

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF

DENTAL MEDICINE

Closing the dental divide

Scholarships help
students address
oral health disparities



DENTAL MEDICINE

Dean

Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN '79)
216.368.3266
kenneth.b.chance@case.edu

Associate Dean for Development and Alumni Relations

Carolyn Gordon
carolyn.gordon@case.edu

Editor/Director of Publications

Lauren Marchaza

Contributing Writers/Editors

Alaina Bartel
Ilima Loomis
Emily Mayock
Laura Meyer
Daniel Robison
Carey Skinner Moss

Photography

Andrew Johnson
Roger Mastroianni
Dan Milner
Matt Shiffler

Design & Production

Blue Star Design

Send alumni news and death notices to dentalalumni@case.edu

Send comments, inquiries and story ideas to lauren.marchaza@case.edu

On the cover:

Scholarship recipients Macy McCall (top), Makayla Dillon (bottom left) and Frances Toth (bottom right) are featured in this issue's cover story on p. 14. (Photo by Roger Mastroianni.)

CONTENTS



14 Closing the dental divide



18 Care beyond the clinic

DEPARTMENTS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 3 Message from the Dean | 21 Developments |
| 4 School News | 28 Class Notes |
| 11 Faculty News | 30 In Memoriam |
| 20 Alumni News | 34 A Look Back |

To our alumni and friends:

The achievements that Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine made over the last year have shown that our school continues to be a leader in the field of dentistry. We have set precedents in research, technology, community care. Even our incoming students are setting records before they arrive on campus: The Class of 2027 has the highest average GPA—and average science GPA—of any incoming class.

Over the last year, our faculty have earned many notable awards and achievements, including Gov. Mike DeWine's appointment of **Faisal Quereshy, MD, DDS (MED '97)**, to the Ohio State Dental Board. In addition, Associate Professor **Ali Syed, BDS**, received Case Western Reserve's Faculty Fellowship [think]box award. His project, which focuses on 3D models in dental education, will benefit dental students and healthcare professionals looking to improve their skills in administering local anesthesia. See more honors and awards on p. 11.

Our faculty members also have been quoted in major publications such as *The Washington Post* and *The Atlantic*. Locally, Fox 8 News covered Professor and Chair of the Department of Periodontics **Gian Pietro Schincaglia's** live Yomi Robot surgical demonstration, which took place during Homecoming and Reunion Weekend (see p. 24).

Our students are also being recognized for their efforts. The Delta Dental Foundation provided a grant allowing five School of Dental Medicine students—**Erin Madar, Gina DeLeonibus, Rhea Pate, Laura Smith** and **Derek Fickes**—to attend the Special Care Dentistry Association (SCDA) 35th Annual Meeting in Dallas. The SCDA is a unique international organization of oral health professionals and other individuals who are dedicated to promoting oral health and well-being for people with special needs (see p. 7).

We continue to push our connections with the Cleveland community through our Lifelong Smiles and Healthy Smiles programs, our engagement with the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, our annual Veteran's Day Clinic and our participation in the Ohio Dental Association's Give Kids a Smile Day. Our commitment to serving the community is what sets us apart, and our ability to provide oral health care to thousands of adults and children makes me incredibly proud. (Read more about our efforts on p. 18.)

As we look back on all this and more, I am very excited for the School of Dental Medicine's future.

Thank you all for your hard work, continued dedication and support.

Kenneth B. Chance, DDS (DEN '79)

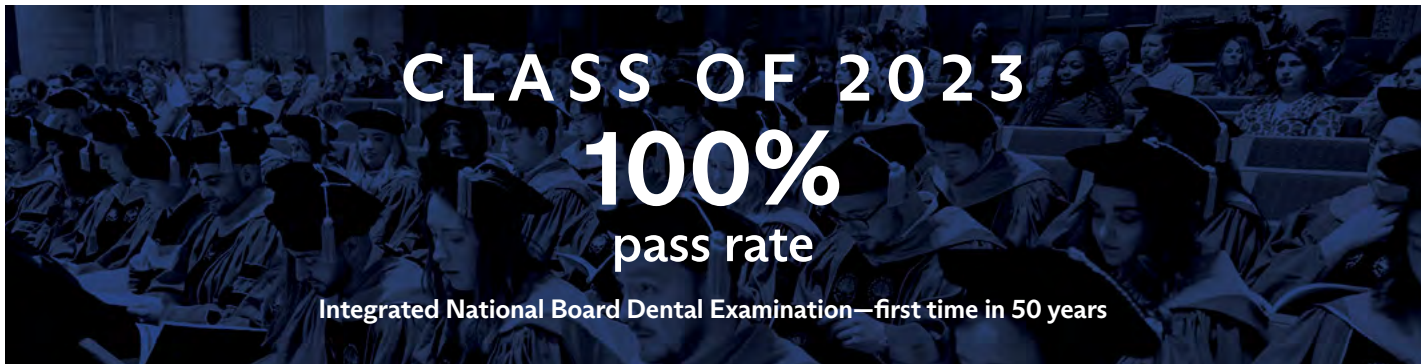
Dean, Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine



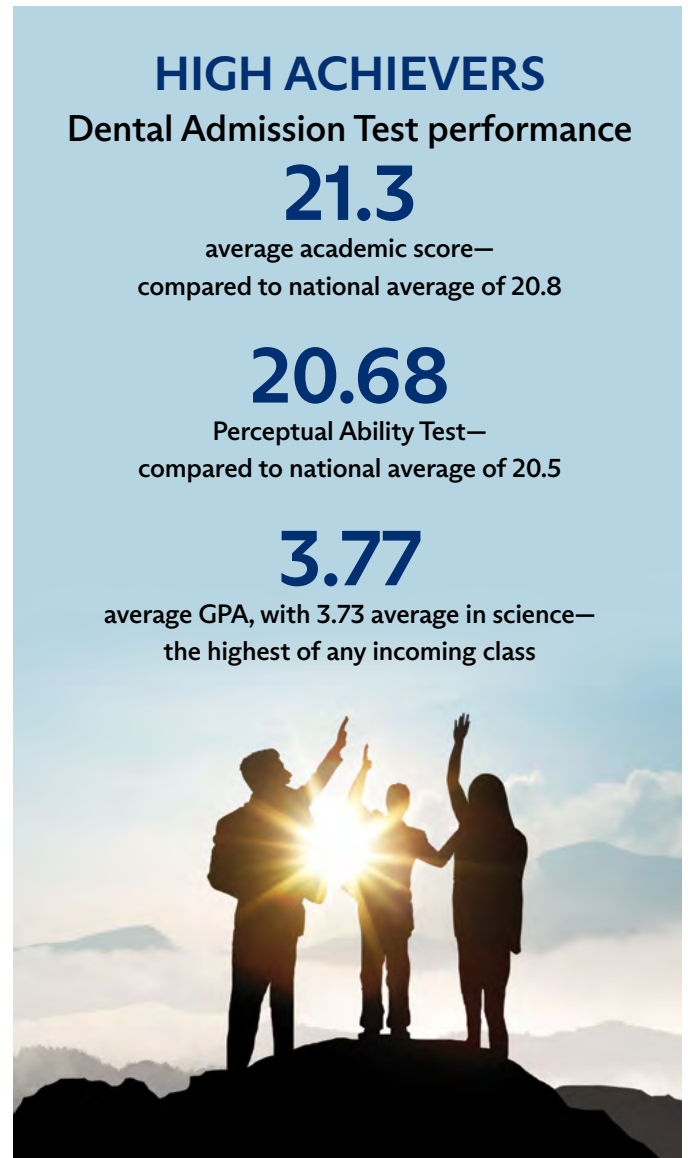
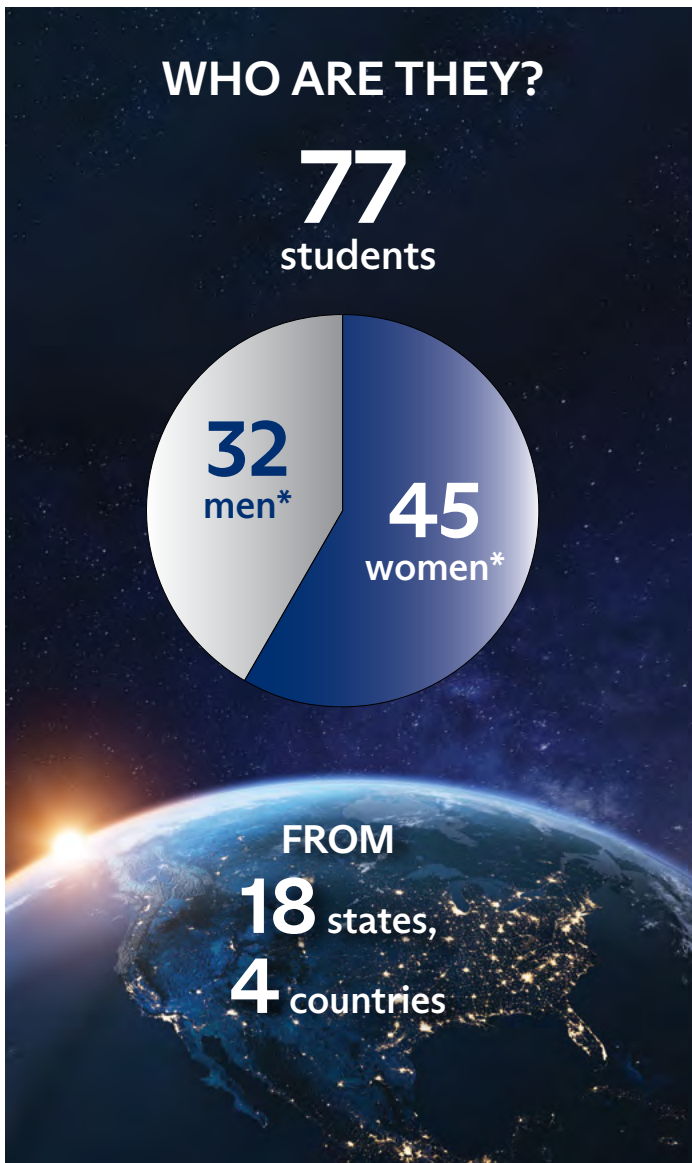
Dean Kenneth Chance

“Our commitment to serving the community is what sets us apart, and our ability to provide oral health care to thousands of adults and children makes me incredibly proud.”

Our students, by the numbers



CLASS OF 2027



*self-identified

Inspired by experience

Dental student makes his way from patient to practitioner

As a child, **Mohammad Hadeed** suddenly found himself a stranger in a strange land. He and his family had recently immigrated from Syria to Michigan, and adjusting was a challenge.

Making matters worse, an accident caused him to break his front tooth.

“My parents could not afford to fix it immediately,” he recalled. “I had to live with half a front tooth for a while.”

That experience took a toll on Hadeed and made him realize the impact dentistry and teeth can have not only a person’s physical health but also their mental well-being.

“I was too scared to smile or be myself,” said Hadeed. “I felt forced to cover my mouth from embarrassment.”

It was not until his parents could afford the treatment costs that he felt his confidence—and outlook—change for the better. As he grew older, Hadeed transformed his trauma into inspiration for his career.

“Having experienced firsthand what dental care can do for a person’s mental health and self-image is why I want to do the same for others,” said Hadeed, who is now a second-year DMD student.

He was attracted to Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, he said, because of its focus on community outreach—especially with those in immigrant communities.

“I was intrigued by the [Healthy Smiles] sealant program and other community outreach opportunities we are able



Mohammad Hadeed

to participate in early in our studies,” said Hadeed, citing volunteering at the Somali Community Center and providing oral screening and oral health education to Afghani children and their parents as particularly rewarding experiences.

Spending time with immigrant communities reminded Hadeed a lot of his own family when they first came to the United States.

“We were unable to speak English properly, had very little money and attended free healthcare clinics in Michigan,” Hadeed explained. “It’s surreal to be on the other side. Helping individuals who have recently immigrated to the U.S. is a dream of mine and something I plan to continue throughout my life.”

—*Laura Meyer*

“Having experienced firsthand what dental care can do for a person’s mental health and self-image is why I want to do the same for others.”

—*Mohammad Hadeed*



“Ortho Girls”

A journey of bonding and teamwork in orthodontics

From left: Sybil Jones, Andrea Jennings, Brittany Link, Diana Villareal and Johana Cortés-Mercado

Sybil Jones, DDS (DEN '23) isn't sure of the algorithm that goes into selecting a group of orthodontics residents, but whatever the method is, she believes “they nailed it on the head” with her class.

Each year, Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine's program selects five residents to join its ranks—and Jones was among four other women chosen for the class of 2024. They were quickly and affectionately coined the “Ortho Girls,” a nickname embraced by Jones, **Brittany Link, DMD (DEN '23)**, **Andrea Jennings, DMD (DEN '23)**, **Diana Villareal, DDS (DEN '23)** and **Johana Cortés-Mercado, DMD (DEN '23)**.

They created a group chat during their first week of residency to effectively communicate with one another, send reminders, ask each other questions, and send help and encouragement whenever needed. Throughout their two-and-a-half years in the program, the five women attended lectures, conferences, courses, and events together and shared laughs and tears.

The culmination of their time together: preparing for the American Board of Orthodontics Written Examination and graduating in December 2023 with certificates in orthodontics and master's degrees in dentistry.

“We prepared our study materials several months in advance,” noted Link. “We met weekly to review the almost 100 literature articles that would be covered on the exam. We had several study sessions together in the week leading up to the exam to make sure we were all prepared.”

All of their work paid off. “We were thrilled to find out that we all passed!” said Link.

The group members credit their unique life experiences and backgrounds to their success, as each has different strengths that allowed them all to benefit. Villareal was already a trained orthodontist in Mexico; Cortés-Mercado completed a two-year general practice residency in New York; Jennings was a practicing dentist prior to joining the program; and Jones and Link had just finished their dental degrees before studying at CWRU.

“We all support, motivate, love and care about each other so much, and always had the best interest of one another at heart,” Jones explained. “We each bring our own energy and vibe, but as a collective group, we worked great together,” she said. “These girls have truly become sisters to me.”

—Alaina Bartel

Empathetic dentistry

Students dive deep into patient care at international conference

Suparna Mahalaha, DDS (CWR '98; DEN '01; GRS '04, public health), knows firsthand the critical importance of understanding techniques—both technical and interpersonal—to provide care for people with special needs. It's part of why she's been a member and fellow of the Special Care Dentistry Association (SCDA) for eight years—and why she now encourages students to attend the international organization's annual meeting alongside her.

"I always come back inspired by the work, research and compassion of these colleagues," said Mahalaha, assistant professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine. With the support of the Delta Dental Foundation, she and a group of students traveled to Dallas for the annual conference last year.

With presentations about using technology to improve empathy in



From left: Erin Madar, Laura Smith, Leonardo Marchini, Derek Fickes, Rhea Patel and Gina DeLeonibus

dentistry and about medications for addiction treatment, attendees deepened their understanding of serving patients of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including older adults and those who are medically compromised.

"I was personally inspired by one session about a clinic in Israel that demonstrated the use of chair-side behavior-management techniques that allowed for the significant reduction of general anesthesia needed to care for patients with special needs," said **Erin Madar, DMD (DEN '23)**, who was a senior at the time of the conference. "The session encouraged me to know that, by taking the time to employ these same techniques, I will also be able to care for patients with disabilities in a private practice setting."

Madar appreciated the experience, and the guidance she received from Mahalaha.

"We are lucky to have staff at CWRU," continued Madar, "who equip students with the tools and mentorship to be mindful to deliver empathetic and competent care to all patients, including those with special healthcare needs."



Symbolic start

First-year students begin their journeys in the dental profession

The Class of 2027 sat eagerly in the pews of Amasa Stone Chapel, waiting for the rite of passage that kicks off their journey at Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine: the white coat ceremony.

Dean **Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN '79)**, and **Michael Gallagher, DDS (DEN '83)**, president of the dental school's alumni association, delivered remarks, and **Keith Schneider, DMD (DEN '08)**, adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, introduced the keynote speaker, **David Rolf II, DMD**, associate dean of academic affairs.

Then, one by one, 87 students made their ways up to the podium, Dean Chance, Gallagher and other faculty members helped them shrug on their white coats, signifying their first steps into the dental profession.

This group of students came to Case Western Reserve with the highest GPA of any incoming class in the history of the dental school. Among them are nine students with family members who have also graduated from the CWRU School of Dental Medicine.

Kristin Williams, DDS (DEN '89; GRS '05, public health), associate dean for admissions and student affairs, then led the students in their recitation of the dental profession's version of the Hippocratic Oath. Together, they pledged themselves to the service of humanity, their patients, community and profession:

"The health and well-being of my patients will be my first consideration," they recited together. "I recognize that I have responsibilities to my community to promote its welfare and to speak out against injustice. ... I am indebted to those who have taught me its art and science, and I recognize my responsibility, in turn, to contribute to the education of those who come after me."



Dale Baur helps a student put on her white coat.



David Rolf II gave the keynote speech during the white coat ceremony in August.



Photos by Dan Milner



The Class of 2027 poses in front of the Cleveland Museum of Art for a group photo.



Students from the Class of 2027, family and friends sit in the pews of Amasa Stone Chapel during the white coat ceremony last summer.



Students read their oaths to their profession.



With their white coats folded behind their backs, students wait for the ceremony to begin.

Addressing threats, seizing opportunities

CEO shares insights on collaboration and challenges in the evolving landscape of oral health

Throughout her career in dentistry and public health, Karen P. West, DMD, MPH, has repeatedly used creative collaboration to overcome challenges—and in November, she came to Case Western Reserve to help future care providers learn from her experiences.

West, president and CEO of the American Dental Education Association (ADEA), presented “Being a 21st Century Influencer: Creating Change in the Academic Health Professions.” Her talk was the second annual Dean Kenneth B. Chance, DDS, Endowed Distinguished Lectureship, which aims to align with the mission of Case Western Reserve and Cleveland Clinic’s shared Health Education Campus: to bring future doctors, dentists and nurses together to collaborate in addressing current and future healthcare challenges.

In highlighting some of her career challenges, West cited the beginning of her tenure as head of the ADEA, which happened in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, she made the difficult decision to cancel the association’s annual conference and have her staff go fully remote, at the cost of \$2 million.

But the pandemic also provided opportunity for ADEA: Thanks to West’s strategic thinking, ADEA took a leadership role in the field of oral health. In collaboration with Federal



From left: Jakki Jones Nance, Dean Kenneth Chance and Karen West

Emergency Management Agency and Henry Schein, a worldwide distributor of medical and dental supplies, ADEA distributed 3M KN-95 respirators to frontline professionals.

West and her team at the ADEA also are using creative thinking to attempt to address threats that West believes face the future of dentistry as a profession, including rising costs and lower enrollments in dental schools, as well as “fewer positive experiences” in dental schools for underrepresented and marginalized faculty, staff and students. The ADEA offers a variety of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, she said, and its Interprofessional Education Collaborative, leadership programs, and advocacy publications and coalitions are designed to foster growth and advancement among dental professionals.

“We must look ahead to the next 100 years of oral health and position ourselves to counter threats and seize opportunities,” she said. “We must prepare doctors for collaborative practice and invest in future academic leaders, leadership development, and faculty and staff recruitment.”

—Laura Meyer



From left: Rosemary Duffy, Sylvia Jones, Kristin Williams, Jakki Jones Nance and Christine Curry

Honors and awards

The achievements of Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine faculty didn't go unnoticed over the last year. Here's a look at some of the ways their work was recognized.



B. Douglas Amberman, DDS (DEN '67), clinical professor, celebrated 50 years of teaching at CWRU School of Dental Medicine.

Amberman teaches predoctoral orthodontics, supervises students in the dental clinic and has served on thesis committees more than 35 residents.



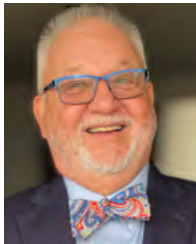
The Oral Health Disparities Group received Case Western Reserve University's Innovator of the Year Award

for research staff. Led by Professor and Associate Dean for Clinical and Translational Research **Suchitra Nelson, PhD (GRS '84, nutrition; GRS '88, '92, epidemiology and biostatistics)**, the group's work has been instrumental in implementing several community-based clinical trials for more than a decade. Read more about their work on p. 12.



Karla Coburn, DDS, PhD, assistant professor of anatomy and assistant professor at the School of Dental Medicine,

received Case Western Reserve's 2023 John S. Diekhoff Award for Graduate Teaching for her outstanding contributions to the education of graduate students through advising and classroom teaching.



Mark Hans, DDS (DEN '79, '81), professor and chair of orthodontics, was selected to deliver the John Valentine Mershon Award Lecture at the

American Association of Orthodontics 2023 Annual Session in Chicago.



Andres Pinto, DMD (MGT '17), professor and chair of oral and maxillofacial medicine and diagnostic sciences, was awarded the

American Dental Education Association Council of Deans Fellowship, which aims to create a diverse pipeline of future leaders of dental schools.



Ali Syed, BDS, associate professor of oral and maxillofacial medicine and diagnostic sciences, received Case

Western Reserve's Faculty Fellowship [think]box award. His project, which focuses on 3D models in dental education, will benefit dental students and healthcare professionals looking to improve their skills in administering local anesthesia. Syed also graduated from the American Dental Education Association's Emerging Leaders Program last year.



Faisal Quereshey, DDS, MD (MED '94), professor of oral and maxillofacial surgery and director of the oral and

maxillofacial surgery program, was reappointed to the Ohio State Dental Board by Gov. Mike DeWine.



Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs

Kristin Williams, DDS (DEN '89; GRS '05, public health), was awarded the

American College of Dentists Fellowship for her exceptional contributions to the dental profession, healthcare and education.

Making the connection

Researching oral health disparities to improve overall health

Older adults with low incomes face a number of barriers when trying to get medical treatment for their cavities, such as a lack of dentists who accept Medicaid, limited transportation options and the difficulties related to navigating online appointment systems. But what if they could get that treatment from other healthcare providers?

“Addressing disparities that exist for individuals to receive dental care—that’s the biggest motivator for me and the people I work with.”

—Shelley Curtan



That’s the question behind a new clinical trial by the Oral Health Disparities Research Group (ORDG) at Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine.

The study compares two nonsurgical treatments for cavities—silver diamine fluoride and atraumatic restorative treatment—delivered to older adults in a community-based setting. The idea is that patients who aren’t able to get to a dentist could get their cavities treated by a hygienist right where they live, said **Shelley Curtan**, research operations manager for ORDG.

“Addressing disparities that exist for individuals to receive dental care—that’s the biggest motivator for me and the people I work with,” she said.

The study is one of four major community-based clinical trials conducted by the group. The projects have received a combined \$20 million in funding from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research and the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute.

Based in the Department of Community Dentistry at the School of Dental Medicine, the ORDG has been investigating health disparities and socioeconomic barriers to dental care since 2007, publishing more than 25 research studies in scientific journals. In 2023, they were recognized by CWRU with the Innovator of the Year Research Staff award.

Suchitra Nelson, PhD (GRS ’84, nutrition; GRS ’88, ’92, epidemiology and biostatistics), who oversees the group, said that, in addition to being motivated by a shared goal of improving access to dental care, the research group is known for its focus on the intersection between oral and systemic health.

Nelson is a professor and associate dean for clinical and translational research at the dental school, and has a secondary appointment as professor in

the Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences in the School of Medicine.

“As an epidemiologist, I don’t think of oral health as being outside of the body,” she said. “There’s always a connection, and that’s the connection we are interested in.”

One of the ORDG’s ongoing studies is an example of that connection. It examines whether training pediatricians to educate parents of young children on Medicaid about oral health leads those parents to take their kids to the dentist for the first time. More than 1,000 children were enrolled in the trial, which followed outcomes for three years.

Biostatistician and School of Medicine Professor **Jeffrey Albert, PhD**, who has worked closely with Nelson on this and other studies, said the group’s driving motivation is to improve people’s health.

“As an epidemiologist, I don’t think of oral health as being outside of the body. There’s always a connection, and that’s the connection we are interested in.”

—Suchitra Nelson, PhD





Michael Oakes, inaugural senior vice president for research and technology management (far left), and Steve Fening, associate vice president for research strategic partnerships (far right), presented The Oral Health Disparities Research Group with the Innovator of the Year Research Staff Award. The group includes (starting second from left) Shelley Curtan, Kelly Hickey, David Selvaraj, Paul Weishampel and Christy Bales.

“The most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our society are disproportionately affected by health problems and are in the most need,” he said. “Targeting these populations—which is what health disparities research is all about—is an opportune way to make a large impact on population health.”

Nelson said that while access issues and disparities are widely recognized in the dental community, new,

innovative solutions are needed to truly improve access.

“Our larger goal is to find methods for treating and preventing oral diseases as well as systemic conditions,” she added, “so that people can have better and more holistic health over their lifespan.”

—Ilima Loomis

“The most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our society are disproportionately affected by health problems and are in the most need.”

—Jeffrey Albert, PhD



Closing the dental divide

In the U.S., nearly 80 million people live in communities with inadequate numbers of dentists, also known as health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). Each of these 7,600-plus HPSAs has more than 5,000 residents for every one practicing dentist. These areas have less than one-third the number of practitioners required to meet basic patient needs, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In Ohio, the numbers are worse: Adequately serving the populations of the state's HPSAs would require a four-fold increase in the number of providers, or nearly 400 dentists.

A scarcity of health providers and facilities—and those willing to accept Medicaid or treat uninsured patients—frequently leads to insufficient care for people living in these communities, which are mostly urban and rural.

This chronic shortfall in services exposes patients, and would-be patients, to significant health risks.

But scholarships from foundations provide tuition coverage for students who commit to a year of service in an HPSA after graduation. And the financial freedom these scholarships provide empowers newly minted dentists from Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine to begin their careers in medically underserved regions.

“[The work done by students in HPSAs is] making a meaningful difference by improving outcomes for many vulnerable patients,” said **Kristin Williams, DDS (DEN '89; GRS '05, public health)**, assistant dean for admissions and student affairs. “It's work that often takes place at the intersection of social justice and public health.”

Forging a path to service

Growing up in Columbus, Ohio, **Makayla Dillon's** family sometimes struggled to maintain dental coverage. Still, they were consistent about taking her to the dentist.

“[The work done by students in HPSAs is] making a meaningful difference by improving outcomes for many vulnerable patients. It's work that often takes place at the intersection of social justice and public health.”

— Kristin Williams, DDS

“We were a low socioeconomic-status household,” said Dillon, a second-year student at the dental school. “So that definitely gave me a unique perspective and awareness of health disparities. I have been there; we experienced it personally.”

Because of her commitment to address oral health disparities, Dillon was invited to apply for a MolinaCares Accord Scholarship. Provided by



Community-centered scholarships empower students and graduates to address oral health disparities in areas of greatest need

By Daniel Robison



Photo by Roger Mastroianni

Makayla Dillon

the philanthropic arm of Molina Healthcare—a health insurance provider through state Medicaid programs—Dillon’s scholarship comes from a \$1.2 million gift to the dental school earmarked for initiatives to increase diversity of the dental workforce and address practitioner shortages in HPSAs.

“The financial support helps me focus on my studies ... and on becoming the best clinician I can be without thinking about a looming financial burden,” said Dillon, who was also a first-generation college student. “It’s a dream come true.”

Many of the dental school’s scholarship recipients come from underprivileged backgrounds, said Williams, who is also the dental school’s director of diversity, equity and inclusion.

“They know the difficulty of getting good quality care, and they’re just determined to give back in the ways they can,” said Williams. Still, she continued, though serving areas of need might be the goal, educational debt can weigh heavily on a new dentist’s career choices.

Often, graduates forgo such aspirations in the short term and find higher-paying jobs to start repaying loans. In 2022, more than 83% of dental school graduates in the U.S. had debt at graduation, with the average around \$293,900 per student, according to the American Student Dental Association.

“Representation matters a lot to me, so I want to be a safe space for patients who can see themselves in me,”

—Macy McCall

“These scholarships allow us to make our job decisions not based solely on where we can make the most money,” said Molina Scholar and first-year student **Macy McCall**. “We have opportunity and financial freedom to go where we want to go—and are most needed.”

Aiming for oral health equity

Built into the dental school’s curriculum is an emphasis on providing culturally competent care, helping students address each patient’s unique needs, sensitivities and history. They learn about the societal roots of inequities in access to dental care—and about effective approaches to decreasing disparities.



Macy McCall

For instance, data shows minorities tend to seek medical services more frequently when they're offered by providers who share similar backgrounds and ethnicities.

"Representation matters a lot to me, so I want to be a safe space for patients who can see themselves in me," said McCall, who is Black and grew up in a predominantly white community in western Pennsylvania. "When a provider looks like their patients, people are more willing to trust and share what they're going through—and health outcomes improve, too."

Last fall, McCall was named a Molina Scholar just as she and her first-year classmates were taking part in the dental school's long-standing Healthy Smiles Sealant Program with Cleveland Metropolitan School District. The experience of placing sealants on teeth of public school students of all ages—and arranging for care for their cavities—stuck with McCall and reaffirmed her dedication to starting her professional career practicing in an underserved community.

"It was eye-opening to see firsthand how oral health can be so easily overlooked. There's so much work to

be done," said McCall. "It makes me excited to think about the changes we all can create over the long term."

After graduating and completing their service to HSPAs, both McCall and Dillon want to eventually open their own practices and build communities of clients from a range of backgrounds.

"Every year, Molina's support has new dentists waiting in the wings at Case Western Reserve who will go into HPSAs throughout our state," said Williams. "Over a few years, they really can make a large difference. And they will carry their experiences and sensibilities to help others throughout their careers."

A chair in the community
Eduardo Santos, DMD (DEN '23), knows dental care can save lives.

Many years ago, his paternal grandfather developed an infection in his gums that went untreated and spread to his heart, causing complications that led to his death. The loss motivated Santos to pursue dentistry and dedicate himself to educating patients on the critical importance of oral health and its broader impact on well-being.



Eduardo Santos with Dean Chance

"The difference between competent dental care and its absence can be significant, even lifesaving. It's very powerful what we can do as dentists."

—Eduardo Santos

"My grandfather's death was almost like a call to action to study and continue on this career path," said Santos.

In 2023, Santos was chosen for the Delta Dental Foundation's Community Commitment Award—\$25,000 given annually to one student from the dental school with a track record of volunteer service in dentistry.

This summer, he will begin a two-year term practicing dentistry at Cincy Smiles—a federally qualified health clinic that treats the underserved and underinsured at schools, juvenile detention centers and other social service agencies in Cincinnati.

"As immigrants, my family was not so fortunate at times, so I feel a calling to serve in areas of need," said Santos. "The difference between competent dental care and its absence can be significant, even lifesaving. It's very powerful what we can do as dentists."

To have a broader impact on HPSAs, the foundation extends scholarships to one student from each of the other four dental schools within its region of focus, spanning Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

"We believe [HPSAs] are areas of opportunity, where people and neighborhoods deserve care and dignity and providers who are going to be there for them," said Jen Anderson, a spokesperson from the Delta Dental Foundation. "To our scholarship winners, we say, 'Just give

us a year practicing dentistry in an HPSA, do the most good, and see how it goes.”

After their year ends, most of the scholarship winners continue to practice in an HPSA or a community health clinic, or provide discounted or free treatments to underinsured patients, Anderson said.

“They demonstrate that you can have a very fulfilling life and lucrative career in an economically disadvantaged area—and you can make a really big difference,” said Anderson. “They are inspirations for others, showing that practicing in an HPSA really is an option.”



Wen Zhou, DMD (DEN '23), saw that example up close as a dental student when he volunteered on his weekends in Youngstown and other nearby

Wen Zhou cities to perform root canals and fillings with fellow members of the Greater Cleveland Dental Society.

His service contributed to him winning the 2022 Community Commitment Award from the Delta Dental Foundation. He served a year at Akron Family Dental, a safety-net clinic serving a diverse patient population.

In Akron, it quickly became apparent that many of Zhou’s “patients had not seen a dentist for many years—or never at all,” he said.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the likelihood of U.S. adults to have visited a dentist in the last year decreases the lower the level of their family income, in both urban and rural areas.

“Some patients face so many challenges,” said Zhou. “Few dental practices accept Medicaid, so patients must often travel far for treatment. Many don’t have a

personal car, and have a job and family duties, so they don’t get treated when problems come up.”

To ensure each office visit has the most benefit to each patient, Zhou—who hails from China and has advanced degrees in medicine and biomedical research—tailors care to each person who sits in his chair, even helping them establish a regular dental routine.

Moreover, Zhou also eases patient apprehension by engaging them in treatment decisions. This fosters trust, builds relationships and encourages return visits, Zhou said.

“I try to maintain as many teeth as possible—many patients are surprised to learn their pain can be eased in other ways [than extraction]. It’s better for their long-term health and makes

them happier,” said Zhou. “When a patient says I helped them, it’s more rewarding than anything else.”

Zhou now serves on the board of the Greater Cleveland Dental Society and recruits dental school students to participate in service activities: “It shows them that when patients trust us and participate, it makes each of us a better dentist.”

Zhou is practicing at a private provider in Westlake that offers comprehensive dentistry, regardless of a client’s insurance coverage. Many of his patients from Akron now seek treatment at the clinic, despite the hour drive, given their preference for Zhou’s approach.

“It’s simple,” he said. “Every person deserves good, competent care.”

Pursuing dentistry with purpose

At the age of 5, Frances Toth discovered her passion for dentistry, inspired by the compassionate care she received from her pediatric dentist. Her interest in the field deepened during conversations with her late aunt.

“Before she passed away, we had a heart-to-heart about my passion for helping others,” said Toth. “She shared a concern with me—how many residents at her nursing home faced difficulties accessing dental care because they use wheelchairs.”

But Toth knew pursuing her goals—and helping those patients—would be financially challenging.

Now in her first year at the School of Dental Medicine, Toth’s path to joining the profession is being made possible in part by a Delta Dental Foundation scholarship that helps disadvantaged students. Her ultimate goal is to provide accessible dental care to older adults with disabilities.

These individuals “often don’t go to dentists, or their needs are not met,” Toth explained. “Health professional shortage areas often have higher average populations of people with disabilities, so I’m sure I’ll end up working in one of these communities.”



Frances Toth

Photo by Roger Mastroianni

Care beyond

Students and faculty connect with the

The last time fourth-grader Santanna Haywood sat in a dental chair to have her teeth examined, she was terrified and sobbing. This experience was all she could think about as she settled into another dental chair—this time, at Case Western Reserve’s Dental Clinic during the annual Give Kids a Smile Day.

The event was part of a nationwide initiative launched in 2003 by the American Dental Association to provide underserved children with free oral healthcare. Each year, approximately 6,500 dentists and 30,000 dental team members volunteer to provide free oral health education, screenings, and preventive and restorative treatment to more than 300,000 children.

Yet even as **Zehra Ashruf**, a first-year DMD student, assured Haywood she had nothing to worry about, Haywood had no smiles to give.

It wasn’t until Ashruf and third-year DMD student **Gabrielle Dean** brought up the topic on nearly every kid’s mind the first week of November—Halloween candy—that Haywood began to visibly relax.

“My dad eats my candy so I have to hide it,” said Haywood, going on to list off her favorite candies as Dean examined her teeth. Before she knew it, Haywood was talking about Girls Scouts, gymnastics and other activities she loves.



Dental students provide care to a young patient at Give Kids a Smile Day in November.

Haywood’s trust and comfort deepened when Dean explained every dental instrument while she worked.

When they were done, both Dean and Ashruf asked Haywood how she felt about her experience, and if it was better than the last time she visited a dentist.

“Next time I go to the dentist,” Haywood exclaimed with a smile, “I’m coming here!”

Visiting Assistant Professor **Ying An**,

DDS, PhD, who helped organize Give Kids a Smile Day, said 150 children from Cleveland received free dental exams, cleanings, fluoride treatments and sealants on adult molars—for a total of \$19,000 worth of dental services.

“This was the first Give Kids a Smile Day in Cleveland since 2018,” An said, “and we were thrilled by the enthusiasm of all the Greater Cleveland Dental Society volunteering dentists, CWRU dental students, staff and residents.”

the clinic

community through dental services



Veteran Richard Griffin gets an examination during the dental school's annual Veterans Day clinic last fall.

But the patients, she said, were the true stars of the show.

“We were absolutely energized by the children’s smiles,” she said.

Serving those who served

About a week after Give Kids a Smile Day, the CWRU Dental Clinic team sought to provide care to another population in Cleveland—individuals who are decades apart from kids like Haywood.

Richard Griffin, who served in the Vietnam War, made his way into the dental clinic on Veterans Day for a free cleaning and exam—something the clinic has offered to military personnel and veterans since 2018. Third- and fourth-year DMD students administer X-rays, comprehensive oral exams, blood pressure readings and oral cancer screenings and recommend follow-up appointments.

The Veterans Day event has grown each year, which is something Associate Professor **Ali Syed, BDS**, who oversees the program, is proud to see.

“Many veterans are not eligible for health benefits at the veterans hospitals,” he explained. “Our aim is to assist patients who do not qualify for care elsewhere.”

As one of those patients, Griffin understood all too well what Syed meant.

“It’s pretty special that Case Western [Reserve] offers this opportunity for veterans like myself,” Griffin said as he leaned back for his exam. “It’s a pretty special day.”



Quantifying care

In 2023, the School of Dental Medicine’s community outreach team provided patients with dental healthcare and education throughout greater Cleveland. Here’s a snapshot of their work over the last year.

18
community events

820+
patients

To my fellow alumni



From left: Michael Gallagher and Dean Kenneth Chance at the white coat ceremony in August

“Our national reputation has increased, as evidenced by the quality of applicants who seek admission to our alma mater. And locally, the dental school’s clinic and other service programs continue to provide care to many underserved populations and lift our reputation in Cleveland and beyond.”

Dear Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine alumni,

As a proud member of the Class of 1983, I celebrated my 40th reunion with my classmates this year and had the opportunity to meet other alumni from our school and others. I hope that, as your reunion year approaches, you will consider attending to reconnect with your friends and your alma mater; I can assure you, it was an enjoyable time building relationships old and new.

Now, as the newest president of the CWRU School of Dental Medicine Alumni Board, I want to share my vision for the organization for the next two years of my tenure.

I will always keep an open line of communication with and support the efforts of Dean **Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN '79)**. Dean Chance has consistently elevated the reputation of the School of Dental Medicine, as evidenced by the quality of applicants who seek admission to our alma mater. He also helped lead the most ambitious building project in the school’s history: the Health Education Campus with Cleveland Clinic. And locally, the dental school’s clinic and other service programs continue to provide care to many underserved populations in Cleveland and beyond.

To make sure people are aware of the incredible strides taking place at our alma mater, I have asked all members of the dental school’s Alumni Association Board of Directors to contact close friends and classmates and share updates; I would urge you to do the same!

Plus, we have reorganized our committees to increase alumni board membership, nominate more people for annual awards, establish alumni events and programs to increase engagement, and align our efforts with the school to help it achieve the goals of its new strategic plan.

Finally, fundraising will be critical to our success. The School of Dental Medicine exceeded its \$5 million attainment goal in Fiscal Year 2023, and our goal for Fiscal Year 2024 is \$5.5 million. To help us achieve that, I have asked for 100% board participation in supporting the dental school. When I attended the Celebration of Philanthropy event in August, I was grateful to see the generous gifts many people made to help support the dental school and its students. While I am not asking everyone to consider the sizable gifts that were honored that night, I would ask each of you to consider making a gift that is personally significant. This is how we will ensure the success of our current and future students.

I look forward to working with all of you to accomplish the mission of the dental school’s Alumni Association to promote the welfare—and advance the objectives of—the School of Dental Medicine.

Respectfully,

Michael Gallagher, DDS (DEN '83)

President, School of Dental Medicine Alumni Association

Generosity in the spotlight

Special event pays tribute to donors

Several alumni and friends attended Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine's Celebration of Philanthropy in August, honoring donors and their contributions toward a \$5 million attainment for the school over the past fiscal year. Dean **Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN '79)**, and **Carolyn Gordon**, associate dean of development and alumni relations, expressed their gratitude to all those who contributed to this ambitious goal.

During the event, select donors received special recognition for their longtime investments in the School of Dental Medicine,

including **Ronald L. Occhionero, DDS (DEN '61)**, and his wife, Carole; Thomas J. and Bonna DeMarco; and organizations such as the Molina Healthcare Foundation and the Ralph T. & Esther L. Warburton Foundation.

Leonard Weiss, DDS (DEN '63), spoke about the establishment of the Robert A. Kalina Memorial Scholarship. Its latest recipient, second-year student **Hounein Arbaji**, expressed his gratitude for the faculty and staff of the School of Dental Medicine, as well as the donors who have made this experience possible for all CWRU dental students.

PHILANTHROPY DEVELOPMENTS

Developments highlights special philanthropic support for the School of Dental Medicine from alumni, friends, corporations and more. Here are some of the gifts received over the last year.

Ronald L. Occhionero, DDS (DEN '61), and his wife, Carole, committed \$2 million to establish The Ronald L. Occhionero, DDS "Dr. O" Academic-Clinical General Practice Preceptor Program Scholarship Fund.

Nobel Biocare committed \$783,000 through in-kind support to support the School of Dental Medicine and its clinical operations.

Ronald Carmen, DDS (DEN '73; GRS '78, dentistry), donated \$130,000 to establish *The Dr. Ronald B. Carmen Partnership for Excellence in Orthodontics* with \$100,000 and fund an additional \$30,000 to the established The Ronald B. Carmen, DDS, MSD Endowment Fund for Orthodontics.

Department of Pediatric Dentistry Chair and Professor **Gerald A. Ferretti, DDS**, and his wife, Charlene donated \$100,000 to establish The Dr. Gerald A. and Charlene A. Ferretti Special Needs Fund.

Clarence James Red III, DDS (DEN '98), and Linzette M. Red, PhD made an additional \$59,000 commitment to The Clarence and Linzette Red Endowment Fund for Orthodontics.

The Delta Dental Foundation contributed \$50,000 for two of their scholarships: \$25,000 toward the Community Commitment Student Award and \$25,000 toward the Diversity Dental Student Scholarship.

Jerome N. Eisman, MD, and his wife, Karen, contributed \$50,000 to establish The Eisman Family Dental Scholarship Fund.

Philip H. Dixon, DDS (DEN '83) and his wife, Carolyn, made a \$40,000 commitment to the School of Dental Medicine.

The American Association of Orthodontists Foundation committed \$40,000 to support research of **J. Martin Palomo, DDS (DEN '97)**, orthodontics professor, and **Mark Hans, DDS (DEN '79, '81)**, orthodontics professor and chair, about technology used in the treatment of sleep apnea.

Zyris, Inc. contributed \$32,000 through in-kind support to support the School of Dental Medicine and its clinical operations.

KLS Martin contributed \$30,000 to the Oral Surgery Department and its operations.

Joong Hee Hahn, DDS (DEN '89, '90, '92), and **Hui-Jin Lee, DDS (WRC '89, DEN '92, '95)**, contributed \$15,000 each to the Endodontics and Periodontics Discretionary Funds.

The Robert L. Kittredge Trust donated \$25,000 to establish The Robert L. Kittredge, D.D.S. Endodontics Endowed Scholarship Fund.

John Gerstenmaier Jr., DDS (ADL '67), contributed \$15,000 to The John H. Gerstenmaier, Jr. DDS Endowment Fund.

Joseph H. Belhobek, DDS (ADL '70; DEN '72; GRS '74, orthodontics), donated \$13,000 toward The Jack Love DDS Endowed Fund of Prosthodontic Excellence, the Orthodontic Alumni Fund and the Adelbert Annual Fund.

David Mills contributed \$10,000 to support his brother's memorial fund, the Jeffrey A. Mills Memorial Scholarship.

Degrees earned, dreams realized

New graduates step into their futures with knowledge and compassion

With faculty, family and friends in attendance, the Class of 2023 gathered at the Milton and Tamar Maltz Performing Arts Center last May to collect their diplomas and celebrate their graduation from Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine—commemorating years of rigorous training and growth.

“You have not only witnessed a global pandemic and formed within yourselves the ability to adapt accordingly, but you have also cultivated something deep within your identity that can never be shaken,” Dean **Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN ’79)**, told them in his opening remarks. “Throughout all of these trials and tribulations—these hurdles and setbacks—you had to know that you, the Class of 2023, are called to this profession. You have had to stand on perseverance.”

Dean Chance introduced the keynote speaker, **Thomas Van Dyke, DDS, PhD (ADL ’69, DEN ’73)**, vice president for clinical and translational research and chair of the Department of Applied Oral Sciences at the Forsyth Institute. As a CWRU alumnus who celebrated his 50th anniversary of graduating that month, Van Dyke noted the advancements, especially technological, made in dental medicine in those five decades.

“It’s an exciting time in our profession,” he said. “A time of profound change.”

He suggested the new dentists in the audience embrace that change, and use the technology to their advantage—but, above all else, remain centered on those they serve.

“Always remember that we’re treating people—not just patients. It is this relationship that will help you build a successful practice,” he explained.

Kari Cunningham, DMD (DEN ’10, ’12), then-president of the school’s alumni association, welcomed the members of the Class of 2023 to the profession, encouraging them to be willing to grow, adapt, learn and serve throughout their careers.

Both **Ji-hoon Min, DMD (GRS ’19, medical physiology; DEN ’23)**, executive student council president, and **Catherine Ramsey Kenney, DMD (DEN ’23)**, senior class president, addressed their peers, congratulating them on their collective achievements. Min suggested that, as they embark on their professional journeys, they remember four things: practice daily gratitude, stay true to themselves, find joy in their work and believe in themselves. Kenney echoed the message relayed earlier by the keynote speaker.

“True success is found in the relationships we build with our patients,” she said. “Never lose sight of the humanity behind our profession.”



Students stand together before the ceremony



Thomas Van Dyke delivered the keynote address at the diploma ceremony last May.



From left: Catherine Ramsey Kenney and Ji-hoon Min posing before they addressed their peers during the ceremony



Newly graduated students stand with family members outside of the Maltz Performing Arts Center.



A new graduate holds her diploma while posing with family.



Members of the Class of 2023 wait for the ceremony to begin at the Milton and Tamar Maltz Performing Arts Center



Students are all smiles as they prepare to receive their diplomas



Dean Chance presented Eduardo Santos with the Delta Dental Fund Community Commitment Award.



School of Dental Medicine Class of 2023



Students file into the diploma ceremony

Bridging the past and present

Homecoming weekend showcases rich history and promising future

More than 100 School of Dental Medicine alumni and their guests came to campus in October for Case Western Reserve University's Homecoming and Reunion Weekend. This included members of the Class of 1973, who celebrated their 50th reunion.

The weekend began with a live implant surgery demonstration using Yomi Robot, an implant robotic system. **Gian Pietro Schincaglia, DDS, PhD**, professor, chair and graduate program director of the Department of Periodontics, led the presentation.

Later that night, alumni, family and friends gathered at a welcome reception to learn about the state of the school from Dean **Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN '79)**, and enjoy live music from **Tom Leatherman, DDS (DEN '85)**, and his band, Cloud9CLE. Afterward, the Class of 1973 dined at the InterContinental Hotel, where each alum stood and shared highlights from their 50 years since graduation. They were also treated to some entertainment from comedian **Ron Stark, DDS (DEN '73)**.

The rest of the weekend provided alumni with engaging presentations, such as demonstrations of the school's use of HoloAnatomy software for Microsoft HoloLens, and CWRU's JAWS at Work, a similar application that enables dental students to study the human jaw in masticatory dynamics classes. Alumni were also treated to tours of Samson Pavilion and the state-of-the-art Dental Clinic. Elsewhere on campus, some alumni attended a joint presentation by students from the dental, nursing and medical schools about the CWRU Student-Run Health Clinic, while others enjoyed a private docent-led tour of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The festivities concluded with a cocktail party and an evening of awards. Dean Chance and **Michael Gallagher, DDS (DEN '83)**, president of the dental school's alumni association, presented the Alumni Association Awards (see p. 26).

—Michelle Hoffman



School of Dental Medicine Class of 1973



School of Dental Medicine Class of 2013



From left: Catherine Conaway, Devin Conaway, Maya Ratnam and Maximillian Beushausen



From left: Dale Dixon and Jack Love



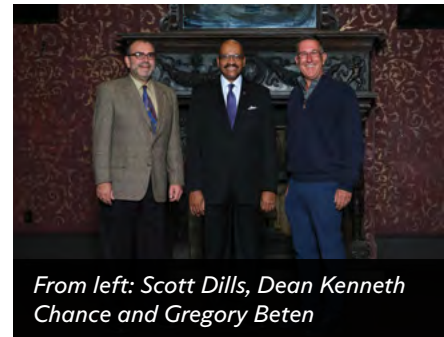
Back row, from left: David Becker, Thomas Van Dyke, Ron Stark, Timothy Benich, William Langstaff, Frank Pace. Front row, from left: Kerry Ann Becker, Barbara Rowdybush Van Dyke, Diane Benich, Toby Langstaff.



Alumni observe a demonstration of the Yomi Robot



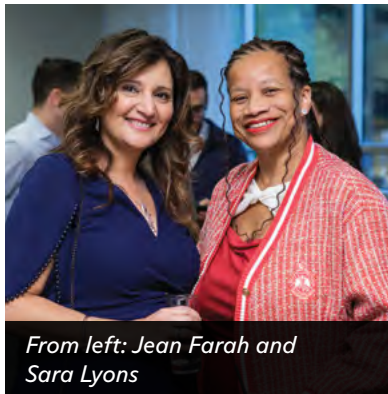
From left: Martin Hritz, Cheryl Brunelle and Suresh Goel



From left: Scott Dills, Dean Kenneth Chance and Gregory Beten



Thomas Leatherman and his band, Cloud9CLE, pose before performing at the alumni welcome reception at the House of Blues in downtown Cleveland.



From left: Jean Farah and Sara Lyons



From left: Nelson Petrov, Leonard Weiss and Roger Ream



School of Dental Medicine Class of 1983



School of Dental Medicine Class of 2003

Photos by Andrew Jordan

Shining stars

Honoring alumni achievements on campus and in the field

Each year, Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine's Alumni Association recognizes individuals whose superior talents and selflessness of service bring distinction to the school.

Here are last year's winners.

Distinguished Alumnus of the Year Award

Most dental professionals have one career in the field. **Jack Love, DDS (ADL '56, DEN '58)**, has had four: the U.S. Navy Dental Corps, restorative dentistry, prosthodontics and prosthodontic dentistry, and academia.

For his extraordinary dedication to the profession, and for his nearly 40 years of service to the School of Dental Medicine—both as a volunteer and a faculty member—Love received the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year Award.

After retiring from private practice in 1999, Love joined the Case Western Reserve faculty to teach the Complete Denture Course, updating it with new articulating instruments, and making the implant over denture the standard of treatment. He used his clinical photography skills to update lecture presentations and implemented a clinical photography course for third-year students during their clinical orientation.

“Jack Love was unstinting in his devotion to dentistry through mentoring and teaching excellence for years to all students.”

—Thomas Marxen, DDS

While Love initially thought he might stay for one to five years, he retired 20 years later at the age of 88. **Thomas Marxen, DDS (DEN '73)**, said, “Jack Love was unstinting in his devotion to dentistry through mentoring and teaching excellence for years to all students.”

Outstanding New Dentist Award Winnie Wong, DMD (DEN '16)

has a long list of accolades and appointments, to which she recently added Case Western Reserve's Outstanding New Dentist Award. The honor is presented to an alum who has demonstrated outstanding service to the community, is engaged with the School of Dental Medicine and whose accomplishments enhance the perception of the dental profession.

Wong began racking up the awards in 2017 during her general practice residency in Chicago at Loyola University Medical Center. There, she was recognized for providing outstanding service and care to patients with two Magis Star Awards. Five years later, in 2023, Wong received the Ohio Dental Association (ODA) N. Wayne Hiatt Rising Star Award.

Described by those who know her as a “servant leader,” Wong volunteers her time broadly and has served on the dental school's Alumni Association Board of Directors since her residency. She has held multiple leadership roles in organized dentistry, including reference committee member and elected delegate of the ODA House of Delegates; alternate delegate for the American Dental Association; and chair of both the New Dentist Committee and

“Dr. Wong represents our alma mater and our profession with poise, grace, dignity and respect”

—Kari Cunningham, DDS

the Membership and Communications Committee of the Greater Cleveland Dental Society (GCDS).

Wong previously was vice president of the GCDS, but this year, she became the first Asian American—as well as the youngest dentist—to hold the title of president.

And, she does all of this while co-managing Barsan, Stefan and Wong Family Dental, located in Fairlawn and Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

“Dr. Wong represents our alma mater and our profession with poise, grace, dignity and respect,” said **Kari Cunningham, DDS (DEN '10, '12)**, fellow of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and owner of Panther Pediatric Dentistry. “She possesses all the qualities that a recipient of this award should have.”

Alumni Board Special Recognition Award

Tania Markarian-Skowronski, DDS (DEN '97, MGT '19), assistant professor in the Department of Comprehensive Care, has excelled as both clinician and educator with the School of Dental Medicine for 25 years. She has twice won Clinical Instructor of the Year at the dental school, and has earned certificates from Weatherhead School of Management and the Flora Stone Mather Center for Women. In addition to her academic and clinical duties, she



From left: Alumni award recipients Tania Markarian-Skowronski, Jack Love and Winnie Wong (Photo by Andrew Jordan)

has served on Curriculum Innovation Committee and the Alumni Association Board of Directors and has represented Case Western Reserve University in the U.S. Consortium for Advanced Simulation. She is a diplomate of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and is chief of the Dental Division at Akron Children's Hospital.

But it was Markarian-Skowronski's dedication to the service of others—specifically, her work with Lifebanc, a nonprofit organ and tissue recovery organization—that earned her the Alumni Board Special Recognition Award last fall.

Markarian-Skowronski has volunteered her time with Lifebanc since 2010,

“The beauty about Lifebanc is that it combines hope, feeling, heartbreak, sadness and second chances.”

—Tania Markarian-Skowronski, DDS

serving as both an ambassador and board member. Over those years, she has embraced Lifebanc's mission and its commitment to supporting families when they must make the selfless decision to donate an organ so that someone else may have a second chance at life.

Markarian-Skowronski has volunteered and chaired events for the organization,

engaging hundreds of students, faculty, staff and volunteers who participate and donate in the annual Lifebanc Gift of Life Walk and Run. Her team, Chews Wisely, has raised tens of thousands of dollars for organ donation and awareness.

“The beauty about Lifebanc is that it combines hope, feeling, heartbreak, sadness and second chances,” said Markarian-Skowronski.

“I am a mother, a friend, a sister, a doctor, a daughter. I am so many things,” she continued. “And yet—other than the title of mother—the title I am most proud of, and most passionate about, is Lifebanc ambassador.”

Class notes

Includes submissions received from Jan. 10–Dec. 10, 2023.

Norman J. Nagel, DDS (DEN '65, '67), finished a 10-year term in 2023 as trustee for the American Association of Orthodontists, of which he served as president last year. Nagel also received the Arthur A. Dugoni Lifetime Achievement Award from the Pacific Coast Society of Orthodontists in Anaheim, California.



Fred Rosenberg, DDS (DEN '68), and Bernie Keough, DMD, co-presented an all-day seminar titled “The Efficacy of Interdisciplinary

Treatment Planning Leading to Long-term Successful Case Outcomes” to faculty and senior dental students at University of Kentucky College of Dentistry in August.

Walter Grossman, DDS (ADL '66, DEN '69), is a photographer in addition to his role as a dental professional. His photography has appeared in various national and international exhibits.



Ronald Stark, DDS (DEN '73), was published in Marquis Who's Who, an online directory for biographical data.



Thomas Van Dyke, DDS, PhD (CIT '69, DEN '73), vice president for clinical and translational research and chair of the Department

of Applied Oral Sciences at The Forsyth Institute, was selected as the 2023–24 diploma ceremony speaker for Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine.

Michael Landers, DDS (DEN '76), associate professor in CWRU's Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences, retired from the School of Dental Medicine in August.



Edward Loftspring, DDS (DEN '77), a prostate cancer survivor, serves as an ambassador for the Prostate Cancer Foundation and

a member of the Board of Directors for the United Ostomy Associations of America. In May, he threw the first pitch at the Cincinnati Reds game and hosted a fundraiser to benefit the foundation.

Kerry Robson, DDS (DEN '83), lives in Oldsmar, Florida. Though retired since 2020, she has worked at the Peter Emily International Veterinary Dental Foundation for the past decade, providing dental care to animals in captivity, such as tigers, lions, leopards and cheetahs.

Todd Stultz, DDS, MD (WRC '80, DEN '84), practices neuroradiology at Cleveland Clinic and works in dentomaxillofacial imaging through the American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology. He collaborates with his wife, Allison Vidimos, MD, dermatologic surgeon at Cleveland

Clinic, on educational presentations focused on advanced imaging for aggressive cutaneous neoplasms.



Albert J. Natelli Jr., DDS (DEN '89), spent 30 years in private practice and volunteering at the Advanced Education in

General Dentistry Clinic at University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine before relocating to Charleston, South Carolina. Natelli is now an assistant clinical professor and dental director at Medical University of South Carolina James B. Edwards College of Dentistry, where he leads the new Dental and Oral Health Center.



Mario Pavicic, DDS (DEN '92), became the Supreme Grand Master of Delta Sigma Delta International Dental Fraternity on

Sept. 30 in San Francisco. Pavicic has been involved with Delta Sigma Delta since 1988 and is only the sixth Supreme Grand Master from Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine in the fraternity's 141-year history.

Richard Adelstein, DDS (DEN '93), and his daughter, **Melanie Adelstein, DMD (DEN '21)**, were recently profiled in *Cleveland Jewish News* for their multi-generational dental practice, Obermeier, Adelstein, Lempel & Associates, Inc., which has locations in Beachwood and Medina.



J. Martin Palomo, DDS (DEN '97, '98), professor and program director in CWRU's Department of Orthodontics

and president of the Great Lakes Association of Orthodontists, joined



forces with **David Harmon, DDS (DEN '94, '96)**, adjunct professor of orthodontics at CWRU and president of the Middle Atlantic

Society of Orthodontists, to host a joint meeting of their groups in September at the Gaylord National Harbor in Maryland.



Kari A. Cunningham, DMD (DEN '10, '12), was recognized with the National Dental Association's 40 Under 40 Award at the July convention in New Orleans.

Winnie Wong, DMD (DEN '16), who practices at Barsan, Stefan & Wong

Remembering a leader



Robert Heckel, DDS (DEN '57), who is remembered for his dedication to the dental profession and for his love of teaching, died Sept. 1, 2023. Throughout his life, he inspired countless people by serving in leadership roles wherever he went.

Over the years, Heckel led the way for his peers, serving as lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy submarine force during the Cuban Missile Crisis; head of his own oral and maxillofacial surgery practice; president

of medical staff and chairman of the Department of Surgery at St. Joseph Hospital in Warren; president of the Great Lakes Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons; and diplomate and examiner with the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery.

Heckel retired from private practice in 2005, but he wasn't finished with his career yet. He returned to Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine to become clinical associate professor in the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. He taught until 2023—proudly boasting that, at 90, he was likely the oldest person ever to have held the position.

"Over the years, he became my confidant, mentor and friend," said **Dale Baur, DDS (DEN '80)**, Heckel's colleague, vice dean of the dental school and chair of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. "I could always turn to him for advice, as so many others did."

In recognition of Heckel's dedication to teaching and mentoring—especially residents—an outstanding oral and maxillofacial surgery resident at the dental school will be selected each year to receive the Robert D. Heckel Award.

"He will be missed," Baur said, "by everyone."

Family Dental, received the Ohio Dental Association N. Wayne Hiatt Rising Star Award for her commitment to leadership and service in dental medicine. She also received Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine's 2023 Outstanding New Dentist Alumni Award (see p. 26).

Ashley Howen, DMD (DEN '16), received the Academy of General Dentistry Fellowship Award at the

2023 Academy of General Dentistry Scientific Session in Las Vegas for her commitment to providing quality dental care in Springfield, Massachusetts, and advancing her professional skills.

Brian J. Hudec, DMD (DEN '17), was recently profiled in *Fortune Week* for his service to his community of Lakewood, Ohio, through his long-standing family practice, Hudec Dental.

In memoriam

Includes death notices received Jan. 10, 2023–Feb. 21, 2024.

Gerald B. Adelstein (ADL '61, DEN '66) of Cleveland died Sept. 22. After graduating from Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine, Adelstein was a captain in the U.S. Air Force Dental Service Corps. He managed a private practice for 53 years and volunteered dental services at the Little Sisters of the Poor in Cleveland.

John Anderson (DEN '74) of Atascadero, California, died June 25. After earning his doctorate, Anderson served as an officer in the U.S. Navy. He later graduated from University of California San Francisco with a degree in orthodontics and opened his own practice in Atascadero, from which he retired in 2007 to found St. Hilaire Vineyard and Winery.

Wilson R. Armstrong (DEN '69) of Idaho Falls, Idaho, died Sept. 6. After graduating from dental school, he served in the military, then returned to Idaho to work in private practice until he retired.

Donald R. Brauning (DEN '56) of Nashport, Ohio, died May 26. Brauning served as a U.S. Army captain in the Dental Corps and later managed Brauning Dental Associates, his private practice in Zanesville, Ohio.

Gary P. Brigham (DEN '74; GRS '76, orthodontics) of Scottsdale, Arizona, died Dec. 25. While in dental school, Brigham received the Harry Sicher Award from the American Association of Orthodontics for best graduate research. He served as an assistant professor of pediatric medicine and as post-doctoral fellow at Abraham

Lincoln School of Medicine at University of Illinois Medical Center. He was a nationally recognized authority and lecturer on clear aligners, having treated more than 1,000 patients. In 2008, he delivered the keynote address at Align Technology's Invisalign Summit in Las Vegas. He managed his private practice, specializing in orthodontics, from 1987 until his death.

Reynold M. Crane Jr. (DEN '74) of Danville, Pennsylvania, died April 21. After graduating from Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine, he earned his oral and maxillofacial radiology certificate from University of Pennsylvania. He managed his oral surgery private practice in nearby Northumberland and Bloomsburg, and volunteered his services to patients in Ecuador, Lithuania, Nepal, China and Vietnam.

Darwin R. Datwyler (DEN '63; GRS '65, orthodontics) of El Dorado Hills, California, died Dec. 18, 2022. After graduating from Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine, he operated his private orthodontist practice in Danville, California, until he retired.

Kerry A. Demascus (DEN '81) of Naples, Florida, died June 10. Demascus was a periodontist and implantologist who operated his private practice in Bronxville, New York. He specialized in dental implants and bone grafts for patients with deficient jaw structures. Demascus was recognized as a leader in these fields and lectured annually at the Ninth District Dental Society.

Emilio D. Ferrara (DEN '64) of Kent, Ohio, died June 28. Ferrara completed his residency in oral and maxillofacial surgery at University of Cincinnati Medical Center and established an oral surgery private practice, which he managed for 40 years. He served on the Kent City School District Board of Education for 32 years and was appointed by Ohio Gov. Bob Taft to be a trustee at Kent State University, where he served for nine years.

Henry Greenwell III (DEN '82) of Taylorsville, Kentucky, died June 1. For 35 years, Greenwell served on the faculty in the Department of Periodontics at University of Louisville School of Dentistry, where he was also program director of the postdoctoral periodontics program. Through research, Greenwell developed new surgical procedures for periodontal treatment with his students, who he trained in these techniques. He was an active member of the American Academy of Periodontics, the American Board of Periodontics and the American Dental Association.

Martin F. Gulbransen (DEN '80) of Wadsworth, Ohio, died Nov. 12, 2022. He managed a private practice in Brunswick, Ohio, for 34 years. He was a member of The Mayflower Society, a hereditary organization of individuals who have documented their descent from at least one of the 102 passengers who arrived on the Mayflower in 1620 at what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Michael P. Healey (DEN '76) of Roswell, Georgia, died Nov. 10, 2022. He specialized in pediatric orthodontics and practiced in North Sandy Springs, Georgia, before moving to Children's Dental and Orthodontic Care of North Atlanta in Alpharetta.

Asaaki A. Horii (DEN '65) of Overland Park, Kansas, died March 21, 2023.

Thomas M. Kopriva (ADL '64, DEN '68) of Springfield, Oregon, died Dec. 28, 2022. After graduating from the School of Dental Medicine, he served in the U.S. Air Force as a dentist in Laughlin, Texas. He was honorably discharged in 1972 and operated a private practice in Houston for several years before relocating to Eugene, Oregon, where he eventually retired.

Eugene W. Kozel (DEN '66) of Monterey, California, died Sept. 2, 2022. After earning his degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, Kozel studied endodontics at George Washington University—concurrently serving in the U.S. Army as a paratrooper. He retired from the service in 1977 and established a private dental specialty practice in Monterey, which he managed for a decade before moving to northeast Texas to work in the cellular telephone industry. He later moved back to Monterey, where he stayed for the remainder of his life.

Thomas F. Lucas (DEN '74) of West Roxbury, Massachusetts, died Feb. 15, 2023. Lucas served in the U.S. Navy Dental Corps for two years after

graduating from the School of Dental Medicine. He then opened a dental practice in his hometown of Lowell, Massachusetts, where he worked until retirement.

Charles F. Marek (DEN '68) of Apopka, Florida, died Nov. 12, 2022. Marek was stationed as a dentist for the U.S. Navy in Memphis, Tennessee, from 1968 until 1970. After being honorably discharged, he first opened a private practice in Strongsville, Ohio, only to relocate to the Gulf Coast of Florida. There, he opened a private practice with locations in Englewood and Siesta Key, managing both until he retired in 2014.

Paul W. Martin Jr. (DEN '60) of Hudson, Ohio, died Aug. 20. He served as captain in the U.S. Navy Dental Corps, and as the reserve commanding officer for Cleveland's U.S. Navy Dental Reserve Corps. Martin operated a private practice for nearly four decades in Hudson and was a fellow and life member of the Academy of General Dentistry. While he maintained a career in dentistry, Martin also earned an associate's degree in fire science and a master's degree in urban administration from University of Akron. A volunteer firefighter at the Hudson Fire Department since 1962, Martin worked his way up to become fire chief. He served as president and chairman of the Board of the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the State of Ohio Citizens and Ohio's Fire Service, and was inducted into the State of Ohio Fire Hall of Fame by Ohio Gov. Bob Taft.

Terrence J. Martzial III (DEN '86) of Boardman, Ohio, died March 31, 2023. He managed his private practice in New Middletown, Ohio, for 27 years and performed dental surgery and taught residents at Mercy Health-St. Elizabeth Youngstown Hospital. Martzial was also president of the Corydon Palmer Dental Society, a nonprofit association of dental practitioners that serves Ohio's Mahoning, Trumbull and Columbiana counties.

Benjamin L. Nase (DEN '60) of Lower Salford Township, Pennsylvania, died Nov. 14. He served in the U.S. Army for two years before attending Goshen College in Indiana. After graduating from Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine, Nase interned at University of Pennsylvania. Nase was the dentist at Pennhurst State School and Hospital and performed dental exams and surveys for Souderton Area School District. He opened a private general dentistry practice in Harleysville, Pennsylvania, where his son, John, continues his legacy of care.

Louis Anthony Pocharski Jr. (DEN '59) of Marblehead, Massachusetts, died July 21. After graduation from the School of Dental Medicine, Pocharski opened his oral surgery practice at Salem Hospital in Massachusetts. He belonged to the Salem Rotary Club, where he served one term as president.

Ronald J. Reber (DEN '61) of Lorain, Ohio, died Dec. 1, 2022. He served in the U.S. Air Force as a dentist at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, where he was elevated to captain. He was honorably discharged

In memoriam, continued

in 1963 and returned to Lorain, where he opened a private practice. In addition to maintaining his practice for 50 years until retirement, Reber was on the dental staff at St. Joseph Hospital in Lorain and was an instructor at University Hospitals Rainbows Babies and Children Hospital. Reber was a member of the Lorain County Dental Society, serving as president in 2005, and the Lorain County Health and Dentistry Advisory Board.

Jeremy Mathew Rosenberg (DEN '99) of Dunwoody, Georgia, died Sept. 26. He was a member of the Alpha Omega International Dental Society, and his dental practice, Peachtree Dunwoody Dental Group, serviced the metro Atlanta area for 17 years.

Harvey A. Schlesinger (ADL '58, DEN '62) of Shaker Heights, Ohio, died Nov. 24, 2022. After graduating from the School of Dental Medicine, he completed an endodontic internship at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Detroit. Schlesinger then returned to Cleveland, where he taught endodontics for seven years at Case Western Reserve University, worked in private practice and served as president of the Euclid Dental Society. Schlesinger was also a member of the American Association of Endodontists and the Cleveland Dental Society and was chair of Alpha Omega International Dental Society's speakers bureau.

James J. Skiffey Jr. (DEN '67) of Niles, Ohio, died Aug. 9. He managed Skiffey Dental Practice in Niles from 1969 until 2022, when he retired. He was a member of The American Dental Association, The Ohio Dental Association and the Corydon Palmer

Dental Society, a nonprofit association of dental practitioners that serves Ohio's Mahoning, Trumbull and Columbiana counties.

Thomas J. Smith (DEN '66; GRS '69, dentistry) of Fort Laramie, Wyoming, died March 3, 2023. Smith practiced dentistry for 16 years before becoming an associate professor at University of Minnesota School of Dentistry, where he taught diagnosis, treatment planning, bioethics and health law. Simultaneously, he earned his JD from William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota. After a relatively brief period at University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine, Smith retired as a tenured professor in the Department of Advanced General Dentistry at University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Dentistry, where he spent a decade as associate dean of clinical programs.

Murray Stein, of Shaker Heights, Ohio, died December 3. Stein served as chair of the School of Dental Medicine's oral and maxillofacial surgery program for 25 years before retiring as professor emeritus. He also served as the dental school's associate dean and senior advisor to the dean, and established the Division of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at University Hospitals. Stein volunteered his time to multiple organizations, including the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, International College of Dentists, American College of Dentists, American Dental Association, Ohio Dental Association, Greater Cleveland Dental Society, Cleveland Society of Oral Surgeons and more.

Leon S. Stone (ADL '44, DEN '46) of Riverdale, New York, died Jan. 30, 2023. Stone served as a captain in the U.S. Army in Munich, just after World War II. When he returned stateside, he worked in New York City in a family dental practice, then as a solo practitioner, until his retirement in 1996.

Ronald Michael Sveda (DEN '59) of Brecksville, Ohio, died Dec. 11, 2022. He spent three years with the U.S. Navy Dental Corps at Camp LeJeune in North Carolina. Later, Sveda opened a private practice in Garfield Heights, Ohio, where he worked for 38 years before retiring.

Efthimios Tartara (ADL '62, DEN '67) of Parma, Ohio, died Oct. 14, 2022. After graduating from the School of Dental Medicine, Tartara served three years as a dentist in the U.S. Air Force. He then moved to Broadview Heights, Ohio, to open a private practice, where he worked for 52 years. He was a member of the Greater Cleveland Dental Society, Ohio Dental Association and American Dental Association.

Leonard M. Warren (ADL '53; DEN '57; GRS '61, orthodontics) of Foster City, California, died Sept. 26. Warren purchased a practice in San Francisco in 1963, which he managed until retiring in 2000. He also served as president of the San Francisco Dental Society.

Shaping excellence

A lifetime of mentorship influences alumnus's journey

While some children may fear going to the dentist, that was never the case for **Kumar Subramanian, MSD (DEN '04)**.

In fact, the family dentist, M.R. Chandrasekaran, DDS, inspired Subramanian's future career path, helping him narrow his focus within healthcare and start working toward his goals at an early age. Living in Madras, India, now known as Chennai, Subramanian began shadowing Chandrasekaran in middle school, logging nearly 400 hours in the office before he finished his undergraduate degree. He still points to Chandrasekaran as one of the biggest influences in his life and career.

Today, Subramanian is now in his 18th year running a private endodontics practice in Columbus, Ohio, and in his 20th year training residents and treating patients at Nationwide Children's Hospital. He also recently completed two consecutive terms as president of the Ohio State Dental Board, during which time he spearheaded important state policy changes at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Subramanian and his wife, Purnima Kumar, DDS, PhD, met in dental school at the University of Madras and came to the United States to advance their careers.

Subramanian toured more than half a dozen schools to find the right place to get his master's in endodontics and U.S. certification, but Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine stood out above the rest.

"I was dazzled," he said of his visit,



Purnima and Kumar Subramanian

recalling an impressive presentation by **Andre Mickel, DDS**, chair of endodontics. "Andre made it clear how diverse and motivating the program is," Subramanian said, "and that people at Case Western Reserve are thinking about the future."

While he certainly learned new techniques, such as operating with a microscope, the alumnus said the relationships he formed while at CWRU have had the greatest impact—continuing the theme of mentorship that began with Chandrasekaran.

Among Subramanian's list of inspirational mentors is Dean **Kenneth**

Chance, DDS (DEN '79)—but the two didn't overlap at Case Western Reserve. They met years before Chance became dean, when he still chaired the endodontics department at the University of Kentucky. He hired Subramanian as an assistant professor, and though they only worked together for two years, their bond remains today.

"I owe a lot to Ken, for the motivation and encouragement he has given me over the years," Subramanian said. "I wouldn't be where I am today without the support of all of my mentors, my friends, co-residents and my amazing family."

A look back

From the archives of the School of Dental Medicine

From WWI warriors to modern heroes

Continuing the commitment to service and care

When classes began at Western Reserve University in 1917, World War I was dominating the attention of the country. Despite the sedate tone that hushed campus after the war began, students adopted the mindset to “do your bit” and “carry on,” as campus life transformed to support the war effort.

Western Reserve Yearbook editors wrote that hundreds of students had been recruited to “wear Uncle Sam’s uniform” in the U.S. military and the Student Army Training Corps (SATC)—the U.S. Department of War’s effort to accelerate the training of new soldiers across the country. Members of the SATC lived in residence halls and completed college coursework while receiving military training, adhering to strict schedules and leaving campus only with the permission of their commanding officers.



Western Reserve Student Army Training Corps men pose inside their barracks circa 1917.

In October of 1918, U.S. Army Surgeon William Cowgill wrote to the Committee on Education and Special Training in Washington, D.C., asking that the Western Reserve dental school be allowed to provide “urgent” dental treatment to the SATC recruits, and requesting recompense from the federal government.

One clinic in October of 1918 treated 70 recruits with 35 fillings, 13 crowns, three canal fillings, 18 prophylactic



The dental school class of 1918—pictured here in 1916 as freshmen in the East 9th Street school building in downtown Cleveland—provided dental services to military recruits during WWI.

treatments and extractions on 30 patients. The exact number of extracted teeth from these 30 patients is not known, however, because “no record was made, as it was all done for the good of the country.”

Additionally, the dental school’s new facility was offered up to the Preparedness League of American Dentists to provide free dental care to other men who had been drafted into the army. Between 1917 and 1918, volunteer dentists and dental school residents performed around 14,000 dental operations on military men.

Today, more than a century on, the School of Dental Medicine at what is now Case Western Reserve University continues its tradition of caring for those who serve through the Veterans Day Clinic, at which students and faculty have provided free dental healthcare to veterans and military personnel since 2018.

Ali Syed, BDS, associate professor in the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences, was inspired to establish the program by his own father, who served in the Indian Army.

“I wanted to do something for people who serve their country,” said Syed. “I am thrilled to be part of this initiative.”

Read more about last year’s Veterans Day Clinic on p. 19.

Find connection and inspiration Nov. 14–17

Mark your calendars for Case Western Reserve University's 2024 Homecoming and Reunion Weekend!

Reconnect with classmates, engage with students, celebrate milestone anniversaries and be inspired by the latest innovations at Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine.

Keep an eye on case.edu/dental/homecoming for more information.



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY**
School of Dental Medicine



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY**
School of Dental Medicine

10900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7342

Help discourage waste:

If you receive duplicate mailings,
want to be removed from the
mailing list or need to change an
address, contact 216.368.3480 or
dentalalumni@case.edu

Support students, *drive innovation*

Gifts to Case Western Reserve University
School of Dental Medicine's Annual Fund help us:

- offer critical student scholarships;
- conduct cutting-edge research;
- recruit and retain top faculty;
- serve the Greater Cleveland community;
- and much more.

Making a three-year commitment through our
Partners in Progress program provides extra
stability, allowing us to plan for the future.



Become a partner in progress today
by visiting giving.case.edu/dental or
calling 216.368.3480.



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY**
School of Dental Medicine

