦

State University of New York
at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, New York

Amr Wagih Eldesouky ♦

Woodhull Medical Center
Brooklyn, New York

Gabriela Giannuzzi

Veterans Administration Medical
Center—Louis Stokes Cleveland
Cleveland, Ohio

Emily Rose Gola

Veterans Administration Pittsburgh
Healthcare System
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Gayle Sarah Gottlieb

East Carolina University—
Robeson County
Lumberton, North Carolina

Katherine Gutierrez

University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Mohammed Harb

Veterans Administration Medical
Center—Northport
Northport, New York

Catherine Jiwoo Hong

Providence Veterans Administration
Medical Center
Providence, Rhode Island

Laura Huff

Rochester General Hospital
Rochester, New York

Ellie Ilene Jarvis ♦♦

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Cameron Michael Leung Jedemann

Mount Sinai Hospital Medical Center
New York, New York

Zaid Jureyda

University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Minjoo Kim

Providence Veterans Administration
Medical Center
Providence, Rhode Island

Matthew Charles Lawson

University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Kevin Le

Rutgers University
School of Dental Medicine
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Selena Seojin Lee

Veterans Administration Medical
Center—Brooklyn
Brooklyn, New York

Madison Rose Lenhard

Veterans Administration Medical
Center—Buffalo
Buffalo, New York

Olivia Aren Suzanne Littman ♦

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Kristianne Liu

Waimanalo Health Center
Oahu, Hawaii

Natalie Lunie Lolo

New York Medical College
Valhalla, New York

Christopher W. Long

Oregon Health & Science University
Portland, Oregon

Louis Manuel Lopez

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Isabella Luciano

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Brandon Lutchmidat

Veterans Administration Orlando
Healthcare
Orlando, Florida

Claire Genevieve Martin

Roswell Park Comprehensive
Cancer Center
Buffalo, New York

Pooja Shailesh Mehta

Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio

Brennan Michael Mooney

Rochester General Hospital
Rochester, New York

Jenna Nocero

Interfaith Dental
Nashville, Tennessee



♦ CUM LAUDE | ♦♦ MAGNA CUM LAUDE | ♦♦♦ SUMMA CUM LAUDE

2026

Isabella Ortega
Rochester General Hospital
Rochester, New York

Helayna Ortiz
Jacobi Medical Center
Bronx, New York

Sayma Parhana
University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Grace Elizabeth Quevedo
Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Alexander Reale ♦
East Carolina University
School of Dental Medicine
Greenville, North Carolina

Greyssi María Reyes Paz
East Carolina University
School of Dental Medicine
Lillington, North Carolina

Manuel Romo Crisostomo
Englewood Health
Englewood, New Jersey

Serena Sanon
Oregon Health & Science University
Portland, Oregon

Sara Lynne Schaeffler
St. Charles Hospital
Port Jefferson, New York

Deepika Sharma
University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Abigail Shea
NYC Health—Hospital/Bellevue
New York, New York

Gary Shum ♦♦♦
Northwell Health
Manhasset, New York

Khrystyna Maria Sobko
Veterans Administration Medical
Center—Buffalo
Buffalo, New York

Danielle Sudol ♦
Northwell Health
Manhasset, New York

Asad Waqar Tanweer
University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Abel Eskinder Tefera
Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Santino Testani
Veterans Administration Medical
Center—Northport
Northport, New York

Manny Weinstein
University Hospital—SUNY Upstate
Medical University
Syracuse, New York

Winnie Xu
East Carolina University
Elizabeth City, North Carolina

Isabel Yang
Jamaica Hospital
Queens, New York

Oleg Zadoyanny
Rochester General Hospital
Rochester, New York

Charles Zaepfel
Veterans Administration Medical
Center—Buffalo
Buffalo, New York

Larissa Zeigler
NYU Langone Dental Medicine—
Hometown Health
Schenectady, New York

Annie Zheng
East Carolina University
Elizabeth City, North Carolina

ENTERING SPECIALTY PROGRAMS

Asia Arshalous Allen
Orthodontics Residency
University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Kodia Al-Sharqi
Pediatric Dental Residency
Jacobi Medical Center
Bronx, New York

Anthony Joseph Blaskovic ♦♦♦
Orthodontics Residency
University of Rochester
Eastman Institute for Oral Health
Rochester, New York

Amanda Elizabeth Engel
Pediatric Dental Residency
Ann & Robert Lurie
Children's Hospital of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Emily Genovesi
Prosthodontics Residency
University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

John Angelo Germinerio ♦
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Residency
Augusta University
Augusta, Georgia

Elizabeth Gu
Pediatric Dental Residency
University of Connecticut Health Center
Farmington, Connecticut

Jordan Jay Hollander ♦
Pediatric Dental Residency
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Ashley Kim ♦♦
Endodontics Residency
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

Mark Mikhail
Pediatric Dental Residency
Cincinnati Children's Hospital
Medical Center
Cincinnati, Ohio

Julia Marie Ophals
Pediatric Dental Residency
East Carolina University
School of Dental Medicine
Greenville, North Carolina

Saya Patel
Pediatric Dental Residency
One Brooklyn Health System—
Brookdale/Interfaith
Brooklyn, New York

Joseph Dominick Riccardi ♦
Orthodontics Residency
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Lea Safarpour ♦
Orthodontics Residency
Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
Aurora, Colorado

Chlöe Lee Schrier ♦♦
Orthodontics Residency
University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Barinder Pal Singh
Pediatric Dental Residency
NYU Langone Dental Medicine
—Princess Anne, MD
Princess Anne, Maryland

Rachel Steffan ♦♦♦
Pediatric Dental Residency
Children's Hospital—Harvard University
Boston, Massachusetts

Aziza Sultana
Pediatric Dental Residency
Indiana University—
Riley Children's Hospital
Indianapolis, Indiana

Ajola Zylalaj
Orthodontics Residency
Montefiore Medical Center—
Einstein College of Medicine
Bronx, New York

ENTERING DENTAL PRACTICE/ ACADEMICS

Yousif A.M. Alkawaz
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Basel Alkrunz ♦
Chicago, Illinois

Mona Almaala
Durham, North Carolina

Nirav Arora
Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

Pratiksha Basnet Rayamajhi ♦♦
Manchester, New Hampshire

Nishesh Batra ♦
Dallas, Texas

Anna Belan
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Aneesh Bhardwaj
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Ambika Chaudhary
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Biling Chen
Houston, Texas

Chidozie Chukwujama
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Marta Danyleyko
Chicago, Illinois

Shreya Edulakanti
Princeton, New Jersey

Faustina Frattali
Charleston, South Carolina

Aditi Ghosh
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Nosa Ighile
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada

Leila Jazayeri
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Rand Kaddou
Houston, Texas

Karanjot Kaur ♦
Seattle, Washington

Dipankar Suresh Khadtale
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Hassan Khalid
Baltimore, Maryland

Soundarya Chowdary Mandava
Houston, Texas

Chandana Namburi
Austin, Texas

Prathi Patel
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Smit Patel
Hamilton, New Jersey

HONORS FOR FACULTY & STAFF

Srushti Kaushikkumar Patel
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Alberto Perez Escobar
U.S. Army

Grace Perna

Ross Jared Reddock
U.S. Navy

Megan Schornack ♦
Hopkinsville, Kentucky

Priyank Seth
Indianapolis, Indiana

Kanan Shah
Rochester, Minnesota

Swapnali Shinde Kamble
St. Louis, Missouri

Mounika Sunku ♦
Charlotte, North Carolina

Manali Divyesh Vora
Boston, Massachusetts

Zahra Yazdani Kachouei ♦♦♦
Tacoma, Washington

THESIS HONORS

Amr Wagih Eldesouky
"Fracture Resistance and Failure Mode of CAD/CAM Milled Versus 3D-Printed Nano-Ceramic Crowns for Endodontically Treated First Premolars"
Primary Mentor: Adaias Matos, DDS, PhD

Emily Genovesi
"In Vitro Assessment of Open-Access Digital Workflow for Presurgical Nasoalveolar Molding in Unilateral Cleft Lip and Palate"
Primary Mentor: Praveen Arany, DDS, PhD

Aditi Ghosh
"Community Water Fluoridation and Oral Health Inequities in U.S. Youth"
Primary Mentor: Rubelisa Oliveira, DDS, PhD

Ellie Ilene Jarvis
"Evaluation of Fracture Resistance, Torquing Moment, and Torsional Creep of 3D Printed Orthodontic Brackets"
Primary Mentor: Ashish Gurav, DMD, PhD

Mounika Sunku
"Examining Efficacy of Laser Versus Routine Mechanical Veneer Tooth Preparation"
Primary Mentor: Praveen Arany, DDS, PhD

Zahra Yazdani Kachouei
"Photobiomodulation Enhances Matrix Synthesis for Pulp Regeneration"
Primary Mentor: Praveen Arany, DDS, PhD

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ORAL BIOLOGY DEGREE

Omar Glover, DMD
"Obesity-Induced Gut Dysbiosis Drives M-MDSC Expansion and Osteoclastogenesis in Periodontitis"
Major Professor: Keith Kirkwood, DDS, PhD

Cole Matrishin, BS
"Ecology of Phages and Other Mobile Elements in the Keystone Pathogen *Porphyromonas gingivalis*"
Major Professor: Kathryn Kauffman, PhD

Edwin Jordany Ovalle, BS
"Mechanism of Oral-Mediated Lysophosphatidylserine Nanoparticle-Based Immune Tolerance"
Major Professor: Jason G. Kay, PhD

Dayron Manuela Leyva Rodriguez, BS
"Spirachete Neutrophil Interactions Initiate Vascular Inflammation Promoting Aortic Endothelial Cell Dysfunction"
Major Professor: Michelle B. Visser, PhD

Theresa Wrynn, BS
"Decoding Salivary Gland Identity: Transcriptional Blueprints of Development and Adult Homeostasis"
Major Professor: Rose-Anne Romano, PhD, and Satrajit Sinha, PhD

MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREES

ORAL SCIENCES

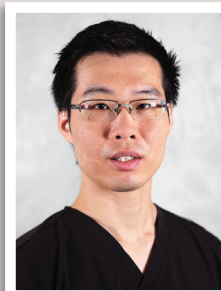
Mona Saud S. Aldawsari, BDS
"Arthralgia and Myalgia: Separate Disorders, or Same Disorders in Different Tissues"
Major Professor: Richard Ohrbach, DDS, PhD

Rahaf Saud Almukhlifi, BDS
"The Effect of Strontium on Cytokines and Extracellular Matrix Production of Human Gingival Fibroblasts in the Presence of a Simulated Smoking Environment"
Major Professor: Michelle B. Visser, PhD

Nada Abdulrahman A. Alsulaiman, BDS
"Fracture Load of Cantilever Implant-Supported Zirconia Fixed Partial Dentures: An In Vitro Study"
Major Professor: Rui Li, DDS, PhD

Jade Denielle Greene, BS
"Independent Contributions of Obesity and High-Fat Diet on Myeloid Osteoclastogenesis in Intestinal Bmal1-KO Mice"
Major Professor: Keith Kirkwood, DDS, PhD

Anna Paritsky, DDS, DMD
"Strontium-Loaded Hydrogel Scaffold to Improve Soft Tissue Healing Around Implants in a Rabbit Maxilla Model"
Major Professor: Rosemary Dziak, PhD



DENTAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION STAFF APPRECIATION AWARD

Tian Zhou



DR. ALAN J. GROSS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD (CLASS OF 2026)

THE WILLIAM M. FEAGANS AWARD

Latifa Bairam, BDS,
Oral Sci. MS '84,
Pros Cert. '81



EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Patrick Anders,
DDS '86, MPH



FLORENCE KRONSON AWARD

Kevin Ryan

Raveeroch Rakhainiyom, DDS

"Comparative Analysis of Speed Sintering Protocols on Chairside Zirconia Blocks Using Different Furnaces"

Major Professor: Hyeongil Kim, DDS, MS

Abigail Shea, BS

"Overproduction of Phosphatidylserine Effects on Pre-Osteoblast Cells"

Major Professor: Jason G. Kay, PhD

Nusrat Jamila Tarannum, BDS

"A Lipopolysaccharide (LPS) from Tannerella forsythia Uniquely Engages the Non-Canonical Caspase 4/5 Pathway During Inflammasome Activation"

Major Professor: Ashu Sharma, PhD

Thunyanon Wongsuwanakorn, DDS

"Comparative Evaluation of Zirconia Implant-Supported Fixed Prosthesis with and without Titanium Bases with Different Prosthetic Screw Designs: An In Vitro Study"

Major Professor: Hyeongil Kim, DDS, MS

ORTHODONTICS

Jeffrey Emmanuel Ajayi, DDS

"Outcomes of Clear Aligner Orthodontic Treatment in the University at Buffalo Orthodontic Clinic"

Major Professor: David A. Covell, Jr., DDS, PhD

Lojayan Al Muhareb, DMD

"Comparative Analysis of Optical Properties and Biofilm Adhesion Between Direct Printed and Thermoformed Clear Aligners: A Combined In Vitro and In Vivo Study"

Major Professor: Thikriat Al-Jewair, DDS, MBA, MSc, MS, FRCD(C)

Timothy Gerard French Jr., DMD

"Perception and Utilization of Artificial Intelligence in Patient Communication, Diagnosis and Treatment Planning, and Remote Dental Monitoring"

Major Professor: Thikriat Al-Jewair, DDS, MBA, MSc, MS, FRCD(C)

Yasmin Mohamed, BDS

"Impact of Daily Cleaning Protocols on Microplastic Release from 3D-Printed Aligners"

Major Professor: Thikriat Al-Jewair, DDS, MBA, MSc, MS, FRCD(C)

Ryan Michael Prevost, DDS

"Mental Health Conditions and Resource Utilization among Postgraduate Orthodontic Residents: An International Perspective"

Major Professor: Thikriat Al-Jewair, DDS, MBA, MSc, MS, FRCD(C)

Brooke Elizabeth Talsania, DMD

"Comparing Effects of MARPE and SARPE on Maxillary Anterior Root Resorption Utilizing CBCT Radiography"

Major Professor: Ashish Gurav, DMD, PhD

**CERTIFICATES OF
ADVANCED STUDY**

GENERAL DENTISTRY

Toshani Arya, DDS

Gucci Gusun Ding, DMD

Michael Charles Gimotty III, DDS

Johanna Graham, DDS

Amanda Grace Janes, DMD

Zhengdao Daniel Li, DDS, MS

Marie Clare Schaefer, DDS

Jingjing Zhao, DMD

ENDODONTICS

Casey Giarrano, DMD

Christopher Y. Kim, DDS

Lucila Piasecki, DDS, MS, PhD

Monica Romero, DDS, MS

**ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL
PATHOLOGY**

Rahaf Saud Almukhlifi, BDS

Nusrat Jamila Tarannum, BDS

ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

Adarsh Mehta, DMD, MD

ORTHODONTICS

Jeffrey Emmanuel Ajayi, DDS

Lojayan Al Muhareb, DMD

Timothy Gerard French Jr., DMD

Yasmin Mohamed, BDS

Ryan Michael Prevost, DDS

Brooke Elizabeth Talsania, DMD

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

Doris Fenigstein, DDS

Sophia Mazanitis, DMD

Jashandeep Kaur Mundi, DDS

Egan Sachs-Hecht, DMD

Riley Steed, DDS

Joanne Tan, DMD

Jemima Sarah Varughese, DMD

Ethan Wood, DDS

PERIODONTICS

Omar Glover, DMD

Dam Soh, DDS, MS

PROSTHODONTICS

Nada Abdulrahman A. Alsulaiman, BDS

Raveeroch Rakhainiyom, DDS

Thunyanon Wongsuwanakorn, DDS

**TEMPOROMANDIBULAR DISORDERS
AND OROFACIAL PAIN**

Mona Saud S. Aldawsari, BDS

Sarbjeet Singh, BDS, MPH

2026 SENIOR AWARDS

RECOGNIZING SKILL, ACHIEVEMENT
AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Academy of General Dentistry Award
Maxwell Christian Balko

Academy of Operative Dentistry Award
Ross Jared Reddock

**Dr. Joseph A. Accardo Eighth District
Dental Society Award**
Danielle Sudol

**American Academy of
Esthetic Dentistry Award**
Rachel Steffan

**American Academy of
Implant Dentistry Award**
Christopher W. Long

**American Academy of Oral and
Maxillofacial Pathology Award**
Alejandro Caraballo IV

**American Academy of Oral and
Maxillofacial Radiology Award**
Olivia Aren Suzanne Littman

**American Academy of
Oral Medicine Award**
Paul Anthony Bargnesi

American Academy of Orofacial Pain
Isabella Ortega

**American Academy of Pediatric
Dentistry Certificate of Merit
Predoctoral Student Award**
Rachel Steffan

**American Academy of
Periodontology Award**
Olivia Margaret Bird

**American Association of
Endodontists Award**
Ashley Kim

**American Association of Oral and
Maxillofacial Surgeons Award**
John Angelo Germinero

**American Association of
Orthodontists Award**
Ellie Ilene Jarvis
Joseph Dominick Riccardi

**American Association of
Public Health Dentistry Award**
Elizabeth Gu

**American College of Dentists
Outstanding Student Leader Award**
Mark Mikhail

**American College of
Prosthodontists Award**
Danielle Sudol

**American Dental Society of
Anesthesiology Award—Horace Wells
Senior Student Award**
Santino Testani

**American Student Dental Association
Award of Excellence**
Laura Huff

The Barrett Prize Award
Anthony Joseph Blaskovic
Gary Shum
Rachel Steffan

Brasseler USA Esthetic Dentistry Award
Jordan Warner Chatelle

Eleanor Bushee Award
Claire Genevieve Martin

Dean's Award
Elizabeth Gu

Dental Alumni Award
Jordan Warner Chatelle

**Dental Lifeline Network's
Brian D. Stone Memorial Award**
Julia Marie Ophals



COMMENCEMENT

**Erie County Dental Society
Chester A. Glor Award**
Madison Rose Lenhard

Dr. Marshall Fagin Prosthodontic Award
Emily Genovesi

The Pierre Fauchard Academy Award
Anthony Joseph Blaskovic

**Fonzi Dental Study Club, Anthony S.
Gugino Humanitarian Award**
Abel Eskinder Tefera

**Dr. Davis Garlapo Memorial
Prosthodontics Award**
Marta Danyleyko
John Angelo Germinerio
Ross Jared Reddock
Rachel Steffan

**International College of Dentists
Leadership Award**
Laura Huff

**International College of Dentists
Student Humanitarian Award**
Amanda Elizabeth Engel
Olivia Aren Suzanne Littman
Julia Marie Ophals
Alexander Reale
Manuel Romo Crisostomo
Rachel Steffan

**International Congress of
Oral Implantologists Award**
Olivia Margaret Bird

**International Team for Implantology
Award for Excellence in Implant
Dentistry**
Anna Belan

Edwin C. Jauch Award
Cameron Michael Leung Jedemann

Donald Kozlowski Memorial Award
Maxwell Christian Balko

Robert B. Levine Award
1st Place: Anna Belan
2nd Place: Selena Seojin Lee

Eric J. Murawski Memorial Award
Kevin Le

Dr. Russell J. Nisengard Award
Swapnali Shinde Kamble

**New York State
Association of Endodontists**
Mohammed Harb

**New York State Society of Oral and
Maxillofacial Surgeons Student Award**
Grace Perna

**The Northeastern Society of
Periodontists Award**
Anna Belan

**Omicron Kappa Upsilon—
Student Inductees**
Pratiksha Basnet Rayamajhi
Olivia Margaret Bird
Anthony Joseph Blaskovic
Amr Wagih Eldesouky

Ellie Ilene Jarvis
Karanjot Kaur
Olivia Aren Suzanne Littman
Alexander Reale
Joseph Dominick Riccardi
Chlöe Lee Schrier
Rachel Steffan
Danielle Sudol
Zahra Yazdani Kachouei

**Omicron Kappa Upsilon Research
Award**
Joseph Dominick Riccardi

**Pediatric and Community Dentistry
Department Award**
Amanda Elizabeth Engel
Elizabeth Gu
Mark Mikhail

Richard A. Powell Award
Claire Genevieve Martin

Quintessence Awards
Research Achievement: Emily Genovesi
Clinical Achievement in Restorative
Dentistry: Santino Testani
Clinical Achievement in Periodontics:
Laureen M. Bazzi

Lester Schatz Memorial Award
Olivia Aren Suzanne Littman

**Dr. Jeanne Craig Sinkford
Student Leadership Award**
Katherine Gutierrez

George B. Snow Awards

Fixed Prosthodontics:
1st Place: Emily Genovesi
2nd Place: Amr Wagih Eldesouky
Removable Prosthodontics:
1st Place: Mohammed Harb
2nd Place: Biling Chen

**The Special Care Dentistry Association
Student Award**
Julia Marie Ophals

**St. Apollonia Guild Dental Student
Service Award**
Greysy Maria Reyes Paz

Student Affairs Recognition Award
Nirav Arora
Laureen M. Bazzi
Shreya Edulakanti
Amanda Elizabeth Engel
Emily Genovesi
Emily Rose Gola
Laura Huff
Cameron Michael Leung Jedemann
Hassan Khalid
Claire Genevieve Martin
Mark Mikhail

**U.S. Public Health Service
Dental Award of Excellence**
Elizabeth Gu

**Whip Mix Hanau Prosthodontics
Award**
Amr Wagih Eldesouky

BELOW: DEAN ARAUJO AND DR. ANDERS WITH THE SENIOR AWARD RECIPIENTS OF THE CLASS OF 2026. PHOTO BY CASS MCALISTER





WHITE COAT CEREMONIES

WELCOME 120 NEW STUDENTS TO THE SDM

THE IDP CLASS
OF 2028 STANDS
TOGETHER WITH
DEAN ARAUJO.



BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI
PHOTOS BY
CASS MCALLISTER
& JASON CHWRIUT

THE WHITE COAT CEREMONY is an annual rite of passage for incoming students that marks the beginning of their dental school journey. Students are presented with a white coat, a symbol of clinical service and care, and recite the dentist's pledge in unison.

One week after the UBSDM said farewell to the Class of 2026, it welcomed 25 new students during the International Dentist Program (IDP) White Coat Ceremony, held May 8 at the Reikart House in Amherst.

The IDP Class of 2028 hails from all over the world, representing 12 different countries and speaking 16 languages. The cohort includes foreign-trained dentists, a multimedia supervisor, a German language teacher and public health consultant, among other professionals. The students are defined by their dedication to volunteerism

and service, providing thousands of hours of care in dental camps and community health centers.

LATER IN THE SUMMER, 95 incoming students were welcomed to the school at the DDS White Coat Ceremony held Aug. 7 at Slee Hall on North Campus.

The DDS Class of 2030 represents a global community as well. While 85% of incoming students are NYS residents, students were born in or hold citizenship in 16 countries. They speak 25 languages. The class includes former EMTs, teachers, triathletes and a fashion design assistant. The class has dedicated thousands of hours to volunteering and outreach here in Buffalo and around the world.

Welcome, new students! We can't wait to see your journey unfold.



STUDENTS IN THE CLASS OF 2030 DON THEIR WHITE COATS FOR A CLASS PHOTO WITH DEAN ARAUJO.



CLASS OF 2030 INCLUDES 10 DESTINATION DENTAL ALUMS

BY JESSICA SCATES

"Destination Dental School!" is a mantra for prospective dental students hoping to enter the dental profession — and an award-winning pathway program held at the UBSDM since 2021.

Each year, around 25 Destination Dental School fellows participate in a hybrid summer program that provides exposure to dentistry, the dental school application process and research. The program aims to create a pathway for students who may require additional resources and networks to successfully apply to dental school.

Since 2021, five Destination Dental grads have enrolled at the UBSDM. That number is about to triple! This fall, we are pleased to welcome 10 program graduates as incoming first-year dental students. They include representatives from the 2021, 2024, and 2025 cohorts and hail from New Jersey and New York.

On behalf of the UBSDM, welcome back to Buffalo!

FROM DESTINATION DENTAL TO D1, OUR
NEWEST STUDENTS ARE EXCITED TO
BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY AT THE UBSDM!



MEET YOUR NEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, DR. JOHN TIBBETTS

BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI

John Tibbetts, BA '79, DDS '92, Ortho Cert. '94, Oral Sci. MS '94, has been named president of the Dental Alumni Association for the 2026–28 term. A longtime educator, orthodontist and proud UB alum, Tibbetts brings decades of experience and a deep commitment to our school and the association.

Nearly a decade before starting dental school, Tibbetts shaped lives as a math and science teacher, a role that suited his passion for helping others succeed. At age 30, he enrolled at the UBSDM, eventually earning a DDS, master's in oral sciences, and an

orthodontics certificate. Tibbetts credits his wife, Betsey, a 1978 UB graduate, for supporting his career change while raising a young family. The two met through UB and were very active in the alumni community over the course of their long marriage.

Tibbetts entered private practice in 1994 and officially retired in 2022 after Betsey's passing. Stepping away from clinical practice did not mean stepping away from the dental community. In addition to volunteering in the ortho department as clinical faculty for the last 30 years, he served as president of the Eighth District Dental Society and got involved with

“I'm honored to serve as your next president and look forward to maintaining the excellence our association has worked so hard to achieve!”

the Dental Alumni Association.

As his involvement grew, Tibbetts came to deeply appreciate the alumni association's tight-knit community and strong commitment to serving not just alumni but also current dental students, the school and the local dental community.

“From the Buffalo Niagara Dental Meeting to our CE offerings, fundraising efforts, signature events and more, the Dental Alumni Association's impact is only possible because of our strong alumni base,” says Tibbetts. “I'm honored to serve as your next president and look forward to maintaining the excellence our association has worked so hard to achieve!”



2025 BUFFALO BILLS COMMUNITY QUARTERBACK AWARD

Mark E. Mahaney, DDS '82, was chosen as the 2025 Buffalo Bills Community Quarterback, which recognizes a volunteer who exemplifies leadership, dedication, and commitment to giving back to the Western New York community. Dr. Mahaney was nominated by Harvest House for his commitment to patients. In 2025, he provided free dental care to nearly 300 uninsured or underinsured patients.

**UPDATE
YOUR CONTACT
INFORMATION!**



SCAN

EMAIL ss287@buffalo.edu

2026 Hanau Cup is a Family Affair

BY RAYMOND G. MILLER, DDS '85

The 2026 Hanau Cup alumni vs. student hockey game, held in February, was as memorable as all the games that preceded it.

A recent trend is the student team's skill level showing dominance over the more senior alumni. Not only were their abilities greater, but they also played smarter. Early in the competition, Dr. Ray Miller was "intentionally/accidentally(?)" flipped upside down. The students knew getting him out of the game would greatly increase their path to victory. Miller, in 1977, was projected to play in the NHL (had a million players been drafted that year). Despite their best efforts, the remaining alumni were no match for the faster, more skilled students.

An exciting part of the tradition is the generations of UBSDM families who participate. This year, the Boulé family

showed up in full force. Brother and sister Anne Marie Boulé-Spear, DDS '91, and Michael Boulé, DDS '98, represented the family on the alumni team, playing against Michael's daughters, Abigail, DDS '27, and Gillian, DDS '29. Louis Giordano, DDS '91, also had the pleasure of competing against his son Maxwell, DDS '29.

A special thank you to Dr. Michael Gengo, DDS '13, for designing the logo for our new team jerseys and for generously sponsoring the event. Players, along with family, students and alumni spectators, enjoyed a traditional pizza and chicken wing post-game celebration on-site at Riverworks.



ALUMNI DINNER – SCOTTSDALE, AZ

From top left: UBDA President John Tibbetts, DDS '92, Fred Rodems, DDS '80, Richard Lynch, DDS '83, David Stasiak, DDS '83, Raymond Niceforo, DDS '83, Joseph Modica, DDS '82, William Crowe, JD '74, John Mott, DDS '83, Anthony Palombaro, DDS '83, William Marusich, DDS '83 and Jim Tibbetts (nephew) enjoyed another successful annual golf trip. This year's destination was Scottsdale, AZ.



2026 UPCOMING EVENTS

UB Alumni Achievement Awards

UB Center for the Arts
Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026
6–9 p.m.

Homecoming

UB Bulls Football Game

Broadview Arena
Saturday, Sept. 26, 2026
1 p.m. Tailgate
3:30 p.m. Game

Buffalo Niagara Dental Meeting

Buffalo Convention Center
Nov. 4–6, 2026
BNDMeeting.com

REUNION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

This year celebrates the 50-year reunion of the Class of 1976 and the UB dental classes ending in 1s and 6s.

Remember When Reception

Hyatt Regency Buffalo
Thursday, Nov. 5, 2026
5:30–7 p.m.

Dinner Dance Gala

Buffalo Convention Center
Friday, Nov. 6, 2026
6:30 p.m. Cocktails
7:30 p.m. Program & Dinner

Entertainment by Boys of Summer

UB School of Dental Medicine Tour

Squire Hall Atrium
Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026
10–11:30 a.m.

THROW THE MICROSTONE CURLING EVENT

On April 19, 2026, the UBDA hosted the inaugural "Throw the Microstone" curling event at the Buffalo Curling Club. Alumni, students and friends gathered to learn how to throw, sweep and skip their stone to the house target circle, followed by pizza and wings. Thank you to our generous sponsor, Andy Jakson from Evolution Dental Science, for supporting the event and joining on the ice!



TAKING THE OATH

Raymond Miller, DDS '85, Lieutenant Colonel (USAF ret.) and clinical associate professor, administers the Oath of Office to **Ross Reddock, DDS '26**, Lieutenant, U.S. Navy. Reddock reported to Camp Lejeune, NC, for duty in June.

UB BULLS BASKETBALL GAME

The annual **Health Sciences UB Bulls basketball game** and pre-game reception was held Feb. 25 as the Bulls took on the Western Michigan Broncos. This event highlights UB's interprofessional impact on education, research, and patient care. This year, the deans of four health sciences schools attended, including (from left) Dean Annette Wysocki (nursing), Dean Marcelo Araujo (dental), Dean Jean Wactawski-Wende (public health) and Dean Allison Brashear (medicine).



OMICRON KAPPA UPSILON (OKU) CONVOCATION

On April 28, the OKU Lambda Lambda Chapter welcomed their newest alumni, honorary and life members at the annual Convocation and Installation Dinner. Class of 2026 alumni members include Olivia Bird, Anthony Blaskovic, Amr Eldesouky, Ellie Jarvis, Olivia Littman, Alexander Reale, Joseph Riccardi, Chlöe Schrier, Rachel Steffan, Danielle Sudol, Pratiksha Basnet Rayamajhi, Karanjot Kaur and Zahra Yazdani Kachouei. These students were among the top 20% of the Class of 2026 academically and have demonstrated exemplary traits of character and potential qualities of future professional growth and attainments. Dr. Michael Krajewski, PharmD, was inducted as an honorary member. Robert Bochiechio, DDS '92, and Lynn Stacy-Lyndaker, DDS '92, were elevated to Life Member status.



JOHN J. CUNAT LECTURE

The annual **John J. Cunat Lecture** was held at the Westin Buffalo on June 5. Presentations included "Impaction Masterclass: Diagnosis, Timing, Outcomes & Pitfalls," delivered by Dr. Stella Chaushu, vice dean, professor, and chair of the Department of Orthodontics, Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Dental Medicine, and "Struggling with Impacted Canines? Management of Impacted Canines with a Straight Wire Approach Using Passive Self-Ligation Mechanics," delivered by Jeffrey T. Kozlowski, DDS '96, Ortho Cert. '98, who is in private practice in southeastern Connecticut.



2026 UBDAA CLASS REUNION LEADERS

- 1956** John V. Lucchese
- 1961** Roger W. Triftshauser
Richard R. Wilson
- 1966** Joseph P. Rowbottom
- 1976** Stanley L. Zak, Jr.
- 1981** Albert Cantos
Gerald T. Carlo
Kevin A. D'Angelo
Elizabeth A. Schisa-D'Angelo
- 1986** Samuel D. Carocci
Brendan P. Dowd
- 1991** David A. Ball
- 1996** Jeffrey M. Dolgos
- 2006** Jill M. Kramer
Joseph M. Salamon
Lisa M. Yerke
- 2011** William J. D'Angelo
Kathryn C. Korff
- 2016** Amber Shay
James Wanamaker
- 2021** Kelsey Bergeron
Melissa L. Stoj

WILLIAM C. KNAUF JR. MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING

On June 1, the UBDAA teed off at the Transit Valley Country Club for the 33rd annual William C. Knauf Jr. Memorial Golf Outing hosted by the Eighth District Dental Society. Dr. Michael Ragan gave a risk management continuing education course.



inmemoriam

Donald N. Brombacker, DDS '72, passed away at age 86 on Jan. 13, 2026. Donald proudly served his country in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves in 1964. He established a dental practice in Middlefield, CT, in 1974, where he cared for his patients for over 40 years. He was a loving father and proud grandfather who took great pride in his family.

Charles J. DiCosimo II, DDS '74, of Manlius, NY, passed away at age 76 on July 13, 2025. After earning his DDS at the UBSDM, he completed specialty training in oral and maxillofacial surgery at the University of Connecticut and Hartford Hospital. Dr. DiCosimo practiced in Central New York for 40 years. He was a Diplomate of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, a Fellow of the American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, a member of the American Society of Dental Anesthesiology, and a founding member of the Central New York Study Group for Dentofacial Abnormalities. He was respected for his surgical skill and cared deeply for his patients.

Andrea P. DiVernieri Drucker, DDS '86, passed away on Feb. 7, 2024, at age 63, in Staten Island, NY. She was a

beloved wife, mother, mother-in-law, daughter, sister, aunt and friend.

John W. Dueringer, DDS '76, MS Ortho '78, passed away on Feb. 24, 2026. As an engineer, orthodontist and builder, his life was built on hard work, adventure and belief in supporting his friends, family and community.

Harry E. Flynn, DDS '51, Emeritus Faculty and Lifetime Member of Omicron Kappa Upsilon, passed away on March 14, 2026, at the age of 100 in Tonawanda, NY.

Steven J. Goldberg, DDS '70, passed away on March 17, 2026, at the age of 82.

Neal W. Johnson, DDS '64, age 85, passed away on Nov. 22, 2025, in Phelps, NY. Neal faithfully served the Newark community as a dentist for over 40 years as the owner of The Johnson Health Group. Affectionately known as "Doctor Smiley," he greeted everyone with kindness, genuine care, and the warmest smile.

James Charles Leitten, DDS '67, Ortho Cert. '72, passed away on May 17, 2025, in Bradenton, FL. His commitment to excellence in dentistry left a lasting impact on those he served throughout his career. Beyond his professional accomplishments and family life, James found joy in photography and wood-working.

John D. Nystrom, DDS '63, age 89, passed away on March 23, 2026. John enjoyed a long career in dentistry as Houghton, NY's sole dental practice for over 40 years. He served as chair of the Ethics Committee in the Eighth District Dental Society. Over his career, he led and participated in over 30 annual medical/dental mission trips to Haiti.

James W. Olson, DDS '64, passed away at the age of 86 on Dec. 22, 2025. Following graduation from dental school, Dr. Olson was drafted into the U.S. Army Dental Corps. Dr. Olson maintained a dental practice in Lockport for 53 years, serving patients throughout Eastern Niagara and Orleans counties. He was a member of the American Dental Association, the New York Dental Society, the Niagara Dental Society, and the Eighth District Dental Society, from which he earned an award for completing over 1,500 hours of continuing education. He was very skilled in his chosen profession and earned accolades from patients and other dental professionals for his dental artistry.

Norman A. Roswick, DDS '59, passed away peacefully on Feb. 3, 2026, in Omaha, NE. Following graduation from dental school, Norman entered the U.S. Public Health Service as a dentist, serving communities in

Albuquerque, NM, Savannah, GA, and Louisville, KY. He established a successful private dental practice, serving the Norwich, NY, region for many years and later expanding his practice to Cooperstown, NY.

William J. Williams, DDS '59, passed away on Feb. 1, 2026. Dr. Williams was a member of the Omicron Kappa Upsilon Dental Honor Society and the American Dental Association. He was a U.S. veteran, having served as a captain in the Air Force from 1959 to 1961. Dr. Williams owned and operated a dental practice in Fulton from 1961 until retirement. He was an active member of the community and served as a longtime member and past president of Fulton Kiwanis.

Stanley A. Youdelman, DDS '64, passed away on April 10, 2025. He served his community with exceptional care and expertise at Suffolk Oral Surgery Associates. Known for his commitment to oral health and patient well-being, Dr. Youdelman was a respected figure in his field. Dr. Youdelman's career was marked by his passion for dentistry and his ability to connect with patients on a personal level.

FSC LOGO

The University at Buffalo is a premier public research university, the largest and most comprehensive campus in the State University of New York system. The School of Dental Medicine is one of 12 schools that make UB New York's leading public center for graduate and professional education and one of six health science schools that collaborate efforts to push the boundaries of scientific discovery and innovation.



Nov. 4-6, 2026

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Speakers



John C. Cranham,
DDS
Ballroom Speaker



Uche Odiatu,
BA, DMD
Ballroom Speaker



Jorge Vera,
DDS, MS



Anna Paritsky,
DMD, DDS '25, MS '26
Alumni Speaker Series



Kyra Chadbourne,
DDS '08, D-ABDSM
Alumni Speaker Series



Brian B. Nový,
DDS



Marc M. Gottlieb,
DDS '82
Alumni Speaker Series



Jeffrey M. Dolgos,
DDS '96, FAGD, FAACP
Alumni Speaker Series



Ann-Marie C. DePalma,
CDA, RDH, MEd



Stefan Ruhl, DDS, PhD
Robert J. Genco
Distinguished Speaker



Michael Nagai,
DDS '10, MD



Joseph Rumfola, DDS '02 &
Samuel Carocci, DDS '86
Alumni Speaker Series

Courses for the Entire Dental Team!

PUBLIC HEALTH SESSION Fri. 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Gale Burstein, MD, MPH - STIs and Oral Health
Betsy Vazquez-Arudio - Stress Relief Through Mindfulness
Arthur Weissman, MD - Cannabis

FEATURED PROGRAM

Chun Wang (Reinhard) Chau, BDS, MSc, CPH, FICD
Mark Whitefield, DDS, AFAAID, AAACD
Loren King, RDH

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DENTISTRY

Fri. 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Faraz Moharrami, DDS, PhD
Seth Gibree, DMD, FAGD

Presented by: The American Academy of Artificial Intelligence in Dentistry



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