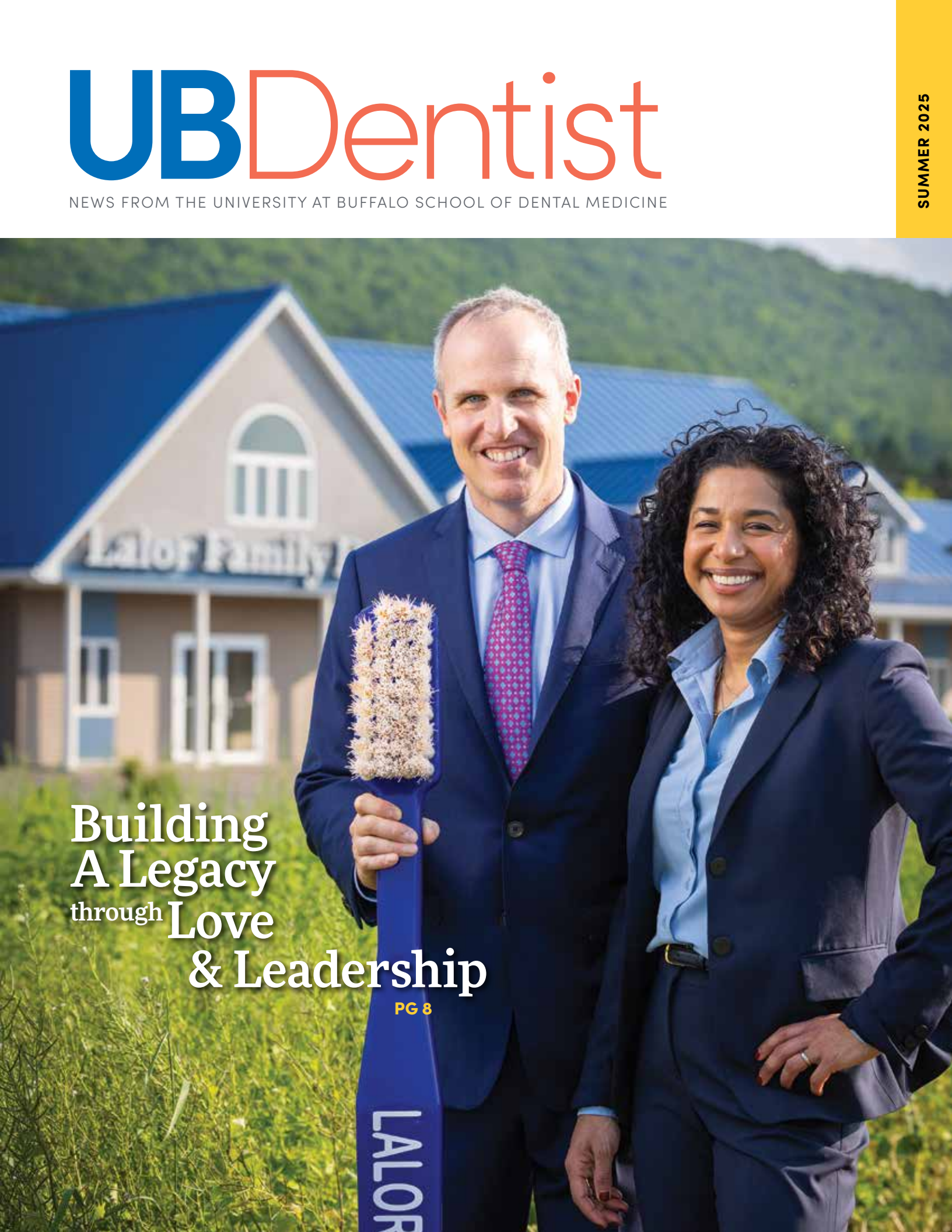


UBDentist

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE

SUMMER 2025



Building A Legacy through Love & Leadership

PG 8



FROM THE DEAN

As a UBSDM alum myself, I know how meaningful these connections can be.

Dear UBSDM family,

One of the best parts of serving as dean is witnessing the lifelong bonds that form in our community. Whenever I see students together—whether they're putting in long hours in B30 or mixing at one of the many social events held throughout the year—I can't help but feel excited about the connections they're making.

As a UBSDM alum myself, I know how meaningful these connections can be. They make the UBSDM more than a place. It's where we come together to pursue our passions and find our purpose, surrounded by people who help us achieve this and more. These experiences make an impression on us for a lifetime. The proof is in our alumni, whose pride and commitment to the UBSDM grows with every year that passes.

In this issue, you'll read about two standout alumni who embody these traits: Dr. Mary John and Dr. Bob Lalor, graduates of the Class of 2000. Their generosity and mentorship have greatly impacted our school and allowed dozens of dental students to find their own path at the UBSDM. As we celebrate their 25-year class anniversary, we're proud to

honor Dr. John and Dr. Lalor with our 2025 Distinguished Alumni Awards.

As we head into the fall, I look forward to reconnecting with you at our many upcoming alumni events. We'll also be welcoming an important milestone this September: our accreditation site visit. Stay tuned for updates as we prepare to showcase the excellence that defines UBSDM—excellence you've helped create.

Until then, stay in touch, stay involved, and always remember that you're a part of the UBSDM family.

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

ON THE COVER:

Class of 2000 alumni Dr. Bob Lalor and Dr. Mary John in front of Lalor Family Dental in Horseheads, NY.

Photo by Douglas Levere

IN THIS ISSUE

SUMMER 2025

UBDentist

News from the University at Buffalo
School of Dental Medicine

UB Dentist is published
twice a year by the School
of Dental Medicine.

Summer 2025 | 25-DEN-001

SDM EDITORIAL GROUP

Dave Donati/Green Soup Design
Art Director and Designer

Laurie Kaiser
Contributing Writer

Judson Mead
Contributing Writer

Cass McAllister
Photographer

Edward J. Morrison
Assistant Dean
& Chief Marketing Officer

Sarah Smykowski
Editorial Director

Sherry Szarowski
Senior Director of Alumni Relations
and Professional Engagement

Office of the Dean
325 Squire Hall
Buffalo, NY 14214-8006
716-829-2836
dental.buffalo.edu

UB Dental Alumni Association
337 Squire Hall
Buffalo, NY 14214-8006
716-829-2061
ss287@buffalo.edu
dental.buffalo.edu/alumni

8

BUILDING A LEGACY

Two Class of 2000 alumni turned their start at UB into a dental empire—and a legacy of generosity.

Lalor

12

DENTISTRY GOES DIGITAL

The dental school is innovating its curriculum through advances in technology.

14

RESEARCH IN FOCUS

Oral health & cannabis use and AI robots among the latest in UBSDM research initiatives.

20

COMMENCEMENT

Caps off to the Class of 2025!

also...

- 4 NEWS BRIEFS
- 7 ADVANCEMENT
- 18 PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE
- 26 ALUMNI NEWS
- 29 IN MEMORIAM

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

1 Spreading smiles across WNY, from Squire Hall to Highmark Stadium

BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI AND LAURIE KAISER

Dental students, faculty and staff stayed busy this spring with several outreach events that made a true impact on the WNY community.

GIVE KIDS A SMILE

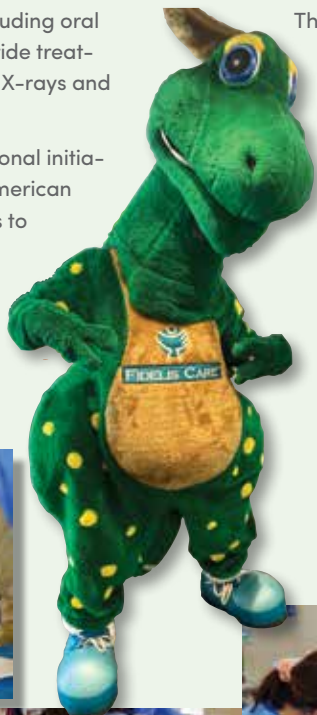
More than 100 preschool and elementary-age children received free dental care and education at Squire Hall during Give Kids a Smile on Feb. 7. In partnership with the SUNY Erie Dental Hygiene Program, the UBSDM offered comprehensive services, including oral exams, screenings, fluoride treatments, fillings, sealants, X-rays and extractions.

The event, part of a national initiative sponsored by the American Dental Association, aims to

eliminate barriers to care and promote positive dental experiences for underserved children. This year's theme, "Be Our Guest for Healthy Smiles," featured interactive activities like "Dress Up Like a Dentist," educational brushing stations and visits from Princess Belle and the Tooth Fairy. The festive environment helped kids feel comfortable while learning important oral hygiene habits.

In addition to the ADA and Colgate, local sponsors included the Eighth District Dental Society, Fidelis Care, Colvin Cleaners and Patterson Dental.

DINOS, TOOTH FAIRIES AND MOLAR BEARS—OH MY! A FULL CAST OF CHARACTERS BROUGHT SMILES TO EVERYONE'S FACES. PHOTOS: CASS MCALLISTER



A SUITE INSIDE HIGHMARK STADIUM WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A DENTAL OFFICE FOR THE DAY, WITH SMILES AND TEAMWORK AROUND EVERY CORNER. PHOTOS: DOUGLAS LEVERE

TEAMSMILE @ THE BUFFALO BILLS

On April 4, over 175 volunteers from the UBSDM, TeamSmile, SUNY Erie Dental Hygiene Program and the Buffalo Bills teamed up at Highmark Stadium to provide free dental care to approximately 235 elementary students from eight local schools. The initiative targeted underserved children, many of whom lack regular dental care, by offering preventive and restorative treatments such as cleanings, fluoride applications, fillings and extractions.

To create a welcoming and enjoyable environment, the event featured appearances by Billy Buffalo, the Bills' mascot, a live DJ, educational games, dental hygiene demonstrations, face painting and more.

For the second consecutive year, the program included children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, integrating occupational therapy to tailor the dental experience to their needs. This part of the event has been so successful that TeamSmile asked the UBSDM to repeat it this year and replicate it in other cities.

This event marked UB's third partnership with TeamSmile, a Kansas City-based nonprofit that connects oral health professionals with athletic organizations to provide dental care to underserved children nationwide. Presenting partners of the Buffalo event included Colgate, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and United Concordia Dental Insurance Co.



UB DENTAL DAY @ THE BELLE CENTER

On March 29, the UBSDM hosted UB Dental Day @ The Belle Center on Buffalo's West Side, providing free preventive dental care to adolescents aged 12 to 17 and their families.

Led by Rubelisa Oliveira, DDS, PhD, MPH '25, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Periodontics and Endodontics, the initiative aimed to improve oral health among underserved youth and gather data on their dental health status. Over 20 volunteers from various fields, including dental, public health, and biomedical sciences, supported the event, which offered fluoride treatments, oral screenings, hygiene kits, referrals for ongoing care, blood pressure and glucose screenings and assistance in finding medical care.

The event emphasized fluoride treatments due to a past discontinuation of Buffalo's

water fluoridation program from 2015 until recently. Many adolescents missed out on fluoride during critical developmental years, increasing their risk for tooth decay. The event also provided education on proper oral hygiene and the importance of regular dental visits.

UB Dental Day was funded by a \$5,000 UB Civic Engagement Research Fund grant, Henry Schein Dental and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

These stories have been edited for length. Read the full versions at dental.buffalo.edu.



VOLUNTEERS FROM THE UBSDM AND OTHER UB UNITS DEVOTED A SATURDAY IN MARCH TO PROVIDING THE WEST SIDE COMMUNITY WITH GREAT CARE. PHOTOS: CASS MCALLISTER



2 Brett Chiquet named chair of pediatric and community dentistry

BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI

Brett T. Chiquet, DDS, PhD, has been named professor and chair of the Department of Pediatric and Community Dentistry. He began in his role on March 27, 2025.



DR. BRETT CHIQUET

He joined UB from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Dentistry, where he was an associate professor of pediatric dentistry. Chiquet spent more than a decade of his career in various clinical and academic settings at UTHealth School of Dentistry.

He joined the school's Department of Pediatric Dentistry in 2013 as an assistant professor and was promoted to associate professor in 2020. Chiquet also served as the department's director of research.

While at UTHealth, Chiquet led initiatives to enhance clinical practices, educational programs and research collaborations. He taught a variety of pre- and postdoctoral courses in addition to serving as a research

mentor and advisor for residents, predoctoral and master's students.

Chiquet's research focuses on patient safety and multidisciplinary approaches to patient care. He earned a DDS and PhD from UTHealth, where he also completed his advanced certificate in pediatric dentistry.

As chair, Chiquet will be responsible for the department's overall administration and driving its strategic priorities. He will work closely with the dental school's administration to implement innovative academic, clinical care and research programs.

"Dr. Chiquet brings a dynamic vision and demonstrated commitment to excellence to the role of chair of our pediatric and community dentistry department," said Marcelo Araujo, DDS, MS '99, PhD '03, dean of the dental school. "I have no doubt that his leadership will strengthen the department's impact both within the school and the communities we serve."

Chiquet is a member of the American Cleft Palate Craniofacial Association, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the

American Dental Education Association (ADEA). He participated in the ADEA Emerging Leaders program in 2024. He also served as a reviewer for several academic journals, including the Journal of the American Dental Association, Caries Research, Pediatrics, and the International Journal of Oral and Dental Health.

The Department of Pediatric and Community Dentistry provides expert clinical care to pediatric patients up to age 18 and offers world-class education and training to predoctoral dental students and residents. Michael Markiewicz, MD, DDS '08, MPH, professor and Feagans Endowed Chair of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, had served as interim chair of the department since August 2024.

"I wish to thank Dr. Markiewicz for his outstanding leadership as interim chair and Dr. Meelin Dian Chin Kit-Wells for her steadfast dedication as program director," Araujo said. "Their commitment to our faculty, students and residents were invaluable during a transitional time. We are excited for the future and the opportunities ahead."

3 White Coat Ceremony marks beginning of journey

BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI

The UBSDM celebrated incoming International Dentist Program (IDP) students and the DDS Class of 2029 during their White Coat Ceremonies held in May and August. The ceremony is a rite of passage that marks the beginning of dental school and welcomes them as future oral health professionals. Congratulations to all students embarking on this exciting journey!



DDS STUDENTS (LEFT) AND IDP STUDENTS (BELOW).
PHOTOS BY CASS MCALLISTER





AMPLIFY YOUR SUPPORT: MATCHING GIFT OPPORTUNITY



Now through the end of March 2026, your support for the School of Dental Medicine will go even further by generating a 50% matching gift from New York State.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS.

When an individual makes a commitment of \$10,000 or more to an existing or new endowed fund at UB, New York State will provide a 50% match. If the commitment is between \$10,000 and \$24,999, the pledge will benefit the President's Fund for Excellence at the university. For commitments of \$25,000 or more, donors can direct where they would like the funds to go.

"We had a donor who recently committed to establish a scholarship at the \$100,000 level," says Neil Dengler, senior director of advancement for the School of Dental Medicine.

"It's important to note that a commitment doesn't need to be paid all at once. We have plenty of donors who will commit and pay off a pledge over a term of years. The commitment locks in the matching funds and, as gifts are made, the matching gifts follow." In this scenario, once fully funded, this will create a new endowed scholarship that will be funded with \$150,000.

Also important to note, donors can support the school with gifts of cash, appreciated securities and even IRA assets in some instances. "Endowments are extremely important to our school," adds Dengler. "We have been fortunate enough to have a number of donors who have set up endowments to benefit student scholarships and awards, support faculty and even endow chairs."

To learn more about this unique opportunity to give back, please contact Neil Dengler, senior director of advancement, at ndengler@buffalo.edu or 716-881-7486.



Building A Legacy through Love & Leadership

Class of 2000 alumni Dr. Mary John and Dr. Bob Lalor turned their start at UB into a dental empire—and a legacy of generosity.

BY JUDSON MEAD

PHOTOS BY DOUGLAS LEVERE



Assigned seats alphabetically in the preclinical lab, first-year student Bob Lalor, DDS '00, sat directly behind his future wife, Mary John, DDS '00.

They started dating the next year. They were a couple by their fourth year, but decided not to apply for a “couples” residency match in order to preserve their educational independence. Separately, they both matched at Nassau Memorial Hospital on Long Island.

Bob finished his residency and moved home to the Binghamton, NY, area to join his father's practice. After staying at Nassau Memorial for a second year as chief resident, Mary joined Bob in Binghamton, they married and she started practicing across town.

A little more than 20 years later, they're still practicing—but now have more than 250 employees.

And they share their success. The couple made a gift to the UBSDM to create the Lalor Family Conference Room in the UBSDM's preclinical suite. Starting next year, through yet more generosity, a Lalor Family Scholarship will benefit students from the Broome County, NY, region—the home of Lalor Family Dental.

In recognition of their accomplishments, Mary John and Bob Lalor have been named 2025 UB Distinguished Alumni.

“Mary and Bob embody the best of UB,” said Marcelo Araujo, DDS, MS '99, PhD '03, dean of the dental school. “They are superb clinicians, visionary leaders and compassionate mentors who have never forgotten where they came from. Their generosity uplifts our school and inspires future generations of dentists.”

Lalor Family Dental, the multi-specialty group practice they've built, with three primary and two satellite practice sites in the Binghamton area and a newer location in Syracuse, looks like the vision in a textbook business plan.

Actually, it started as the Lalors' reaction to a natural disaster.

MANY UB DENTAL GRADS HAVE GONE ON TO PRACTICE AT LALOR FAMILY DENTAL. FROM LEFT: BETSEY CLARK-FORTIER, DDS '99; STEPHEN MCKEE, DDS '09; MARY JOHN, DDS '00; BOB LALOR, DDS '00, AND BRYANT LAMBERT, DDS '99.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST



BELOW: DR. JOHN AND DR. LALOR MET WITH STUDENTS AT THE UBSDM IN OCTOBER 2024, INCLUDING A FEW WHO WORKED AS DENTAL ASSISTANTS AT LALOR FAMILY DENTAL BEFORE ENTERING DENTAL SCHOOL. FROM LEFT: DR. BOB LALOR, DR. MARY JOHN, SHREYA NIPPANI, CLAIRE LOUGHLIN, PRIYA DESAI, AIDAN STEVENS



In 2010, Mary and Bob borrowed to purchase Bob's father's practice and expand the practice site. Then, in September 2011, Tropical Storm Lee flooded the Binghamton area, including Vestal, NY, where the practice was located.

"I realized I was responsible for the whole nut," Bob remembers. The practice could easily have washed away, leaving nothing but the debt. He started looking for a second site well above the waterline. "That was the genesis of our second office," Bob says. "Our 'vision' was safety."

Mary was the dentist at the second site, seeing patients a few days a week. They added a dentist and went to five days a week. After a year, the office was paying for itself. So they said, "Hey, let's try it again." Every few years since, they've grown.

"When you're in it, you don't necessarily appreciate where you are," says Mary. "But when I step back, I have to say, yes, we've been successful."

Bob and Mary play distinct roles on their executive team of two. "I'm the 'dentist' dentist and the business and finance guy," Bob says. "Mary is the communicator, the relationship person." As the group was growing, Mary occasionally filled in for Bob at staff meetings and eventually took over the role. "For the sake of my ego, I guess, no one said to me, 'Mary's better at this,'" Bob says. "But she is."

They both continue to see patients. When they opened Syracuse Family Dental in 2023, after converting a building that had once been an Outback Steakhouse, they were its first dentists, driving an hour and half each way.

Their business may not have had a textbook origin, but it thrives on classic business principles. First, as the Lalor Family Dental mission says, "to be the best in town."

Long before Lalor Family Dental was more than Bob and his father, Bob had set out to be the best version of who he could be as a clinician. He earned his Academy of General Dentistry Mastership, absorbing more than 1,000 hours of CE courses. As a young business owner, he sought out conferences, consultants, readings—anything to help himself get it right.

On the soft skills side of the business, Mary says that if they focus on building the best possible team, they don't have to worry about the patient experience because they can rely on the team they've built to deliver that.

As for growth, according to Mary, they don't see a limit on the horizon. "We grow to the ability we can handle things," Bob Lalor says. "We won't put the brakes on for any reason other than what the business demands."

Lalor Family Dental's biggest challenge is recruiting dentists to keep up with growth. They have a few dentists who commute from the New York City area a few days a week. They've hired dentists into the group who are stepping back from running their own practices. They make themselves an attractive place to practice, advertising that their "doctors only do what only doctors can do." They actively recruit with visits to dental schools.

And they grow their own recruits. Lalor Family Dental has, so far, sent 35 employees on to dental school, a matter of great pride to Bob and Mary. They are a large workplace where graduates of SUNY Binghamton, Mary's undergraduate alma mater, and other colleges in the area can test their interest in dentistry.

Bob says they're happy to hire motivated young people interested in dentistry who they know will probably be gone in a year. Even though the churn has its costs, "I'd rather have a really good person for a year than someone with less to offer us for longer."

Two of their success stories, Justin Sbarra, DDS '20, and LJ Camacho, DDS '21, practice with the group today.

Sbarra, a SUNY Oswego graduate, didn't get into dental school on his first try straight from college. He went to work at Lalor and a year later was accepted at four schools, including UB.



Bob admits to maybe a nudge toward UB. "I don't really have to sell UB," he says, "it sells itself." Sbarra did his residency at St. Joseph's Health Hospital in Syracuse, with Mary as his supervisor.

"You know they always have your best interest in mind," Sbarra says about Mary and Bob.

Camacho wasn't sure what career path he wanted when he went to work at Dinosaur Dental, the Lalors' pediatric dental practice, as a sterilization assistant in 2015. "The rest is history," he says.

Six years later, he graduated from UB's dental school. After a two-year pediatric dentistry residency at the Eastman Institute for Oral Health in Rochester, he's back at Dinosaur as Dr. Camacho.

That provides some of the motivation for the Lalors' generosity toward the UBSDM. "We're dentists," Mary says, "so it makes sense to give to a place that creates dentists." She describes her parents as "quietly" generous and that she grew up following that pattern of behavior.

In 2021, the Lalors accepted a role as UBSDM campaign committee representatives in UB's successful Boldly Buffalo campaign.

Bob says he was introduced to the concept of regular philanthropy as a way of life when he was a young dentist. In the past 20 years, as he's lived that life, his and Mary's ability to give has grown with their success. But the giving isn't so automatic that it doesn't require the effort of choice.

"Even now," he says, "there is always an excuse not to give, a pending expense for something you really need in the business. I try to live up to how we can do it, rather than how we can avoid it."

Mary puts their approach this simply: "If we can give, we do." **UBD**



Lalor Family Dental has, so far, sent 35 employees on to dental school, a matter of great pride to Mary and Bob.



NOT THAT LONG AGO,

A DENTIST WOULD FILL A PATIENT'S MOUTH WITH A GOOPY MIXTURE OF ALGINATE OR SILICONE TO CREATE A MOLD FOR IMPLANTS, CROWNS OR BRACES. IT WAS MESSY, TIME-CONSUMING AND NOT ALWAYS 100% PRECISE.

DENTISTRY GOES DIGITAL

INTEGRATION OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CURRICULUM PREPARES STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE OF DENTAL CARE.

BY LAURIE KAISER

PHOTOS BY CASS MCALLISTER

Change the color scale of clearance by dragging inside the scale

Switch View

Done

Direction

Clearance

Annotations

Shade Measure

Tools

A L I E N W A R E

TODAY,

thanks to advances in digital dentistry, such practices have largely been replaced by scans, which are less invasive. Cone beam computed tomography (CBCT), for instance, allows dentists to gather a comprehensive baseline record and virtually plan a variety of dental treatments.

This is one of a host of digital dentistry technology that students are learning at the UB School of Dental Medicine.

"Many dentists use digital technology in their workflow, and labs rely on it, too," says Joseph DeLuca, DDS '07, clinical associate professor of restorative dentistry who also directs the school's Preclinical Simulation Laboratory and practices dentistry locally. "If you're not using it in some way, you're falling behind."

UB dental students are well ahead of the game. Starting as early as their first year, they're immersed in a range of digital and artificial intelligence (AI) concepts, primarily through two courses: Introduction to Digital Dentistry and Clinical Dentistry II.

In Clinical Dentistry II, Dr. DeLuca teaches students how to take clinical impressions, both analog and digital, as well as how to master various dental injections. During the students' third-year rotation, they plan implant surgical



guides using a CBCT and digital scan, which ensure that surgeries go exactly as planned.

"All students are being trained in the preclinical facility," he said. "They learn how to use these digital technologies to create a crown, a denture, an implant surgical guide, or the implant crown itself."

STUDENTS LEARN BEST WITH 3D TOOLS

DeLuca also teaches Introduction to Digital Dentistry, with other sections taught by two colleagues in the Department of Periodontics and Endodontics, Lucila Piasecki, DDS '22,

PhD, clinical associate professor, and Mohini Ratakonda, BDS, MDS, Endo. Cert. '23, clinical assistant professor.

In this course, first- and second-year students use AI and try their hand at 3D-mapping to plan procedures like implants and root canals.

"The internal anatomy of teeth is highly complex. Understanding its structure and variations is crucial for the success of many dental procedures, including fillings, post placements and root canal treatments," said Piasecki. "Virtual models allow students to grasp the concepts more effectively than standard X-rays or images in textbooks."

Last year, Piasecki invested in a paid application that allows users to visualize and manipulate virtual models of real teeth with augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) using smartphones or tablets.

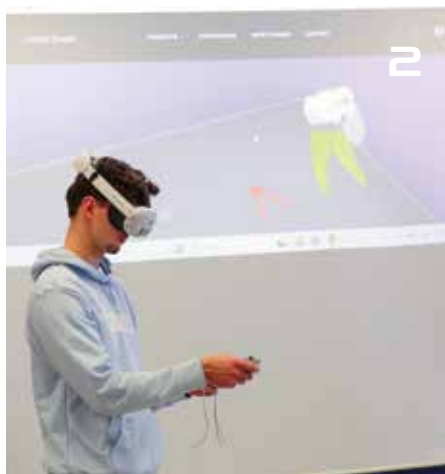
PILOT PROJECT USING AR AND VR

Piasecki wanted to share the technology with her students, so she tapped Cynthia Tysick, the UB librarian for Innovative Pedagogy and Creative Spaces. Tysick helped Piasecki create her pilot project, "Multi-Dimensional Learning: Using 3D-Printing, Augmented Reality, and Virtual Reality to Teach Dental Anatomy in Endodontics."

Tysick was able to provide the dental school with several of the library's Meta Quest 3 headsets (VR goggles), allowing the students to have an immersive experience to visualize and interact with the tooth models.

For the pilot, Piasecki and Ratakonda presented a lecture, then showed students the same 3D models of teeth as printed prototypes, using an AR application, and finally, had them try out the VR goggles. The main difference is the level of immersion. While the VR goggles create a digital environment that replaces the real world, the AR overlays the models onto the real world.

Students reported the AR and VR experiences as highly engaging, saying they helped them understand dental anatomy better, and made them more excited to learn. Some students noted that the 3D-printed models offered a valuable tactile component.



"The generation that grew up playing interactive video games wants to go beyond PowerPoint presentations and experience learning in three dimensions," Ratakonda noted. "If we keep teaching them with the old methods, they don't get it."



BENEFIT FOR PROFESSIONAL DENTISTS

Two of the top reasons dental professionals are embracing digital dentistry are cost and time savings. While some of the digital scanners run into tens of thousands of dollars on the front end, dentists will save money in the long run, DeLuca said.

"You're no longer buying materials to take impressions, which are really expensive. You're saving on the lab work as well," he said. "You can just send the digital file to the lab or you can mill it yourself in-house, which also save time. When I mill my crowns in my office, I prepare the scans, design the tooth and cement it all in a two-hour window. A patient shows up to the appointment and leaves two hours later with the final crown. And the placement is more precise."

GOING SLOW AND LEARNING FUNDAMENTALS

DeLuca said they try to slowly introduce students to emerging technologies, rather than unveiling everything all at once.

"We give them baby steps," DeLuca said. "By the time they graduate, they'll know what technology is available and how to use it," he said. "And when they have their own practice, they can decide if they want to invest in the equipment."

At the same time, DeLuca insists that his student also learn hands-on, analog methods, which not all restorative dental programs require.

"I tell my students, 'Yes, AI and digital programs streamline a lot of the lab work. But if they are streamlined wrong, we as clinicians need to be able recognize the errors,'" he said. "If you're expecting the computer to do your work for you, you're going to get bad results. So, understanding those fundamentals is still really important." **UBD**

This story has been edited for length. Read the full versions at dental.buffalo.edu.

1 A PREDOCTORAL STUDENT PRACTICES USING AN INTRAORAL SCANNER TO CAPTURE IMAGES OF THE "PATIENT'S" TEETH. **2** VR GOGGLES, LIKE THE META QUEST 3 HEADSET, CREATE A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT. THIS ONE FEATURED GIANT MOLARS! **3** THE AR APPLICATION PLACED MODELS OF TEETH IN THE REAL-LIVE CLASSROOM, ALLOWING STUDENTS TO EXPLORE THEM FROM ALL ANGLES.

Frequent cannabis use can lead to cavities, severe tooth loss, according to UB study

Dental school professor's research published in Journal of the American Dental Association



ELLYCE CLONAN, DDS, CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRIC AND COMMUNITY DENTISTRY

BY LAURIE KAISER

IT'S LONG BEEN KNOWN that smoking cannabis can lead to problems in the lungs, heart and brain.

Ellyce Clonan, DDS, clinical assistant professor, Department of Pediatric and Community Dentistry, has identified another health problem linked to frequent recreational cannabis (FRC) use: tooth decay and severe tooth loss.

An article detailing her findings was featured on the cover of the January 2025 issue of the Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA).

Clonan, who joined the dental school faculty in fall 2024, spotted the association between cannabis and tooth decay while completing her Dental Public Health Residency Program at Jacobi Medical Center in Bronx, New York.

As part of the intake questionnaire at the public clinic where she worked, patients would often answer "no" when asked if they smoked, Clonan said. However, when she gave them home instructions following a tooth extraction such as, "no fried foods and no smoking," an important truth often would be revealed.

"They'd tell me, 'Well, I do smoke cannabis,'" she said.

STUDY LOOKS AT FREQUENT CANNABIS SMOKERS

To explore the possible connection, Clonan, who is also a consultant for the ADA, used a cross-sectional study analyzing data obtained from 5,656 adults ages 18-59 who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) between 2015 and 2018.

She discovered that people who reported smoking cannabis at least once a month for more than a year had a 17% higher chance of having untreated coronal caries (cavities), 55% higher odds of root surface caries and 41% higher odds of severe tooth loss compared with patients who did not smoke marijuana after controlling for age, sex, race or ethnicity, education, income or alcohol consumption.

"The surveys only focused on smoking cannabis, not other use such as edibles," Clonan said.

"When you smoke cannabis, you're literally putting fire near your mouth, which is never good. It causes dry mouth, which can lead to tooth decay. Saliva protects you from dental caries."

Two other factors may contribute to cavities and tooth loss: the high-fat snacks, sugary foods and drinks people typically consume when they use cannabis and poor brushing habits while under the influence, she said.

LITTLE RESEARCH IN THIS AREA

The effect of cannabis use on oral health has been on Clonan's radar for a while, she said, since numerous states, including New York, have legalized marijuana, and recreational use has skyrocketed.

"I saw a gap in the dental research compared with the medical field," she said, "so I decided to pursue this study."

All the information was self-reported, so Clonan suspects FRC use is higher than the surveys reveal.

"Someone in New York might be more forthcoming compared to someone in Alabama who might worry about who is looking at the survey," she said.

The average age of the study's respondent was 39. Clonan noted, however, that FRC use was reported from respondents across all ages, races and socioeconomic levels.

These findings reflect a national trend, Clonan added.

Cannabis use in adults 65 and older jumped by 75% over a three-year period, according to a recent report in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Meanwhile, according to a 2023 study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the percentage of young adults (ages 19-30), who reported past-year marijuana use and daily marijuana use reached their highest levels ever.

While smoking cannabis may lead to oral health problems, Clonan said she doesn't want to convey that the drug is inherently bad and patients shouldn't use it. Cannabis, she pointed out, can serve as a therapeutic agent for numerous diseases and disorders, from cancer to anxiety.

"Yes, we want to educate our patients about the dangers of smoking, but we want to treat their use with kindness and understanding," she said. "The results of the survey also indicate we need to tailor our advice."

For instance, a person smoking either cigarettes or cannabis needs to drink a lot of water afterward. If their appetite increases after smoking cannabis, it's preferable that they eat all in one sitting versus snacking over time, which Clonan said is more detrimental to oral health.

"I'd also tell them to avoid sugary, sticky foods and remember to brush after eating, even while under the influence of cannabis," she said.

LONGITUDINAL STUDY NEEDED FOR MORE DEFINITIVE ANSWERS

These lifestyle changes should decrease the chances of cannabis smokers losing their teeth, she said. Also, dental offices can help by making their intake questionnaires more specific.

"In addition to asking about tobacco use, they could ask, 'Do you use cannabis?' 'How often?'" she said. "Knowledgeable providers will be better equipped to identify and address the adverse outcomes associated with FRC use, and in turn, give better advice to their patients."

In the future, Clonan said she would like to conduct a longitudinal study with more surveys and interviews with patients to gauge the effect their cannabis habits have on their oral health over a prolonged period.

"This recent study was just a snapshot in time, so we can't completely determine cause and effect of the cannabis use and the caries and tooth loss," she said. "More research is definitely needed."

Robot demonstrates dental implant procedures

The latest in artificial intelligence (AI) dentistry came to the UBSDM in March in the form of a robot with a winsome name.



DENTAL STUDENTS MET THE YOMI IMPLANT ROBOT IN DIEFENDORF HALL IN MARCH 2025. THIS EXPERIENCE WAS ORGANIZED BY NATHALIA ANDRADE WITH YOMI REP JASON GOLDEN. PHOTOS BY DOUGLAS LEVERE

BY LAURIE KAISER

UB DENTAL STUDENTS had the opportunity to interact with Yomi, a robot that assists with implant surgery, and experimented with cutting-edge software during the “AI Implant Immersion Experience” held on the South Campus in March.

Nathalia Andrade, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Periodontics and Endodontics, organized the event with help from members of the dental school’s student-led Innovation and Technology Club.

A representative from the technology company Yomi by Neocis demonstrated how the robot can assist with implant surgery with an artificial bone block simulation exercise.

“Yomi is the first and only FDA-cleared robotic system for dental surgery,” said Andrade, who has embraced AI as an advantageous tool in her field. Last year, she received a \$5,000 seed grant from UB’s Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation to create a new course weaving AI into periodontics. This year, she received an additional \$5,000 grant as an AI fellow to continue her projects and help with others at the university.

When she saw Yomi at a conference last year, Andrade said she knew she had to bring it to the dental school. Already, Yomi robots have been used in more than 70,000 implant procedures throughout the country.

“We were thrilled to have the chance to see how this robot can assist with delicate and complex implant procedures,” Andrade said. “This isn’t the future—it’s the present. Our students need to understand and feel comfortable using AI technology as they prepare to launch their careers.”

On the first day of the event, 50 participants, from second-year dental students to residents, got a chance to train with the robot, which has an arm connected to a handpiece.



“Yomi lets you know the ideal position to place the implant and the exact depth to drill,” Andrade said. “The robot will not allow the dentist to make a mistake, such as going too far inside the bone and damaging a critical nerve.”

As amazing as this robot is, she said its skills don’t replace that of a dental professional.

“You always need humans to give instructions to the robot,” she stressed. “When given the instructions, the robots can help by making our work more efficient and precise. They also reduce anxiety for dentists because they can prevent mistakes.”

On the second day, 40 participants were divided into two sessions: one focused on basic skills for dental students and the other on advanced skills for residents in periodontics, oral surgery and prosthodontics, where Andrade demonstrated software that plans the location of implants.

The students came to the event, scheduled late in the afternoon both days, following their clinical work, Andrade noted.

“I wasn’t sure if they would want to stay the whole time, and I was impressed that they did,” she said. “In fact, after working with the robot and trying out the new software, the dental students didn’t want to leave. They were so engaged.”

Restorative dentistry faculty receive UB seed grants for AI-related projects

Awards meant to encourage generative AI in courses, curricular redesign



LEFT: DR. AHMET ORGEV IN THE CLINIC. RIGHT: DR. ADAIAS MATOS IN THE CLASSROOM. PHOTOS BY DOUGLAS LEVERE

BY LAURIE KAISER

TWO UBSDM FACULTY MEMBERS have each been awarded \$5,000 seed grants from UB's Division of Academic Affairs through the Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation (CATT) to explore creative ways to use artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom and in their field.

The seed grants, which funded 10 new projects across UB for 2024-25, are meant to encourage faculty to integrate generative AI into their courses and curricular redesign.

Ahmet Orgev, DDS, clinical associate professor of restorative dentistry, is developing virtual reality (VR) goggles to plan for dental implant rehabilitation and other dental prosthetics more precisely as well as communicate treatment plans with patients. He also envisions teaching his students to use this technology.

Meanwhile, Adaias Matos, DDS, PhD, clinical assistant professor of restorative dentistry, is focusing on ways to use AI to create interactive lectures and personalized assessments.

HELPING PATIENTS ENVISION NEW SMILES

Orgev, who also serves as director of UB's Buhite-DiMino Center for Implant Dentistry and Advanced Dental Education, said the VR goggles would allow for streamlined implant planning and placement in the future and would reduce the possibility for human error. At the same time, he said this technology would give patients the chance to see their future smile

designs before they start their treatment, which will likely motivate them to undergo the procedures and be pleased with the results.

"It's everybody's dream to use these fancy goggles, and they are especially attractive to this generation of dental students who grew up with interactive video games," Orgev said. "In gaming, the high-quality graphics create a dynamic environment that feels like it's real. In dentistry, we can use AI to give patients real lifelike experiences with the goggles and simulate what they will be able to achieve at the end of the treatment. Technology is always tempting, and at UB we are lucky to utilize it at a cutting-edge level."

SAVING FACULTY TIME IN THE CLASSROOM

Matos says he wants to use AI to assist in providing individual assessments to students, especially in larger classes. Working specifically with his course, Fixed Prosthodontics, he would like to implement an AI program to help students improve their coursework in real time.

"For example, in the middle of a recorded lecture, I would give students a quiz," he explained. "If they do not perform well, AI will provide the next question based on their performance. It provides a second chance for these students."

Matos adds that his vision for using AI in the classroom would streamline teaching and help faculty members lighten their workloads.

"I plan to create an AI assistant to help provide feedback to students by integrating the current book chapter and lecture materials," he explained. "Student responses will be generated based on this content, and I will review and refine them to ensure accuracy before sharing. This approach is crucial in my class of 120 students, as it enables me to deliver accurate and timely answers to all of my students' questions."

GRANT PROVIDES MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES

Orgev and Matos both said they are grateful for the seed grants and the chance to work with faculty across disciplines through the CATT office, which offers trainings and the chance to share their research.

"Prior to this, there hasn't really been an opportunity for us to collaborate," Orgev said. "We were working on our own projects and not understanding one another because we speak different professional languages and use different terminology. The seed grant project helps us to understand each other's worlds and then see where we can bridge the gap."

"The seed grants provide a great opportunity for UB faculty early in their careers," Orgev said. "It's important to start with a smaller grant, such as this one, and learn the process. In the long run, working under this seed grant will allow us to apply for bigger grants because we can show what we are able to achieve and that we're ready for the next level."

Student Research Day celebrates innovation and discovery

Student researchers take an active role in advancing understanding of oral health



PHOTO BY CASS MCALLISTER

BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI

GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH is happening within the UB School of Dental Medicine, and it's being conducted by students at all academic levels, from undergraduates to postdoctoral fellows. The UBSDM celebrated their discoveries at the 2025 Student Research Day held on Feb. 20 in UB's Center for the Arts.

Rows of posters on display highlighted compelling work in biomaterials, salivary gland development, community water fluoridation and other critically important areas. Each of the 68 poster presentations represented a unique perspective in approaching a question or challenge in oral health and dentistry.

Student Research Day, an annual event, upholds a tradition of research excellence within the School of Dental Medicine, which is currently ranked No. 9 in the nation in support from the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. "I am proud of the significant contri-

butions our students have made to enhance our understanding of oral health and the practice of clinical dentistry," said Marcelo Araujo, DDS, MS '99, PhD '03, dean of the dental school.

This year, the school welcomed keynote speaker William Giannobile, DDS, MS, DMedSc, dean and A. Lee Loomis, Jr. Professor of Oral Medicine, Infection and Immunity at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine. His presentation, "Precision Dentistry: AI and Omics to Improve Clinical Care," offered new insights into technologies and advancements that are shaping the future of oral health research.

The event was a success thanks to the efforts and leadership of Keith Kirkwood, DDS, PhD Oral Bio. '97, senior associate dean for research, Imon Candelaria, PhD, program coordinator, research operations and advanced degree programs, and the many staff and volunteers who made the day possible.

2025 STUDENT RESEARCH DAY POSTER AWARDS

UB UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

POC Smiles Award supported by Academic Affairs | **Jorge Ortega**

DENTAL STUDENTS

AADOCR/Dentsply Sirona SCADA* | **Zofia Rozmus**

Hinman Student Research Symposium Award* | **Barinder Singh**

James English Award for Predoctoral Students | **Jennifer Okewunmi**

UB School of Dental Medicine, Department of Oral Biology Award | **Jooyoung James Lee**

Maryanne Mather Clinical Research Award (Predoc)* | **Julianna Castle**

Frank A. Scannapieco Oral Biology Research Award | **Emily Genovesi**

MASTER'S STUDENTS

James English Award for Advanced Education and/or MS Students | **Dam Soh**

DOCTORAL STUDENTS

James English Award for PhD Students | **Sheta Biswas**

Ernest J. Hausmann Oral Biology PhD Research Award | **Theresa Wrynn**

CLINICAL RESIDENTS

Russell J. Nisengard Advanced Programs Research Award | **Hosam Zebda**

Maryanne Mather Clinical Research Award* | **David Feere**

CLINICAL FELLOWS, VOLUNTEER SCHOLARS, AND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

UB School of Dental Medicine Award (Postdoc) | **Lu Li**

Paul Ziarnowski Award for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Research | **Andrew Jiang**

AADOCR Student Research Day Award* | **Christian Ahearn**

*indicates travel award

peoplewhoinspire.

CELEBRATING THE EXTRAORDINARY STORIES OF PEOPLE OF THE UBSDM

Dr. Dian puts heart and passion into treatment of patients with disabilities



MEELIN DIAN CHIN KIT-WELLS IN SQUIRE HALL. PHOTO BY DOUGLAS LEVERE

BY LAURIE KAISER

When the megahit “Let It Go” was released in 2013, Meelin Dian Chin Kit-Wells DDS ’94, Pedo. Cert. ’00, MEd, knew she had found the perfect song to sing to patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who are feeling anxious.

“Nothing banishes anxiety like ‘Let It Go,’” says Chin Kit-Wells, who is known to many as “Dr. Dian.” A longtime dental school faculty member, she retired from the Department of Pediatric and Community Dentistry in summer 2025.

Singing is just one of many tools Chin Kit-Wells uses for calming and reassuring patients who are on the autism spectrum or who have other sensory and auditory processing disorders that make a visit to the dentist frightening. She has draped patients with lead aprons as a type of weighted blanket, offered noise cancellation headphones during drilling procedures, and even accompanied reluctant patients from the parking lot to the dental office.

To Chin Kit-Wells, treating patients with IDD is second nature, a heartfelt skill she has honed over more than two decades.

“I am always stunned when people ask me where I get my passion to care for those with disabilities,” she says. “What I feel is a passion to care for people. And I don’t see the difference if my patient happens to be a person using a wheelchair or a person on the autism spectrum.

When you focus on providing care that is person-centered, you’re focusing on that patient as much as the treatment.”

EXPANDING PASSION TO NATIONAL LEVEL

Chin Kit-Wells shares her passion nationwide as the president of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD), a nonprofit organization with more than 1,000 members. Elected in June 2024, she will serve in this role through June 2026.

AADMD supports professionals who provide clinical care to people with disabilities through online classes, resources and conferences. The group also supports student chapters in medical and dental schools, including UB.

PROMOTING AWARENESS AND ACCESS

Chin Kit-Wells notes that awareness is one of the top barriers to care.

“Dentists and physicians sometimes feel they are not equipped to treat people with disabilities,” she says. “They don’t want to hurt anybody and are concerned they haven’t had enough training. AADMD offers training.”

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

As a clinical associate professor, Chin Kit-Wells aimed to equip students with the confidence and passion needed to care for patients with IDD.

Individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability are invited to speak at

“I want to help dental professionals understand that treating patients with disabilities is not difficult.”

MEELIN DIAN CHIN KIT-WELLS

lectures for first-year dental students. First-year students participate in an outreach program with a local school that serves children with disabilities. In their second year, students take a communication class where they learn about interdisciplinary communication and the positive effects of collaborative care.

Chin Kit-Wells says she’d like to work to ensure a higher percentage of future dentists become involved with the IDD population through treatment, advocacy and community work.

“We know that dental professionals are going to approach people with disabilities differently and more compassionately when they’ve had exposure to the population early on,” she says. “I know that passion can be ignited. And I love seeing when it happens.”

This story has been edited for length. Read the full version at dental.buffalo.edu.

FIRST-PRIZE WINNER MIRANDA PASKY
WITH HER PORTRAIT, "PASSION."
PHOTO BY CASS MCALLISTER

Artists of the UBSDM

INAUGURAL ART COMPETITION
BRINGS OUT THE DENTAL SCHOOL'S
ARTISTIC SIDE



BY JESSICA SCATES

This spring, the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Art Club collaborated to establish a new tradition: the UBSDM's annual art competition!

Students, faculty and staff were invited to submit artwork for a new gallery space on the 2nd floor of Squire Hall. Submissions included photography, knitting, acrylic paintings and charcoal drawings. The UBSDM community voted on their favorite pieces, and winners

were announced at the gallery's opening reception on March 28. Please join us in congratulating the 2025 winners:

FIRST PRIZE: "Passion" by Miranda Pasky, program coordinator, Office of the Dean

SECOND PRIZE: "Hope's Dialogue" by Aditi Ghosh, D3 student

THIRD PRIZE: "The Divine Harmony" by Shreya Goud Edulakanti Sridhar, D3 student

Artwork will be on display through the fall. "We would like to thank all artists who contributed pieces for our inaugural show. Their creativity and openness to sharing their art helped establish a space that we can all continue to enjoy for years to come," said Jessica Scates, director of operations in the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

"On behalf of the Art Club, we could not have created this wonderful display of creativity that brought a feeling of community to the school without the contribution of our artists and the engagement of those who voted and attended our reception," said Jessica Vilas Boas, president of the Art Club.

UB dental students deliver over \$50,000 in care to underserved patients in Tennessee

RAM CLINIC SERVES PATIENTS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

BY SARAH SMYKOWSKI

Twenty-eight third-year dental students and faculty members from the UBSDM traveled to Cookeville, TN, to deliver critical dental care to underserved patients during a Remote Area Medical (RAM) clinic held in March.

Led by Joseph DeLuca, DDS '07, clinical associate professor in the Department of Restorative Dentistry, with assistance from Alex Sikora, MS Biomaterials '16, DDS '19, clinical assistant professor, Department of Restorative Dentistry, and Robert Cronyn, DDS '82, JD '91, clinical associate professor in the



THIRD-YEAR UB DENTAL STUDENTS AND FACULTY TAKE A BREAK FROM DELIVERING CARE DURING A RECENT RAM TRIP. PHOTO BY ROBERT CRONYN

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, the dental school team joined other health professionals to serve more than 450 patients. Services included dental care, vision exams, health screenings, and other essential medical care, totaling an estimated value of \$372,438.

On the oral health side, UB dental students examined 120 patients and provided \$51,912 in dental services, ranging from extractions and fillings to prophylaxis treatment. RAM organizers expressed high praise for the students' professionalism and compassion, who delivered quality care and upheld the

school's values and commitment to improving community oral health.

RAM is a national nonprofit organization that provides free dental, vision and medical care through mobile pop-up clinics throughout the U.S.

"The dedication shown by our students is remarkable," said DeLuca, who led the students during the trip. "They traveled a long way and gave so much of themselves to help people who truly needed it. They made us, and the school, very proud."

DOCTOR OF DENTAL SURGERY

**ENTERING GENERAL PRACTICE
RESIDENCY OR ADVANCED
EDUCATION IN GENERAL DENTISTRY
PROGRAMS**

Sarah Afzaal

Federally Qualified Health Center
Boston, Massachusetts

Ahmed Albakry

Residency Woodhull Medical Center
Brooklyn, New York

Lia Carmella Alletto

Rochester General Hospital
Rochester, New York

Noor Alrawi ♦♦

Department of Veterans' Affairs
San Antonio, Texas

Zaina Ali Alsadam

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Alex Burgmaster

St Joseph's Hospital Health Center
Syracuse, New York

Michael Caputo

St. Barnabas Hospital Health System
Bronx, New York

Amanda Kristine Choy

Northwell Health-North Shore
University Hospital
Manhasset, New York

Leonard Patrick Close III

St. Charles Hospital
Port Jefferson, New York

Margaret Denman ♦

Veterans' Administration Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Kaitlin May Dickerson ♦♦

East Carolina University School of
Dental Medicine
Greenville, North Carolina

Gabriella Dierna

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Paul DiMarzo

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Laura Elizabeth Fajardo

St. Barnabas Hospital Health System
Bronx, New York



PHOTO OF THE CLASS OF 2025 BY GRAD IMAGES/ALAN NG

Meet the **GRADUATES** of the
CLASS OF 20

Ayesha Farhad

Nassau University Medical Center
East Meadow, NY

Jacob Micah Forchheimer

BronxCare Hospital Center
Bronx, New York

Paige Ariana Francesconi

Interfaith Dental
Nashville, Tennessee

Ruby Ashlin Gadomski

Rochester General Hospital
Rochester, New York

Samantha Gavin ♦

Staten Island University Hospital
Staten Island, New York

Stella Joohie Gha

Northwell Health-North Shore
University Hospital
Manhasset, New York

Ricardo Andres Gonzalez-argoti

Jacobi Medical Center
Bronx, New York

Johanna Leopoldina Graham

University at Buffalo School of
Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Daniel Hogan

St Joseph's Hospital Health Center
Syracuse, New York

Stephen Joseph Hogan

St Joseph's Hospital Health Center
Syracuse, New York

Mirna Husinec

Veterans' Administration Medical Center
Providence, Rhode Island

Janis Jimenez

Hartford Hospital
Hartford, Connecticut

Kyra Katz ♦

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer
Center/SUNY Buffalo
Buffalo, New York

Brendan Keeney ♦♦

University Hospital-SUNY Upstate
Medical University
Syracuse, New York

Grace Kim

Federally Qualified Health Center
Boston, Massachusetts

Johan Olav Kjorven

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Daniel Zhengdao Li ♦

University at Buffalo School of
Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Nicholas Christopher Lim

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Monica Mack

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Holly Mabel McLean

University of Detroit Mercy
Detroit, Michigan

Winifred Mei

Montefiore Medical Center
Bronx, New York

Xinye Monica Noh ♦

Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas

Khaled Oreby

Regions Hospital
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Michael Daniel Ottavio

New York University Langone Dental
Medicine, Interfaith Dental Clinic
Nashville, Tennessee

Karin Claire Cesar Prins

University of Tennessee Health
Science Center
Nashville, Tennessee

Angelika Pupiec

Staten Island University Hospital
Staten Island, New York

Farhan Rahman

Woodhull Medical Hospital
Brooklyn, New York

Shriya Dinesh Rao

Woodhull Medical Hospital
Brooklyn, New York

Allison Marie Rehm

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

LeAnn Brittany Richert

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Kania Rimu

Wyckoff Heights Medical Center
Brooklyn, New York

Madelyn Ritter

University of Colorado Anschutz
Medical Campus
Aurora, Colorado

Michelle Rybak

Staten Island University Hospital
Staten Island, New York

Marie Clare Schaefer

University at Buffalo School of
Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Mattie Seamans

Denver Health Medical Center
Denver, Colorado

Gabrielle Lauren Shuron ♦

Cleveland Clinic
Cleveland, Ohio

Edmund Song

Woodhull Medical Hospital
Brooklyn, New York

Matthew George Strickland

Meharry Medical College
Nashville, Tennessee

Nigar Sultana

University Hospital-SUNY Upstate
Medical University
Syracuse, New York

Hamza Syed

New York University Langone
Dental Medicine
Mineola, New York

Heather Ann Tamburro

East Carolina University
Thomasville, North Carolina

Anthony Tardibuono

New York University Langone Dental
Medicine-Family Health Center of
Southwest Florida
Ft. Myers, Florida

Jacinta Tracey

Loyola University Medical Center
Chicago, Illinois

Katherine Vega Rojas

Mountainside Medical Center
Hackensack, New Jersey

Jessica Vilas-Boas

Yale-New Haven Hospital
New Haven, Connecticut

Paige Warmuth ♦

University Hospital-SUNY Upstate
Medical University
Syracuse, New York

Tyler Roger White

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Tobiras Jerusalem Barao Whitfield

New York University Langone Dental
Medicine
Mineola, New York

Wesley Wolf

Erie County Medical Center
Buffalo, New York

Winnie Wong

Rutgers School of Dental Medicine
Newark, New Jersey

Casey Keith Woodward ♦

East Carolina University
Greenville, North Carolina

Jack Yacoub

Lehigh Valley Hospital-Muhlenberg
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Tristan Cole Yates

Rochester General Hospital
Rochester, New York

Amanda Madison Zeccola

Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston, Massachusetts

ENTERING SPECIALTY PROGRAMS

Katie Marie Beatty

Pediatric Dental Residency
University of Rochester-Eastman
Institute for Oral Health
Rochester, New York

Parneet Chhatwal

Pediatric Dental Residency
One Brooklyn Health System-
Brookdale/Interfaith
Brooklyn, New York

Gurkirat Singh Dhillon ♦

Oral Maxillofacial Surgery Residency
Rochester General Hospital
Rochester, New York

Tina Fadel ♦

Pediatric Dental Residency
University of Connecticut Health Center
Farmington, Connecticut

Matthew Fasulo

Pediatric Dental Residency
University of California Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

Haritha Jupudy

Pediatric Dental Residency
Louisiana State University
New Orleans, Louisiana

Samuel Kaplansky

Oral Maxillofacial Surgery Residency
University of Connecticut Health Center
Farmington, Connecticut

Lindsay Lassetter Mora ♦

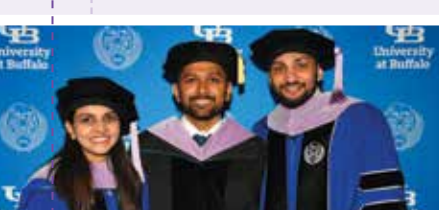
Prosthodontics Residency
University at Buffalo School of
Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Quinn Reo Maguire ♦♦

Prosthodontics Residency
Veterans' Administration Greater
Los Angeles Healthcare System
West Los Angeles, California

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

2025



Paul Mensah

Pediatric Dental Residency
Woodhull Medical & Mental Health Center
Brooklyn, New York

Areeg Naeem

Pediatric Dental Residency
University at Buffalo School of
Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Valerie Shlimov

Prosthodontics Residency
The University of Texas Health Science
Center at Houston
Houston, Texas

Umar Salim Syed

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

Ashley Alysse Turner

Pediatric Dental Residency
University at Buffalo School of
Dental Medicine
Buffalo, New York

Rathna Valluri ♦♦♦

Orthodontics Residency
Tufts University
Boston, Massachusetts

Ava Elizabeth Walch ♦

Pediatric Dental Residency
Children's National Hospital
Washington, DC

Alexa Paige Zeilander

Pediatric Dental Residency
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio

**ENTERING DENTAL PRACTICE/
ACADEMICS**

Afia Anwar Khan ♦♦

Raleigh, North Carolina

Monica Bassi

Toronto, Ontario

Debapriya Debaprasad Biswas

Phoenix, Arizona

Joshua Nathanael Carter

Franktown, Virginia

Amanda Marie Castagnino-Chichester ♦

Warren, Pennsylvania

Young Rim Chang

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Alyssa Marie Fay

Bristol, Vermont

Snehal Ghugardare

Boston, Massachusetts

Vikram Gramopadhye

Toronto, Ontario

Yoonsoo Jung

U.S. Navy

Dunia Kakmekha

Troy, Michigan

Manoja Ramapriya Kanchumarthi

Phoenix, Arizona

Sandeep Kaur

St. Catherine's, Ontario

Daniel Earl Keller ♦♦

Bristol, Vermont

Brenda Jay Kizy

Detroit, Michigan

Prathima Mallempalli

Austin, Texas

Dyllan May ♦♦♦

Green Bay, Wisconsin

Paulo Mazini Neto

Austin, Texas

Jenish Mehta

Ivyland, Pennsylvania

Hibaelrahman Mohammed

Richmond, Virginia

Pragyan Mohanty

New Haven, Connecticut

Aeliya Nabeel ♦

San Antonio, Texas

Harish Narain

Orlando, Florida

Jennifer Oluwafeyisayo Okewunmi

Houston, Texas

Nasim Orumchi

Toronto, Ontario

Dhrutiben Khodabhai Patel ♦

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Riddhi Patel

Carrollton, Georgia

Nausheen Saloda

Chicago, Illinois

Gurinderjit Sandhu ♦

Calgary, Alberta

Sandeep Singh

Toronto, Ontario

Saumya Singh

San Jose, California

Shishira Surapu Reddy

Raleigh, North Carolina

Carolyn Xin ♦♦

Toronto, Ontario

Mahjuba Zehra

Saint Louis, Missouri

PHOTOS BY GRAD IMAGES/ALAN NG



THESIS HONORS

Daniel Zhangdao Li

*Detoxification of Implant Surfaces
With Automated Oral Prophylaxis
Device: An Ex-Vivo Comparison Study*
Primary Mentor: Sebastiano
Andreana, DDS

Dhrutiben Khodabhai Patel

*Color Stability and Mechanical
Properties of Nylon Retainers after
Different Cleaning Methods—
An In-Vitro Study*
Primary Mentor: Thikriat Al-Jewair,
DDS, MBA, MSc, MS, FRCD(C)

LeAnne Brittany Richert

*Nano Calcium Sulfate (nCS) and
Nanohydroxyapatite (nHA) combined
with Strontium (Sr) for use as a Bone
Grafting Material*
Primary Mentor: Rosemary Dziak, PhD

Nausheen Saloda

*Effect of Experimental Cleaning
Methods on the Color Stability of 3D-
Printed and Thermoformed Aligners
—An In Vitro Study*
Primary Mentor: Thikriat Al-Jewair,
DDS, MBA, MSc, MS, FRCD(C)

Jessica Vilas-Boas

*Tumor-associated Macrophage
Reprogramming to Improve Oral
Cancer Therapeutic Efficacy*
Primary Mentor: Keith Kirkwood, DDS, PhD

Mahjuba Zehra

*Endothelial Cell Responses to Photo-
biomodulation Treatments in Diabetic
Wounds are mediated via Concerted
PDGF, VEGF and TGF- β signaling*
Primary Mentor: Praveen Arany, BDS,
MDS, MMSc, PhD

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
ORAL BIOLOGY DEGREE**

Natalie Anselmi, PhD

*Outer Membrane Proteins of
Pathogenic Oral Treponemes Inhibit*

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



Intracellular Signaling and Functions of Neutrophils

Major Professor: Michelle Visser, PhD

Kiana Talisa Bynum, BS

Neutrophil Activation Alters Ability to Kill Normally Commensal Oral Microbes
Major Professor: Jason Kay, PhD

Armond June, BS

The Effect of Periodontitis on the Oral-Gut Microbiome Axis
Major Professor: Patricia Diaz, DDS, PhD

Achamaporn Punnanonitont, PhD

Analysis of the Role of TLR7 in primary Sjögren's Disease
Major Professor: Jill M. Kramer, DDS, PhD

MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREES

ORAL SCIENCES

Abdullah AlBaghli, BDS

Flexural Strength and Microhardness of printed and milled temporary crown and bridge materials from Graphy, Ivoclar and Formlabs
Major Professor: Hyeongil Kim, DDS, MS

Bayan Ali Alhaddad, BDS

IL-36 Family Cytokines Induce Immune Activation in Primary Sjögren's Disease
Major Professor: Jill M. Kramer, DDS, PhD

Mohammed Saleh Alshayiqi, BDS

Relationship Between Implant Geometry and Primary Stability in Variant Bone Densities: An In Vitro Pilot Study
Major Professor: Rui Li, DDS, PhD

Laura Elizabeth Cavallari, DDS, MS

Effect of Surgical and Non-surgical Treatment of Peri-implantitis on Survival of Implants Treated in a Dental School Setting
Major Professor: Robert Schifferle, DDS, MMSc, PhD

Marah Damdoun, DDS, MS

Potential effects of proton pump inhibitors on periodontal disease: A systematic review
Major Professor: Lisa Yerke, DDS, MS

Ryan Andrew Hubert, BS

Caries Theranostics with Targeted Chromophore-assisted laser analysis of Streptococcus Mutans
Major Professor: Praveen Arany, DDS, PhD

Akhila Kiran, BS

Crosstalk between Redox, pH, and TGF-beta1 Signaling Mediates Calcium Hydroxide-Induced Reparative Dentin
Major Professor: Praveen Arany, DDS, PhD

Syed Zaeem Raza, DDS, BDS

Shear Strength and Color Stability of Crown and Bridge Printed UDMA Resin to Printed Resin by Formlabs and Milled PMMA by Ivoclar
Major Professor: Hyeongil Kim, DDS, MS

Madelyn Ritter, BS

Investigating Laser-Assisted Atraumatic Extractions: A Pilot Study in Porcine Jaws
Major Professor: Praveen Arany, DDS, PhD

Azhar Samargandi, BDS

Color stability and Surface Roughness of Different CAD/CAM Denture Teeth Materials
Major Professor: Rui Li, DDS, PhD

Hosam Yousef Zebda, BDS

Myofascial Pain with Referral: Role of Nociceptive Drive and Central Pain Mechanisms
Major Professor: Richard Ohrbach, DDS, PhD

ORTHODONTICS

Alaa Anwar Abdullah, BDS, MS

Long-term Stability of 3D Printed Orthodontic Models Under Various Storage Conditions
Major Professor: Ashish Gurav, DMD, PhD

David Do, DMD, MD, MPH

Relationship Between Obesity and Craniofacial Morphology in Growing Children and Adolescents
Major Professor: Ashish Gurav, DMD, PhD

HONORS FOR FACULTY & STAFF



DEAN'S AWARD/FACULTY

Eugena Stephan, DMD, Pros. Cert. '92, PhD Oral Bio. '98



DEAN'S AWARD/STAFF

Martha Boyer



DENTAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION STAFF APPRECIATION AWARD

Kevin Ryan



DR. ALAN J. GROSS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD, CLASS OF 2025

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



EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Nicole V. Hinchey, DDS '12



FLORENCE KRONSON AWARD

LEFT: Nicole Doria
RIGHT: Tyler McCluskey



THE CHARLES S. LIPANI AWARD

Meelin Dian Chin Kit-Wells, DDS '94, Pedo. Cert. '00, MEd



THE RICHARD A. POWELL AWARD

Hema A. Arany, DDS '23, MDS, CAGS



THE WILLIAM M. FEAGANS AWARD

Robert J. Yetto, DDS '83



PHOTOS BY GRAD IMAGES/ALAN NG

Ashley Lin Jarkowski, DDS

Dimensional Changes in Invisalign Attachments During Treatment by Attachment Type and Complexity of Tooth Movement

Major Professor: Stephen Warunek, DDS, MS

Adrianna Simeone, DDS, MS

Coating of Orthodontic Elastomeric Ligatures with Quaternary Ammonium Silane

Major Professor: Stephen Warunek, DDS, MS

Taylor Toothman Sulkowski, DDS

Accuracy of High-Frequency Ultrasound in the Detection of White Spot Lesions

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

Gabriel Valencia, DDS

Analysis of Power Bar Force I and Force II Elastics on Biomarkers of Orthodontic Tooth Movement – a pilot study

Major Professor: Jill M. Kramer, DDS, PhD

CERTIFICATES OF ADVANCED STUDY

ADVANCED EDUCATION IN GENERAL DENTISTRY

Mohammed Saleh Alshayiqi, BDS

Denise B Curado, DDS

Riya Eapen George, DDS

Jiaqi Huang, DDS

Palak Maniar, DDS, MS

Joseph Mostowy, DDS

Azhar Samargandi, BDS

Parisa Tadi, DDS

Caitlin Viele Haggerty, DDS

ENDODONTICS

Sean Patrick Kennelly, DDS

Derek Lin, DDS

ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL PATHOLOGY

Bayan Ali Alhaddad, BDS

Mohamed Ahmed Y Dahawi, BDS, MS

ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

Andrew Isaacson Buck, DMD

Eric Vu, DMD, MD

ORTHODONTICS

Alaa Anwar Abdullah, BDS, MS

David Do, DMD, MD, MPH

Ashley Lin Jarkowski, DDS

Adrianna Simeone, DDS, MS

Taylor Toothman Sulkowski, DDS

Gabriel Valencia, DDS

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

David Harold Choo Chong, DMD

Kevin J Dobbins, DMD

David Alexander Feere, DDS

Tyler Jamal Laurel, DDS, MA

Joshua Mathew Matam, DDS

Kassiani Strembenis, DDS

Taylor Shepard, DDS

David Alexander Younie, DMD

PERIODONTICS

Layla Arab, DDS, MS

Rayan Alsuwailam, BDS, MS

Nathalia Paiva de Andrade, DDS, PhD

Laura Elizabeth Cavallari, DDS, MS

Marah Damdoum, DDS, MS

PROSTHODONTICS

Abdullah AlBaghli, BDS

Syed Zaeem Raza, DDS, BDS

TEMPOROMANDIBULAR DISORDERS AND OROFACIAL PAIN

Manavjot Kaur Gill, BDS, MS

Josephine Itakpe, BDS, MS

Hosam Yousef Zebda, BDS

2025 SENIOR AWARDS

RECOGNIZING SKILL, ACHIEVEMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Academy of General Dentistry Award

Matthew Fasulo

Madelyn Ritter

Academy of Operative Dentistry Award

Noor Alrawi

Academy of Osseointegration Award

Paulo Mazini Neto

American Academy of Esthetic Dentistry Award

Stella Joohee Gha

American Academy of Implant Dentistry Award

Michael Caputo

American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Award

Kyra Katz

American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology Award

Gabrielle Lauren Shuron

American Academy of Oral Medicine Award

Tyler Roger White

American Academy of Orofacial Pain

Jacob Micah Forchheimer

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Certificate of Merit

Pedodontal Student Award

Umar Salim Syed

American Academy of Periodontology Award

Casey Keith Woodward

American Association of Endodontists Award

Johan Olav Kjørven

American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons Award

Gurkirat Singh Dhillon

American Association of Orthodontists

Lia Carmella Alletto

American Association of Public Health Dentistry Award

Grace Kim

◆ CUM LAUDE | ◆◆ MAGNA CUM LAUDE | ◆◆◆ SUMMA CUM LAUDE

COMMENCEMENT

**American College of Dentists
Outstanding Student Leader Award**
Noor Alrawi

**American College of Prosthodontists
Award**
Quinn Reo Maguire

**American Dental Society of
Anesthesiology Award-Horace Wells
Senior Student Award**
Yoonsoo Jung

**American Student Dental Association
Award of Excellence**
Jacinta Tracey

Barrett Prize Award
Dyllan May

Brasseler USA Esthetic Dentistry Award
Carolyn Xin

Dean's Award
Jennifer Oluwafeyisayo Okewunmi

Dental Alumni Award
Anthony Tardibuono

**Dental Lifeline Network's Brian D.
Stone Memorial Award**
Paige Warmuth

Donald Kozlowski Memorial Award
Daniel Zhengdao Li

**Dr. Davis Garlapo Memorial
Prosthodontics Award**
Tina Fadel
Daniel Earl Keller
Quinn Reo Maguire
Dyllan May
Tobiras Jerusalem Barao Whitfield
Tristan Cole Yates

**Dr. Jeanne Craig Sinkford
Student Leadership Award**
Jennifer Oluwafeyisayo Okewunmi

**Dr. Joseph A. Accardo Eighth District
Dental Society Award**
Jacinta Tracey

Dr. Marshall Fagin Prosthodontic Award
Lindsay Lassetter Mora

Dr. Russell Nisengard Award
Alexa Paige Zeilander

Eleanor Bushee Award
Valerie Shlimov

Eric J. Murawski Memorial Award
Samuel Kaplansky

**Erie County Dental Society
Chester A. Glor Award**
Nigar Sultana

**Fonzi Dental Study Club, Anthony S.
Gugino Humanitarian Award**
Paul DiMarzo

**International College of Dentists
Leadership Award**
Amanda Kristine Choy

**International College of Dentists
Student Humanitarian Award**
Debapriya Debaprasad Biswas
Holly Mabel McLean
Madelyn Ritter
Heather Tamburro
Ava Elizabeth Walch
Tobiras Jerusalem Barao Whitfield

**International Congress of
Oral Implantologists Award**
Valerie Shlimov

Lester Schatz Memorial Award
Dyllan May

**New York State Association of
Endodontists**
Tristan Cole Yates

**New York State Society of Oral and
Maxillofacial Surgeons Student Award**
Matthew Fasulo

**Northeastern Society of
Periodontists Award**
Brendan Keeney

**Omicron Kappa Upsilon Dr. Lata
Shenoy Award**
Afia Anwar Khan

Omicron Kappa Upsilon Membership
Noor Alrawi
Afia Anwar Khan
Kaitlin May Dickerson
Tina Fadel
Brendan Keeney
Daniel Earl Keller
Lindsay Lassetter Mora
Daniel Zhengdao Li
Dyllan May
Quinn Reo Maguire
Dhrutiben Khodabhai Patel
Gurinderjit Sandhu
Ava Elizabeth Walch
Paige Warmuth

**Omicron Kappa Upsilon Research
Award**
Daniel Zhengdao Li

**Pediatric and Community Dentistry
Department Award**
Tina Fadel
Ashley Alysse Turner
Paul Mensah

Pierre Fauchard Academy Award
Lindsay Lassetter Mora

Quintessence Awards
Clinical Achievement in Periodontics:
Lindsay Lassetter Mora
Clinical Achievement in Restorative
Dentistry: Daniel Zhengdao Li
Research Achievement: Winifred Mei

Richard A. Powell Award
Anthony Tardibuono

SDM Implant Dentistry Award
Quinn Reo Maguire

**Special Care Dentistry Association
Student Award**
Ava Elizabeth Walch

**St. Apollonia Guild Dental Student
Service Award**
Farhan Rahman

Stephen B. Totten Award
Janis Jimenez

Student Affairs Recognition Award
Afia Anwar Khan
Margaret Denman
Tina Fadel
Laura Elizabeth Fajardo
Janis Jimenez
Brendan Keeney
Jennifer Oluwafeyisayo Okewunmi
Shishira Surapu Reddy
Jacinta Tracey
Ava Elizabeth Walch
Tobiras Jerusalem Barao Whitfield

**U.S. Public Health Service Dental
Award of Excellence**
Nigar Sultana

**Whip Mix Hanau Prosthodontics
Award**
Daniel Earl Keller

BELOW: DEAN ARAUJO (CENTER)
AND DR. HINCHY (FAR RIGHT)
WITH THE WITH THE SENIOR
AWARD RECIPIENTS OF THE
CLASS OF 2025. PHOTO BY
CASS MCALLISTER



Hanau Cup 2025



BY RAYMOND G. MILLER, DDS '85

Tradition is one of the hallmarks of great institutions and associations. The annual Hanau Cup Hockey Game has over a five-decade history. The event brings students and alumni together for a battle to establish dominance in the great game of hockey. This year's game was held at Riverworks in Buffalo's Old First Ward on Friday, Feb. 28. The alumni, with their older and slower legs, edged the students by a couple of goals to secure the cup. The students may be younger, stronger, and more athletic, but they were outnumbered. Even young legs get fatigued. Hopefully the admissions department understands that admitting more dental students with hockey experience is critical to future Hanau Cup challenges.

Michael Gengo, DDS '13, Endo Cert. '15, of Queen City Endodontics, was again a major contributor to the alumni team. Filing and obturating hasn't weakened his game! Tremendous goaltending by Jenna McCune, DDS '22 was also a major factor in keeping students off the scoresheet. Matthew Milkovich '28, a D1 goaltender, was a welcome addition to the student team. Players and loyal fans enjoyed a postgame celebratory feast of chicken wings and pizza.

The students may be younger, stronger, and more athletic, but they were outnumbered.

Beside Gengo and McCune, other dental alumni players included Raymond Miller, DDS '85, Louis Giordano, DDS '91, Soti Atzemis, DDS '91, Edward Dwyer, DDS '93, Andrew Privitera, DDS '96, Michael Boulé, '98, Michael Markiewicz, DDS '08, Michael Nagai, DDS '10, Oral Max Cert. '16, Justin Au, Oral Max. Cert. '13, Joseph Vollo, DDS '13, Christopher Nowak, DDS '15, Paul Herrmann, DDS '19, Perio. Cert. '22, MS Oral Sci. '22, Benjamin Hietanen, DDS '19, MS Ortho. '24, Caleb Holmes, DDS '19, Alexander Sikora, DDS '19, and Adam Ungaro, DDS '13, Pedo. Cert. '15.

The student team included Mirna (Mimi) Husinec, DDS '25, Matthew Rockhill, '27, Samuel Zyla, '27, Abigail Boulé, '27, Michael Fiorello, '27, Michael Cashatt, '28, Matthew Milkovich, '28 and Samuel DiChristina, '28.

The game was sponsored by the Dental Alumni Association and Dr. Gengo's Queen City Endodontics.

2025 REUNION CHAIRS

1975
Dr. Joseph P. Breloff
Dr. Lawrence E. Volland

1980
Dr. Frank C. Barnashuk
Dr. John C. Buscaglia
Dr. James C. Matteliano

1985
Dr. Michael D. Ehlers
Dr. Stewart M. Fenigstein
Dr. Raymond G. Miller
Dr. David F. Sansone

1995
Dr. Maureen K. Callahan

2000
Dr. Mary John
Dr. Mahnaz M. Khan
Dr. Robert A. Lalor

2005
Dr. Kevin M. Apolito
Dr. Jill Zurek

2010
Dr. James M. Marusich

2015
Dr. Richard C. Ross
Dr. Patricia L. Swanson
Dr. Al-Shaheen Youssef

2020
Dr. Bethany Mattina Chmiel
Dr. Alyssa V. Tzetzo

If you are interested in becoming a leader for your class reunion, please contact **Sherry Szarowski** at 716-829-6419 or ss287@buffalo.edu.



classnotes



Stephen A. Chidylo, DDS '82, MD, FACS, has retired from the clinical practice of plastic and reconstructive surgery, effective June 2024. He practiced in Monmouth County, New Jersey for over 30 years. Being an attending surgeon at Monmouth Medical Center, Long Branch, NJ, in the past he held the academic appointment of clinical associate professor of surgery (plastic surgery) from Hahnemann University School of Medicine and then Drexel University College of Medicine. He is the founder of Central Jersey Plastic Surgery and served as the chief of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Hackensack Meridian Health, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Neptune, NJ.



Steven Litwin, DDS '14, was selected as a Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) 10 under Ten award recipient during the 2025 Yankee Dental Congress in Boston, MA. Established by the MDS in 2005, the annual list highlights 10 new dentists in Massachusetts and their diverse impacts on the dental profession. To qualify for the recognition, dentists must have graduated from dental school within the past 10 years, be an MDS member, and have made significant contributions to the profession, their community or organized dentistry.

Kathryn M. Pawlak, DDS, Pedo Cert. '21, (center), was selected as an American Dental Association 10 Under 10 Award recipient during the Elevate Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. on March 29. Dr. Pawlak is the founder of Planet Smile Inc., a global nonprofit organization devoted to advancing dental education and promoting oral health awareness among at-risk populations. The ADA New Dentist Committee recognizes individuals who demonstrate excellence and inspire others in science, research and education, practice excellence, philanthropy, leadership and advocacy. Recipients are ADA members who graduated dental school less than 10 years ago. **James Wanamaker, DDS '16**, (left), chair of the ADA New Dentist Committee, presented the award, and **Brendan Dowd, DDS '86**, ADA District 2 Trustee, (right), was present for the ceremony.



This year's Class of 1983 Annual Golf Trip included UB grads from the DDS classes of 1982, 1983, 1992 and JD '74. **(BACK ROW, FROM LEFT):** Joseph Modica, '82, Richard Lynch, '83, Fred Rodems, '80, William Crowe, JD '74, John Tibbetts, '92. **(FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT):** Raymond Niceforo, '83, David Stasiak, '83, William Marusich, '83, John Mott, '83, Anthony Palombaro, '83.



Matthew Valerio, DDS '14, president of the Seventh District Dental Society, Ethics Chair and New York State Dental Association delegate, was inducted as a fellow into the Pierre Fauchard Academy during the NYSDA HOD meeting in Uniondale, NY. The Pierre Fauchard Academy is an international dental honor organization that recognizes leaders and future leaders in the profession.



2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

UB Alumni Achievement Awards

UB Center for the Arts
Friday, Oct. 3, 2025
6–9 p.m.

Homecoming

UB Bulls Football Game
Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025
Time TBD

Buffalo Niagara Dental Meeting

Buffalo Convention Center
Nov. 5–7, 2025
BNDMeeting.com

REUNION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

This year celebrates the 50-year reunion of the Class of 1975 as well as all the UB dental classes ending in 0s and 5s.

Remember When Reception

Hyatt Regency Buffalo
Thursday, Nov. 6, 2025
5:30–7 p.m.

Dinner Dance Reunion

Buffalo Convention Center
Friday, Nov. 7, 2025
6:30 p.m. Cocktails
7:30 p.m. Program & Dinner

Entertainment by the all-dentist band, Central Groove.

UB School of Dental Medicine Tour

Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025
Squire Hall Atrium
10–11:30 a.m.

UPDATE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!

Alumni buffalo.edu email addresses are being retired. Update your contact information so we can stay in touch! Email **Sherry Szarowski** at ss287@buffalo.edu.

classnotes

The Omicron Kappa Upsilon (OKU) National Dental Honor Society welcomed students, alumni, faculty and life members during the annual convocation and installation dinner on Thursday, April 29. Membership is limited to 12% of the class and recognizes those who have distinguished themselves through high scholarship, ethical character and excellence in dentistry.

Alumni membership was awarded to Noor Alrawi, Afia Anwar Khan, Kaitlin Dickerson, Tina Fadel, Brendan Keeney, Daniel Keller, Lindsay Lassetter Mora, Daniel Zhengdao Li, Dyllan May, Dhruviben Patel, Gurinderjit Sandhu, Ava Walch and Paige Warmuth. Faculty membership was awarded to Isolde Rojas-Rudolph, DDS, Perio. Cert. '24, PhD. Life membership was awarded to David Covell, DDS, PhD, Rosanne Modica, DDS '91, and Robert Schifferle, DDS '81, MMSc, Oral Bio. PhD '93. Kalpesh Desai, PharmD, was recognized as an honorary inductee.

Chapter president Latifa Bairam, BDS, Pros. Cert. '81, Oral Sci. MS '84, presided over the convocation and induction dinner, which took place at the Saturn Club.



The Dental Alumni Association was a proud sponsor of the Eighth District Dental Society's annual William C. Knauf, Jr., Memorial Golf Tournament held Monday, June 9, 2025, at Fox Valley Country Club in Lancaster, NY.

The tournament brought together approximately 100 dentists and guests, many of them UB alumni. The event began with a morning continuing education course given by Grace De Souza, DDS, MSC, PhD, FADM, professor and chair of the UB dental school's Department of Restorative Dentistry. The course was sponsored by Ivoclar, along with an afternoon of lunch, golf, dinner, prizes and raffle items, with donations going to support Good Neighbors Dental Clinic at Harvest House.

This year's Cunat Lecture took place on June 6, 2025, at the Westin Hotel in downtown Buffalo. Jay Bowman, DMD, MSD, adjunct clinical associate professor at the University of Michigan, adjunct associate professor at Saint Louis University, assistant clinical professor at Case Western Reserve University, visiting clinical lecturer at Seton Hill University, and Milton Sims Visiting Professor at the University of Adelaide, Australia, presented on the following topics: *You Can't Always Get What You Want: It's Only Orthodontics, But I Like It!* and *Drastic Plastic: Improving the Predictability of Clear Aligners/Creative Adjuncts for Clear Aligners to Improve Predictability.*

Won Moon, DMD, MS, professor, Department of Orthodontics, Ajou University School of Medicine, adjunct, ADA Forsyth, adjunct professor, Kyung Hee University, former Thomas R. Bales Endowed Chair in Orthodontics, UCLA (2013-2020), and diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontics since 2002, presented on the following topics: *Non-Surgical Management of Extreme Vertical Problems (Long and Short Vertical Facial Heights) with Micro-Implants and Could We Advance Maxilla in Mature Patients Non-Surgically? Non-Surgical Class III Orthopedic Correction with MSE and FM: Growing vs Nongrowing Patients.*

Dr. John Cunat chaired the UBSDM's Department of Orthodontics between 1955 and 1995. He greatly influenced numerous alumni over his four decades at UB. Today, his legacy thrives on through the foundation he built. The Dr. John J. Cunat Fund, established in 1995 by anonymous alumni and friends, supports an annual lecture for residents and practitioners, driving progress in the field of orthodontics. Despite his passing in 2016, Dr. Cunat's influence lives on through the enduring support of the fund he inspired.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! ---> Submit your class notes to **Sherry Szarowski** at ss287@buffalo.edu.

Moufid Alsawaf, DDS, MS Oral Sci. '87, Pros. Cert. '87, passed away on Jan. 12, 2025, at 74. He was born in Damascus, Syria, and moved to the U.S. in 1982. He pursued his passion for learning at many universities, including UB. Dr. Alsawaf returned to the Middle East from 1992–2018. He is remembered for his giving and caring nature.

John G. Bedosky Jr., DDS '56, passed away on Feb. 7, 2025, weeks shy of his 94th birthday. Dr. Bedosky was born into humble beginnings. His parents inspired and shaped his strong character and future success, always encouraging a college education. Dr. Bedosky and his brother graduated from the UBSDM in 1956. John was a member of the OKU Honor Society and senior class president. Dr. Bedosky served as a captain in the U.S. Army for two years after dental school. He started a practice in Binghamton with his brother in 1958, which they operated for 40 years.

William G. Braun, DDS '51, passed away on May 15, 2023. He earned his DDS at UB after serving in the U.S. Navy during WWII. He started a private dental practice on Bailey Avenue in Buffalo. Dr. Braun was a charter investor in the Northtown Medical Building on Alberta Drive in Amherst, where he practiced dentistry until he retired at age 77.

Gerald F. Campo, DDS '64, passed away on Nov. 3, 2022, at 83. He is survived by his loving wife, Joyce, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Robert L. Dommer, DDS '87, passed away on Feb. 8, 2025. He was a devoted father, grandfather, brother and uncle.

Donald Gilden, DDS '56, passed away on Dec. 9, 2024. He is survived by his wife, Beverly, his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

Dr. Elias J. Kaufman passed away on April 4, 2025, at 86. His career at the UBSDM spanned 45 years, during which he served as an associate professor and director of the pediatric dental clinic. Dr. Kaufman's research focused on bacterial collagenases, techniques for bonding teeth, and a study predicting tooth size when baby teeth are replaced by adult teeth. He received the UBSDM's Charles S. Lipani Award in recognition for his exceptional service in 2006. He is survived by his wife, Madeleine, children and grandchildren.

Ming Shih Levine, DDS '71, passed away on April 10, 2025. She passed peacefully at her residence in Pasadena, CA, with her son by her side. Dr. Levine joined the UBSDM faculty in 1969 as a clinical instructor in the Department of Operative Dentistry and Endodontics. She became chair of the Department of Endodontics in 1982 and served the department through leadership, teaching and mentorship until she retired in 2015.

Jack E. Mimmack, DDS '55, passed away on March 19, 2025, after a courageous battle with Parkinson's disease. After

graduating with his DDS, Dr. Mimmack joined the U.S. Navy as an officer. Upon retiring from the service as Lieutenant Commander, he joined his father as the third generation in the practice where he worked for over 40 years. He was a loyal, kind, patient, funny friend who was always happy to be among family and friends.

Eric J. Morono, DDS '87, passed away on April 1, 2025. He practiced dentistry for 34 years in Pittsford, NY. He is survived by his loving wife, Susan, his children, siblings and many family members.

Rosemary Linzer Neuhaus, DDS '84, passed away on April 23, 2025, at 81. After earning her DDS, she pursued her career in endodontics on the North Shore of Chicago. She was the devoted wife of Francis Neuhaus and cherished their large family. She was an avid reader, puzzler, volunteer and Eucharistic Minister.

Kenneth W. Novak, DDS '78, passed away on Feb. 15, 2024. Dr. Novak was a dedicated dentist who provided dental services for those in need and spent his life caring for others. He was a loving husband, father, uncle, great uncle, doctor, coach and friend. His quick wit and kind heart will be sorely missed.

Richard R. Reed, DDS, Ortho Cert. '67, Ortho MS '68, passed away on Dec. 12, 2024, at 69. He was a devoted family man, orthodontist and cherished member of his community. Following his dental studies, Dr. Reed served in the U.S.

Navy during the Vietnam War. His time in the Navy introduced him to the field of orthodontics, which became his professional calling. Dr. Reed founded Champlain Orthodontic Association, serving countless patients across the region for 41 years. His pioneering spirit and dedication to excellence transformed orthodontic care in Vermont, leaving a legacy that will endure for generations.

Retired Army Major General **Patrick D. Sculley**, DDS '73, former Deputy Surgeon General and 23rd Chief of the U.S. Army Dental Corps, passed away on April 15, 2025, at 77. A towering figure in military medicine and dental education, Dr. Sculley's legacy is one of extraordinary service, scholarship and enduring impact. Following his distinguished military career, Sculley joined the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) as senior vice president for university programs in the Southern Region. Based in San Antonio, TX, he was instrumental in establishing graduate and postgraduate health education programs for military dental officers and other health care professionals. His efforts led to the creation of the USU Postgraduate Dental College and the Master of Science in Oral Biology program—both of which continue to educate military dental officers.

Throughout his Army service, Sculley worked tirelessly to protect the authority and mission of the Dental Corps, advocating

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30.

Dr. David H. Brown 1956–2025



David Brown, DDS '83, passed away on March 19, 2025, at age 69. Dr. Brown departed peacefully at home following a courageous 39-year battle with oral/head and neck cancer, a fight he faced with the same courage and grace that defined his life.

Dr. Brown was a pillar of our dental community, a devoted educator and an inspiration to many. A proud graduate of the Class of 1983, he went on to complete his general practice residency at the Buffalo Veterans Affairs Medical Center in 1984. His career in clinical practice spanned Eggertsville and Tonawanda until 2002 when he transitioned to a full-time role as a professor at the UBSDM. Here, he earned numerous accolades, including multiple Alan J. Gross Excellence in Teaching Awards, the Richard A. Powell Award, the Educator of the Year Award and the 2018 Dental Alumni Association Honor Award. Dr. Brown served on several committees and was director of student admissions for many years, all while shaping the next generation of dentists with his wisdom, kindness and humor.

Beyond his professional achievements, Dr. Brown's passions enriched his life and the lives of those around him. An avid cyclist, he raised over \$300,000 for cancer research through the Ride for Roswell and Empire State Ride. He was a lifelong member of the NYSDA, a skilled squash player, a dedicated boater with the Tuscarora Yacht Club, and a lover of skiing and snowboarding. Above all, Dr. Brown's generosity, empathy, and infectious sense of humor touched everyone he met—whether mentoring a struggling student, encouraging a fellow rider or simply sharing a laugh. Dr. Brown leaves behind his beloved spouse of 39 years, Dr. Beth Reilly, his sons, Dr. Sean Brown (Dr. Danielle Detweiler) and Conor Brown, and his sister, Dr. Carole Brown Knuth. Dr. Brown's door was always open, and his spirit will continue to guide us.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29.

for full enforcement of Title 10 provisions that ensured dental matters remained under the Corps Chief's purview. He was especially focused on recruitment and retention, championing improved pay and benefits to compete with the civilian sector. Sculley's leadership spanned a transformational time for the Military Health System, including the events of 9/11. He oversaw key advancements in care delivery, including the establishment of the U.S. Army Dental Command and command of the Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, where he promoted a forward-thinking "deep battle" approach to health care—emphasizing prevention and readiness to reduce demand on clinical systems. Yet for those who knew him best, it was his mentorship, strength of character and personal connection that left the deepest mark.

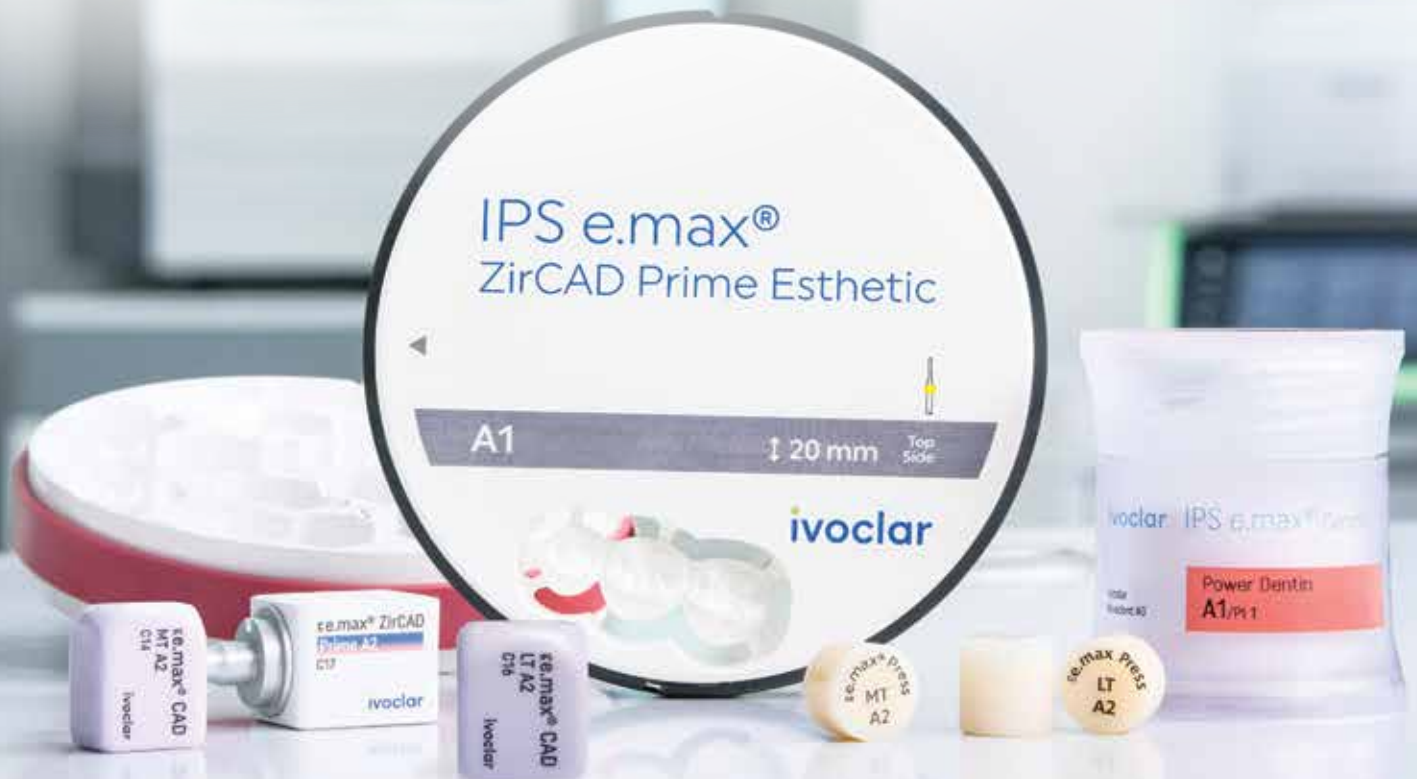
Maurice S. Varon, DDS '48, passed away on June 7, 2023, at 96. His early exposure to dentistry was at his father's dental practice in the Lower East Side of New York City, helping his father heat up gold for inlays. He earned his DDS at 20 and joined his father's practice. He became a dentist for the U.S. Air Force then settled in the Bronx, practicing in Riverdale for over 30 years. His kindness, wit, and skill at explaining dental procedures endeared him to his patients, and many traveled long distances to see him after leaving the neighborhood. He was a devoted husband of 72 years and a dedicated father.

Aaron William Wagner, DDS '71, passed away peacefully on Oct. 9, 2024, at 78. After graduating from the UBSDM in 1971, he dedicated his professional life to serving the Twin Tiers region as a respected dentist for many years. He is fondly remembered by his family and many friends.

Donald E. Wagner, DDS '64, passed away peacefully on April 20, 2025, at 86. Prior to establishing his popular neighborhood practice, Dr. Wagner was a clinician at Buffalo Psychiatric Hospital (Center) and the West Seneca Developmental Center for 10 years. He practiced dentistry for 50 years. He is survived by his high school sweetheart and wife of 63 years, children, grandchildren and sister. He was a proud lifetime learner, garnering a pilot's license, studying several languages and scientific disciplines along the way. He served as president of his local barbershop society, the Friends of Harmony.

Robert H. Wood, DDS '68, passed away on Jan. 10, 2025, at 93. He was his high school's valedictorian and graduated from the top of his college class. He married his high school sweetheart, and they raised two children together. After earning his DDS, he remained at the UBSDM as a faculty member until his retirement.

All ceramic. All you need.



IPS e.max®

- Advanced zirconium oxide and lithium disilicate glass-ceramics
- Trusted for 20 years of clinical success
- 230 million restorations placed worldwide*
- Efficiently fabricated, stunning results



Learn more

ivoclar.com
Making People Smile

ivoclar

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.



**Buffalo Niagara
Dental Meeting**

**Hands-on
Workshops return
this year!**
Shashikant Singhal, BDS, MS, MBA
James Wanamaker, DDS '16
Sponsored by Ivoclar

Nov. 5-7, 2025

REGISTER NOW!
ADVANCE PRICING ENDS SEPT. 30



BNDM

FEATURED SPEAKERS

 Joshua Austin, DDS	 Julie Gaffney, RDH, BSc	 Mark Kleive, DDS	 Alyssa Tzetzio, DDS '20, MPH '21
 Susan Cotten, BSDH, RDH, OMT	 Ankur Gupta, DDS	 Keith Kirkwood, DDS, PhD '97 Robert J. Genco Distinguished Speaker	 Shannon Pace Brinker, CDA
 Benjamin Friberg, DDS '15	 Thomas Kepic, DDS '75	 Patricia Swanson, DDS '15	 Devin McClintock, DDS '16 & Sara Kuckhoff, DDS



Ryan Walsh,
DDS, MS

For a complete list of course descriptions, speaker biographies or to register online, visit our website:
BNDMeeting.com or call (716) 829-2061.

Scan for more info

Major Sponsors









Buffalo Convention Center | 153 Franklin Street | Buffalo, New York