

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF

DENTAL MEDICINE

Transforming how dentists are trained

Inside the newly renovated Simulation Clinic that
helps prepare students for dental practice



DENTAL MEDICINE

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On the cover:

First-year dental student Rania Latifi works on a dental manikin with ergonomic loupes in the dental school's renovated simulation lab during a "Basic Procedures in Restorative Dentistry II" course.

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To our alumni and friends:

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I reflect on the progress and accomplishments of Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine over the past year. This has been a period of transformation, innovation and growth—a testament to our commitment to excellence in education, research and patient care.

Continuing in our tradition of being a long-standing leader in the field of dentistry, CWRU School of Dental Medicine has set new precedents in research, community care and technology, where our advancements have placed us at the forefront of the dental profession. The integration of cutting-edge tools and resources into both our curriculum and clinical practice underscores our focus on innovation and preparing students for the future of dentistry.

Our newly upgraded Simulation Clinic reflects this focus, offering a modernized environment where students can develop and refine their skills using virtual and augmented technologies that simulate real-world scenarios (see p. 12).

Two changes in our faculty reflect our momentum in digital dentistry. **Ilser Turkyilmaz, DMD, PhD**, a distinguished clinician and researcher in the field of prosthodontics and implant dentistry, has joined the School of Dental Medicine as professor and chair of the Department of Comprehensive Care and associate dean for digital innovation. Additionally, Associate Professor **Ali Syed, BDS, MS**, is now special advisor to the dean on craniofacial imaging and artificial intelligence (AI). His leadership will help position the dental school as a trailblazer in the application of AI and imaging innovations to dentistry (see p. 5).

As you likely know, I am stepping down as dean of the School of Dental Medicine at the end of 2025. Serving has been an incredible honor, and I am proud of all we've accomplished—from opening the Health Education Campus of CWRU and Cleveland Clinic and new Dental Clinic to expanding community outreach, providing \$5 million in care to 35,000 patients last year alone.

I'm especially proud of how we navigated COVID-19, ensuring the safe continuation of education, training and patient care. Our resilience strengthened the school, and our strategic plan, "The Business of Dental Education," will guide the school's future advancements (see p. 4).

I am deeply grateful for this community's dedication and look forward to continuing our important work in the months ahead.

Kenneth B. Chance, DDS (DEN '79)

Dean, Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine



Since 2014, Dean Chance—the first Black dean of the School of Dental Medicine—has led the school through challenges and successes, including:

- Elevating curriculum with data-driven improvements, faculty calibration, and advanced technology, including robotics and HoloLens software
- Strengthening clinical performance across specialty programs and faculty practice
- Leading the dental school's largest fundraising campaign (\$81.8 million) in its 133-year history
- Recruiting top-tier students with higher GPAs and Dental Admission test scores, with Class of 2027 having the highest scores in school history
- Achieving 100% first-time pass rate for the Class of 2027 on the new Integrated National Board Dental Examinations
- Adding three new dental research faculty and key leadership positions in digital innovation and craniofacial imaging
- Expanding global collaboration by maintaining partnerships with Future University (Egypt) and Ferrara University (Italy) and by hosting the first Fulbright Fellow in Orthodontics
- Completing a \$2.6 million upgrade of the Simulation Clinic
- Establishing the Dean Kenneth B. Chance, DDS Endowed Distinguished Lectureship

A bold vision for the future

School of Dental Medicine makes progress on its strategic plan

When Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine unveiled its strategic plan, “The Business of Dental Education,” two years ago, it laid out the school’s commitment to ethical and compassionate business principles that support the school’s mission, vision and values.

Guided by this new plan, the School of Dental Medicine will:

- foster a positive, supportive and welcoming environment for all faculty, staff, students, and patients;
- create a culture based on mutual respect, concern for others, dignity, tolerance, fairness, and open dialogue;
- ensure rigorous predoctoral and graduate programs by securing accreditation, improving Integrated National Board Dental Examination pass rates, and completing a comprehensive Doctor of Dental Medicine curriculum review;
- grow and strengthen the research enterprise for more faculty and student involvement and to become recognized as a top-tier research-intensive dental school;
- expand incorporation of the full scope of digital dentistry into comprehensive patient care;
- serve as a local, state, and national leader in community service and dental student service learning through our outreach and research programs; and
- partner with organizations to improve access to oral healthcare for all.

The dental school has been making progress on its objectives, having hosted its mock site visit for accreditation in November and conducted its review of the DMD program.

As the school continues to work on these priorities, it will ensure that graduates are well-prepared to meet the evolving needs of the profession and society. This strategic direction is intended to strengthen the dental school’s role as a leader in dental education, and enhances its ability to impact local and global oral health.

READ THE PLAN:



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.



Dean **Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN '79)** was appointed by American Dental Association President Linda J.

Edgar to serve on the National Task Force on Lowering Dental School Tuition. Chance was one of only four dental school deans selected nationally for the 10-member team.



Mark Hans, DDS (DEN '79, '81), professor and chair of the Department of Orthodontics at Case Western Reserve, received

the 2024 Louise Ada Jarabak Memorial International Teachers and Research Award for significant contributions to orthodontic teaching and research at the 2024 American Association of Orthodontists annual session.



Scott Pelok, DDS, associate professor of comprehensive care, earned a Nord Grant from Case Western Reserve's University Center for

Innovation in Teaching and Education for his most recent research project into "extended reality" tools. Pelok's project aims to develop guidelines for using Meta Quest augmented reality headsets in instructor demonstrations, with the goal of making the technology more user-friendly for faculty, evaluating

streaming capabilities for classroom use and gathering student feedback to improve usability.



Faisal A. Quereshy, DDS, MD (DEN '94, MED '97, MGT '24), earned a Master of Business Administration from CWRU

Weatherhead School of Management and was elected president of the American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons.



Ali Syed, BDS, MS, associate professor of oral and maxillofacial medicine and diagnostic sciences and director of the

admitting clinic, was named special advisor to Dean Chance on craniofacial imaging and artificial intelligence. In this role, Syed will provide guidance on advanced imaging techniques using AI, ensuring accurate diagnosis and treatment planning for complex craniofacial conditions. He will also develop and update imaging protocols to enhance diagnostic precision and prioritize patient safety.



Ilser Turkyilmaz, DMD, PhD, joined Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine last fall as chair of

the Department of Comprehensive Care and associate dean for digital innovation. Turkyilmaz came to CWRU from New York University's College of Dentistry, where, since 2016, he'd made significant contributions integrating cutting-edge technologies into the curriculum. His research focuses on digital dentistry, biomaterials, dental implants and CAD/CAM technology, with 134 peer-reviewed publications and over 3,000 citations. He earned his DMD and PhD in prosthodontics from Hacettepe University in Turkey, then completed an implant prosthodontics fellowship at Ohio State University before joining University of Texas Health Science Center as an assistant professor and director of the Dental School Implant Clinic.

From pain to healing

Patient finds relief at CWRU dental clinic

Pam Ziegler will never forget the day she sat in **Dale Baur's** office at Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine. For years, she had endured relentless dental and jaw pain from a car crash and had been relying on soft foods and heavy medication just to get through the day.

Her case was so intensive that she underwent various dental treatments for more than 30 years. By the time she arrived at CWRU, she felt hopeless.

"I thought no one could help me," she recalled. But then she met Baur, DDS, and **Ibrahim Tulunoglu, PhD**—and everything changed.

Baur, professor and chair of oral and maxillofacial surgery, immediately recognized the severity of Ziegler's condition. She required extensive surgery to address multiple issues caused by years of undiagnosed dental complications. Tulunoglu, a prosthodontist specializing in advanced dental restorations, joined the team to rebuild Ziegler's smile from the ground up.

The journey wasn't easy. Ziegler underwent multiple surgeries and spent countless hours in the dental chair. But the unwavering care and collaboration between Baur and Tulunoglu gave her hope.

"They treated me like a person, not just a patient," Ziegler said. "They truly cared about making me whole again. I've had dental work done all over the country, but it's because of CWRU—their doctors, staff and facilities—that I'm where I am today."

The doctors collaborated on a comprehensive treatment plan, which included the removal of damaged teeth, the placement of 12 implant posts and the creation of custom-fitted dentures. Their work restored Ziegler's ability to eat, speak and smile with confidence. The meticulous attention to detail ensured her new teeth not only looked natural but also functioned perfectly.

Today, Ziegler is pain-free and full of gratitude for the team that gave her her life back.

"They didn't just fix my teeth; they gave me a second chance at living fully," she said.

Baur and Tulunoglu's dedication underscores the School of Dental Medicine's mission: combining cutting-edge treatment with a patient-first approach—one smile at a time.

"I am still healing from all these years of dental trauma, and I know there are many patients experiencing unknowns like I once did," Ziegler said. "My hope is that we can help others by informing them of the possibilities at CWRU."

—Alaina Bartel



From left: Dale Bauer, DDS, Pam Ziegler and Ibrahim Tulunoglu, PhD

Brightening smiles, changing lives

From sealants to dentures, the School of Dental Medicine's community outreach team delivered dental care and education to thousands of patients across the greater Cleveland area in 2024. Here are the numbers on their efforts over the past year.

HEALTHY SMILES SEALANT PROGRAM

Provides medically underserved communities with dental care

5,000+

children received dental care and sealants

"We eliminate barriers by providing care directly to patients, many of whom are in a wheelchair or have cognitive deficits. Many have Medicare but no dental benefits, or struggle to find a provider who accepts Medicaid."

—Suparna A. Mahalaha, DDS, director of the Lifelong Smiles Program

HEAD START OUTREACH PROGRAM

2,646
children

8

counties in Northeast Ohio

832

children referred to the School of Dental Medicine Pediatric Dental Clinic for treatment

GIVE KIDS A SMILE DAY

Provides underserved children with free oral health care

80

children received free dental care

"One of my patients is a 95-year-old woman with hearing difficulties who wanted a new denture to improve her smile. We took a bit more time to create and fit her new denture, and she was thrilled. She couldn't stop smiling and proudly showed off her new smile."

—Kayla Nero, fourth-year student



LIFELONG SMILES AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Provides dental care to patients in area nursing homes

220

people received dental care during 500 appointments

406

people provided with oral health screenings and education



Studying the connection

Researchers make important discoveries about the link between oral health and overall health

It's a well-known axiom among oral healthcare professionals that the mouth is the window to the body; however, it's less well-understood why that connection exists.

The relationship between the two is usually explained by shared inflammatory pathways between the mouth and body, which are said to contribute to everything from adverse pregnancy outcomes to diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Researchers at Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine have long been exploring this concept. Here are just a few examples of their recent discoveries.

Tooth loss as a warning sign

If our oral health is indicative of our overall health, then could it help doctors diagnose serious illnesses in their patients—before it's too late?

Anita Aminoshariae, DDS, a professor in the Department of Endodontics, analyzed more than a dozen studies to find a connection between oral health and heart disease, the nation's leading cause of death.



Anita
Aminoshariae

Her conclusions, published in the *Journal of Endodontics* in October, found that people with tooth loss are at significantly increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease (CVD). Among the key findings: Individuals with multiple missing teeth had a 66% higher chance of dying from CVD; the risk was even higher in people who had lost all of their teeth.

While the exact relationship between oral health and cardiovascular health remains unclear, the chronic inflammation present in periodontal disease—a leading cause of tooth loss—is thought to be a significant factor, according to Aminoshariae.

"Researching this link can provide insights into how managing oral health might reduce inflammation and lower CVD risk," Aminoshariae said. "Understanding this relationship can help identify individuals at higher risk for CVD and lead to better preventive measures, such as regular dental check-ups and early interventions for oral health issues."

READ THE STUDY:



An ally for oral health

A child's pediatrician might be the key to a healthier smile, according to recent research led by **Suchitra Nelson, DDS**, professor and associate dean for clinical and translational research at the dental school.

Nelson and her team found that when pediatricians received extra training in spotting early signs of tooth decay and referring families to dentists, kids were significantly more likely to get the dental care they needed. The findings, published in *JAMA Network Open* last July, highlight how a quick oral health examination during routine checkups could help close the gap in dental care access for children from families with low incomes.

The study, which was funded by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, followed 1,023 children enrolled in Medicaid over three years. To test their hypothesis, researchers split a group of primary care pediatricians and nurse practitioners into two groups: One received expanded oral health education and skills training to provide quick oral exams including how and when to provide referrals to dentists who accepted Medicaid; the other received basic oral health education.

By the end of the study, the children whose families received expanded oral healthcare were 34% more likely to visit the dentist.

"Primary care providers can be at the forefront of reducing cavities in young children," said Nelson.

"Our study shows that they can do this effectively in their wellness visit workflow in less than two minutes."

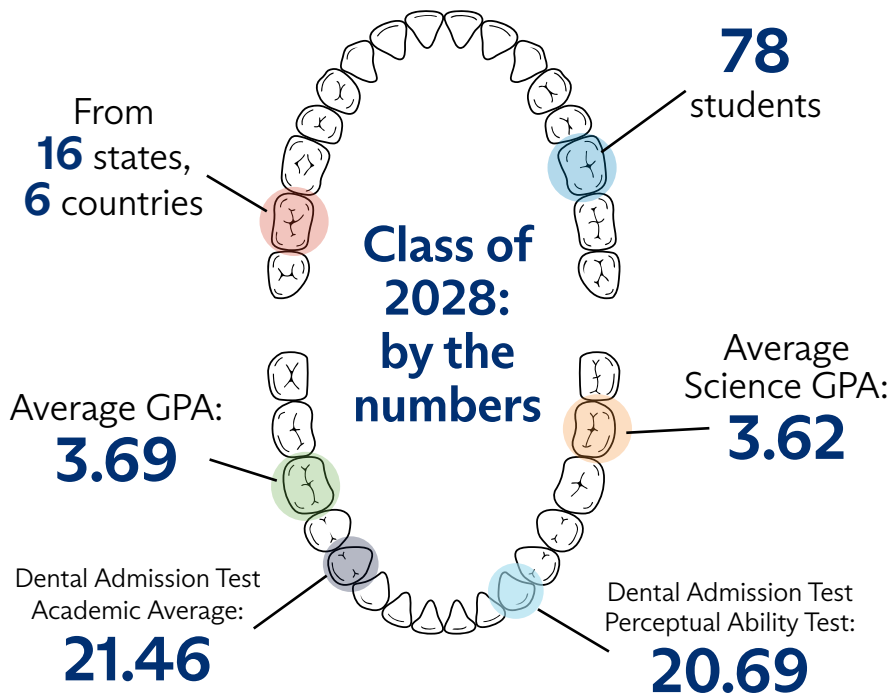
—Christina Frank

READ THE STUDY:



Snapshot of future leaders

At Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, students from the Class of 2028 come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, bringing with them impressive achievements and a shared passion for patient care. Take a closer look at who they are—their academic journeys, career aspirations and what drives them to excel in the field of dentistry.



“



“I want to create an environment where patients feel confident they’re receiving the best care. I love that we’ll be helping the Cleveland community right away.”

—Aisling Halliden, Class of 2028, on the School of Dental Medicine’s small, collaborative environment and emphasis on clinical skills and patient care

“

“One of my goals in dentistry is to make people more comfortable with going to the dentist. There are people who have access to care but choose not to utilize it out of fear. I hope to relieve stress for my patients while improving their self-esteem and quality of life.”

—Joseph DeCarlo, Class of 2028, on why he chose to pursue a career in dental medicine



“

“My community involvement during my undergraduate studies has made me really passionate about community work, and a major goal of mine [is to provide] dental care to underserved communities.”

—Ananta Datta, Class of 2028, on how the School of Dental Medicine helps him fulfill his academic passion



White coats, bright futures

The Class of 2028 stepped into their educational journeys

The soft glow of afternoon sunlight filtered through the stained-glass windows of Amasa Stone Chapel as the incoming Class of 2028 filed in, anticipation hanging in the air.

Late last summer, the Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine held its annual White Coat Ceremony, a rite of passage marking the students' formal entry into the profession. With each crisp white coat slipped on, the weight of their future responsibilities became tangible—a symbol of dedication, integrity and the journey ahead.

Take a look at some of the scenes from that day.

Photography by Andrew Jordan







Jeremy Ngo

FIGS



Transforming how dentists are trained

Inside the high-tech Simulation Clinic preparing
students for real-world dental practice

By Daniel Robison

It's early in the spring semester at Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, and the newly renovated Simulation Clinic is alive with activity. Under bright overhead lights, rows of realistic manikins—complete with imitation lips, cheeks and built-in suction—are seated at workstations stocked with the latest in dental technology.

Even without real patients, the space hums like a busy dental practice. First-year student **Ava Krensky** and her classmates take turns drilling and refining foundational techniques—skills that, until recently, were practiced on much simpler setups.

“When you’re drilling, it feels almost like a real patient,” said Krensky, who is from Bethesda, Maryland. “It’s incredible how real it feels, especially for one of my first times using a handpiece.”

Opened in August, the \$2.6 million facility—funded largely through philanthropy and in-kind donations—has also brought a major upgrade to the school’s preclinical curriculum. The new Simulation Clinic emphasizes extensive hands-on training with state-of-the-art tools that reflect evolving clinical practices.

“We’re determined to be at the forefront of dental education,” said **Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN ’79)**, dean of the School of Dental Medicine. “Our objective is to ensure our students are ready to deliver high-quality care from their very first day with patients.”

*First-year dental student
Jeremy Ngo pauses
while using ergonomic
loupes on a manikin.
These magnification
tools provide ergonomic
support by reducing
tension on the neck,
shoulders and upper back.*

Photography by Matt Shiffer



First-year dental students Joseph DeCarlo (left) and Armon Behestian (right) begin familiarizing themselves with hand pieces and burs prior to working on the manikin by cutting into a Kilgore Preparation Plate.

A modern launching pad

Housed at the Health Education Campus of Case Western Reserve and Cleveland Clinic, the dental school's Simulation Clinic offers dedicated spaces where students practice procedures long before treating real people. In the primary training area, 82 advanced dental units—each outfitted with a programmable touchpad, overhead lighting and an operator stool—create a near-clinical environment.

At every station, high-tech manikins allow students to mount typodonts (simulated teeth) and operate electric motor handpieces—learning restorative, implant, endodontic and prosthodontic techniques in a setting that mirrors an actual operating room.

“This is one of the most advanced simulation clinics in the country,” said **David Rolf, DMD**, associate dean for academic affairs and professor of periodontics. “It’s a major step forward for the field, and we’re leading the way—preparing students for a future when tech like electric handpieces are the norm.”

Until recently, preclinical dental students practiced on basic benchtop models—plastic teeth mounted on metal posts—that left much to be imagined. Today’s advanced manikins, equipped with a litany of lifelike features, integrated suction and foot pedals, allow students to build technical skills that more closely mirror actual patient care.

“Back in dental school, we made do with the materials we had; learning to be resourceful was part of the training,” said **Tania Markarian, DDS, MSM (DEN ’97, MGT ’19)**, an assistant professor at the dental school who teaches in the clinic. “Now, the manikins bring us much closer to the experience of treating someone—it really eases the learning curve.”

The manikins recline just like a real dental chair, requiring students to adopt accurate angles and positions.

“This level of detail prevents shortcuts that wouldn’t work in actual patient care,” Markarian added.

The manikins also feature magnetically swappable teeth, so students can seamlessly switch from a root canal on an

Continued on p. 16

Bridging lab and clinic

While preclinical students use manikins to build foundational skills, learners at every level benefit from the Simulation Clinic's expanded suite of advanced technology, enabling them to tackle more complex procedures.

Adjacent to the manikin stations, a dedicated area accommodates up to 40 students for hands-on training in the Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing process, essential for crafting crowns and other restorations. Next door, a 3D printing lab transforms digital designs into physical prototypes, bridging the gap between virtual modeling and real-world application.

Nearby, a 10-seat suite equipped with Sim-Ex augmented reality simulators provides real-time 3D views of

operative or fixed prosthodontic procedures—allowing students to practice with high-speed handpieces and receive immediate feedback from faculty.

“These hands-on experiences here are reshaping dental education,” said Rolf. “Yes, we focus on clinical proficiency, but we’re also cultivating critical thinking and adaptive problem-solving—essential qualities students will carry into their practices.”

To expand interactive learning, the dental school has also invested nearly \$100,000 in the mixed-reality headset and specialized software, strengthening its position as the first U.S. dental school to integrate advanced spatial learning with the technology.

In what's known as the Health Education Campus Digital Suite, students use HoloAnatomy and HoloNeuro mixed-reality software—both developed at CWRU—to explore anatomical structures in greater detail, seamlessly blending virtual visualization with hands-on training. Soon, the integration of HoloLens will expand to the school's Masticatory Dynamics course, allowing students to examine the temporomandibular joint and occlusion in three dimensions—bridging theoretical learning with clinical application.

“This is a low-stakes environment that helps them master tools and software before they face complex patient needs,” Markarian said. “Especially emerging digital components can be daunting if they haven't practiced.”



Students use the typodont to practice drilling and other skills.



Clinical Instructor David LaSalvia, DDS, teaches first-year student, Farhan Choudhary, using the typodont.

upper incisor to a crown prep on a lower molar in the same session. The soft cheeks and lips further challenge them to manage retraction, moisture and water spray.

“Learning to deal with water pooling or a fogged mirror—things they never faced with a simple plastic tooth—accelerates their readiness,” said **Scott Pelok, DDS**, an associate professor at the dental school.

Students also practice proper posture. Instead of bending over a desktop model, they sit upright, position themselves as they would with a real patient’s head, and adjust the overhead light for optimal visibility.

“This approach builds good ergonomic habits that will protect their backs and necks over their long careers,” said Pelok.

For **Makayla Birrell**, now in her second year, the ergonomic improvements over her first-year experience are evident.

“We have better stools and more accurate chair positions, so I’m not straining,” she said. “I go home less exhausted after a day in the lab.”

With less physical strain, she finds it easier to stay focused and engaged. In the afternoons, Birrell sometimes steps across the street to the main CWRU Dental Clinic to watch a classmate place a final restoration, then returns to the Simulation Clinic to practice those same techniques.

“Being able to observe and then immediately apply what I’ve seen makes a huge difference,” she said. “By the time I’m working with real patients, these steps will feel like second nature.”

Third- and fourth-year students also use the Simulation Clinic to master skills they’ve observed in the main clinic. Faculty often roam the rows of manikins, providing immediate critiques or demonstrating best practices.

“It’s a dynamic teaching loop,” said Pelok. “They can connect what they saw there with what they’re doing here; it helps them ask sharper questions and refine their approach.”

Centering the patient experience

While the Simulation Clinic is designed to build technical proficiency, it also reinforces the human side of dental medicine, helping students develop empathy and



Dental student Luke Erhart takes pointers on working with the manikin from Assistant Professor Tania Markarian, DDS.

communication capabilities. First-year student **Molly Newman** is drawn to how the lab combines precision with the profession's personal side.

"Dentistry feels like solving a puzzle on a small scale," said Newman, who is from the Chicago suburbs. "It's careful problem-solving paired with building real connections with patients."

Even with state-of-the-art technology, faculty emphasize that patient interaction is just as vital as technical expertise. By their third year, students are expected to enter clinical rotations with greater confidence—in both technical and interpersonal skills.

"We want dentists who can handle the drill but also connect with patients," said **Kristin Williams, DDS (DEN '89; GRS '05, public health)**, assistant dean for admissions and student affairs. "Once they've mastered the mechanics, they can focus on what truly matters: the person in the chair."

In fact, the Simulation Clinic—and its ongoing integration into deeper parts of the curriculum—aims to reflect a broader shift in dental education toward a more patient-centered approach. Its mix of modern tools and techniques is also a draw for those considering the program.

"It helps us attract more of the best and brightest," said Williams.

Stepping confidently into practice

Since opening at the start of the fall semester, the Simulation Clinic has become a hub of activity well beyond scheduled lab hours. Many students stay late—perfecting a crown margin, experimenting with digital scanning or practicing a complex procedure.

"Each scenario feels less intimidating as our first year goes along," said Krensky. "That foundation will be a benefit when we're treating patients depending on us."

For Birrell, her imminent transition to hands-on patient care later this year will be smoother thanks to time spent in simulation.



"It all adds up—and prepares us for challenges that we'll face soon. When we meet patients who need custom solutions, we won't be intimidated by the software or the tools."

—Makayla Birrell, second-year student

"It all adds up—and prepares us for challenges that we'll face soon," she said of her fellow second-year students. "When we meet patients who need custom solutions, we won't be intimidated by the software or the tools."

Faculty view students' enthusiasm and commitment as proof of the clinic's impact. Rolf calls it "the ultimate training ground"—and a place "where students grow into the competent and compassionate dentists they've always aspired to be."

School leaders also credit the clinic with accelerating student readiness. Dean Chance sees the facility as part of a

larger transformation in dental medicine—what he calls a "renaissance" combining science, technology and human-centered care.

"When students walk into this space, the energy is palpable," he said. "They're using the same cutting-edge technologies used in the most advanced clinics—and building the skills and habits that always put patients first."

Philanthropy and partnerships

Industry partnerships have played a key role in the development of the Simulation Clinic.

Bien-Air, a Swiss manufacturer of precision dental instruments, contributed \$350,000 worth of Optima MX2 electric motor systems. The dental school partnered with dental equipment supplier A-dec to procure advanced workstations, and with medical device company Kilgore International for manikins and typodonts for hands-on training.

"These collaborations bring cutting-edge tools directly into student training," said Dean **Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN '79)**. "It's about producing graduates who are ready to excel."



The career path less traveled

Academia offers opportunities for dental professionals

While more and more students enroll in dental schools across the United States each year, the faculty available to teach them has flatlined, according to the American Dental Education Association, which projects a shortage of about 400 faculty members over the next year.

Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine Dean **Kenneth B. Chance (DEN '79)**, hopes more dental professionals will help fill that gap by taking up a career in academic dentistry—just as he did several decades ago.

For Chance, the enriching potential of an academic career unfolded

unexpectedly. Fresh from his residency in endodontics at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (now Rutgers University) early in his professional life, Chance agreed to continue there with a one-year teaching assignment.

“I had no idea it would become a lifelong passion,” said Chance, who is preparing to retire from Case Western Reserve in December.

The choice between clinical practice and academic dentistry, Chance explained, is not an either/or proposition. Instead, a career in academia empowers dental professionals to simultaneously maintain their clinical skills, contribute



Kenneth B. Chance

to groundbreaking research, mentor the next generation of practitioners and actively engage in community health initiatives.

Chance and other dental professionals in academia have found that driving crucial advancements in research and educating future generations have not only enriched their careers, but also helped shape the future of the field.

At CWRU School of Dental Medicine, for example, faculty lead groundbreaking research initiatives. They mentor students in the dental clinic and provide care to local residents through community programs. They're at the forefront of digital dentistry with CWRU's state-of-the-art simulation center and digital imaging labs.

And, most importantly, Chance said, dental school faculty leave legacies of their own.

Chance likens teaching to a real-life equivalent of immortality because, he explained, "you leave a little bit of yourself to future generations."

Although very few new graduates choose academia—in part due to the need to repay student debt—many seasoned dental professionals transition later in their careers.

"What's good about this profession is that, as you get older, you can do various things," said Chance. "You can really engage in many different ways."

Leading by example

From leading research initiatives to directing prestigious programs at renowned universities, CWRU dental school alumni demonstrate how careers in academia have empowered them to propel the field forward while leaving their mark as leaders at some of the nation's top institutions for dental education. Read on to meet some of these inspiring alumni.



Sami Chogle

Sami Chogle, DMD (DEN '03)

Chair of endodontics and Herbert Schilder Professor in Endodontics, Boston University

Chogle got his start in academia at CWRU School of Dental Medicine as the director of undergraduate endodontics. Now, he leads the Department of Endodontics at Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine and influences both academic curriculum and research in the field.

"I am growing exponentially and have embodied the term 'lifelong learner,'" said Chogle. "I'm learning from colleagues [about] better teaching methods; from my superiors in administration about leading a department and not just managing it; from my staff how to build a welcoming learning environment; and, most of all, from my students, who share new insights into old literature and fundamental principles that they see in current literature. The joy of seeing our students succeed is only comparable to seeing our own children succeed in life."



Marc Schlossman

Marc Shlossman, DDS (DEN '78)

Associate director of clinical research and periodontics faculty and assistant professor, A.T. Still University

Shlossman's work at A.T. Still University Center for Oral Health Research focuses on the microbial characterization of periodontal and peri-implant disease and how to treat it using new technologies. In his role as a professor, he contributes to both the advancement of dental knowledge and the education of future periodontists.

"Interactions with students, faculty and patients has made this second career in academic dentistry incredibly rewarding," he said. "One of the most gratifying aspects of teaching is witnessing the transformation of our second-year students as they enter the clinic—initially tentative, they quickly gain confidence in their skills and continue to grow into competent and compassionate dental providers over the course of their training."



Theresa Roma Jasinevicius

**Theresa Roma Jasinevicius,
DDS (DEN '74, '76)**

*Associate professor, Department of
Comprehensive Care, Case Western
Reserve University*

Jasinevicius credits the inspiration for her journey into academia to her mentor, Vibeke K. Nygaard, DDS, an associate professor of oral biology and the first woman to hold the position of course director at the CWRU School of Dental Medicine. Affectionately referred to as “Dr. J” by students and alumni, Jasinevicius was honored with the CWRU Special Recognition Award in 2024 for her remarkable 48-year commitment to dental education.

“I am fortunate that my professional journey as an alum and faculty member has been inextricably woven together,” she said. “Each day as I walk into the School of Dental Medicine, I am greeted by the bright faces of our students—future colleagues and fellow alumni. It has been so lovely to be among their first instructors, guiding them to do their best and become all they aspire to be.”



Martin Nweeia

**Martin Nweeia, DMD
(DEN '84)**

*Clinical assistant professor,
Case Western Reserve University
Lecturer, Harvard University
Global Fellow, The Wilson Center*

Nweeia, a dental anthropologist and marine mammal odontologist, is renowned for his groundbreaking environmental research, particularly his studies of the narwhal's tusk. He exemplifies how CWRU-trained dentists can make extraordinary contributions beyond traditional clinical practice.

“[T]he world of teeth and my curiosity drew me into this world of wonder. Even as a student, I was curious about how teeth worked,” said Nweeia. “The understanding of teeth, anatomy, morphology, physiology and microstructure is a compelling and fascinating field of science. Though I enjoy the scientific and artistic challenges of general dentistry, the very nature of how teeth evolved and are functionally relevant to myriad mammals is still very much unexplored and an area of interest that motivates my continued passion for my research investigation on the narwhal tusk.”



Thomas Van Dyke

**Thomas Van Dyke, DDS,
PhD
(ADL '69, DEN '73)**

*Vice president of clinical and
translational research and professor,
Harvard University*

With an extensive and accomplished record of appointments and publications, Van Dyke is a leading figure in the dental research community. His focus has primarily centered on the development of periodontal disease and other inflammatory diseases.

“There is no shortage of new questions to answer or new paths of science to investigate,” he said. “There’s also little repetition. Every day brings new challenges, so I am always excited to go to work. Along with the excitement of research, there is the aspect of working with students, which is also quite fulfilling. I find teaching and mentoring very rewarding.”



Adam Kennedy

**Adam Kennedy, DMD
(DEN '14)**

Program director, general practice residency, Yale New Haven Hospital

When Kennedy isn't overseeing residents from Yale University, he's advancing his other passion: improving dental healthcare accessibility and inclusivity in the community. For example, Kennedy and his team secured grant funding to launch a community dental van, prioritizing essential care for veterans.

"I have the privilege of mentoring residents from diverse backgrounds, learning from them as much as I teach, and caring for a uniquely underserved patient population," he said. "It's deeply meaningful work. Academia has opened the door to opportunities in research, public speaking and continued professional growth—areas I'm eager to explore further. I'm incredibly grateful for the strong foundation I received at CWRU, and especially for the mentorship that encouraged me to pursue academic dentistry in the first place. That support played a pivotal role in bringing me to where I am today."



Anita Aminoshariae

**Anita Aminoshariae, DDS
(DEN '99)**

Professor and director of Predoctoral Endodontics, Case Western Reserve University

Aminoshariae splits her time between teaching at the School of Dental Medicine, treating patients at the Louis Stokes Cleveland Veterans Affairs Medical Center and researching diseases that affect the soft tissue of the teeth. She chose to return to her alma mater in 2009 to begin her journey in academia, and acknowledges that her career lends itself to lifelong learning.

"The lessons we learn at CWRU don't end at graduation," she said. "They grow with us, sparking new ideas, guiding our ambitions and shaping both our careers and who we become."



Xingzhong (John) Zhang

**Xingzhong (John) Zhang, DDS
(DEN '10)**

Clinical associate professor, University of Florida; Associate administrative director, postgraduate orthodontic program, A.T. Still University

Zhang was a full-time faculty member in the Department of Orthodontics at Peking University in China for more than a decade before pursuing further studies at Case Western Reserve. His influential mentors fueled his passion to advance his career in academia in the United States.

"I love teaching because it's rewarding and fosters continued learning while working with all the bright dental students and orthodontic residents with different backgrounds," said Zhang. "Working in academia allows me to make my contribution to dentistry and orthodontics, and pass the torch to the next generation of dentists and orthodontists."

To my fellow alumni



Michael Gallagher delivered remarks to the Class of 2028 at the White Coat Ceremony in August.

GET INVOLVED IN THE MENTORING PROGRAM:



DONATE TO THE SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE:



As president of the CWRU School of Dental Medicine Alumni Board, I am excited to share our goals for this year and highlight how we can continue to strengthen our incredible community of dental professionals.

First, we are committed to enhancing alumni engagement. Whether through campus events, receptions at annual conferences, continuing education opportunities, digital communications or simply staying connected with your classmates, we want every alumnus to feel connected to the School of Dental Medicine.

The 2024 Homecoming and Reunion Weekend was a tremendous success, with a huge increase in attendance—nearly filling the Tinkham Veale University Center ballroom to capacity—and lots of opportunities to connect with each other and with the school. One of the highlights was recognizing the winners of our annual alumni awards: **Andre Mickel, DDS (DEN '94)**, **T. Roma Jasinevicius, DDS (DEN '76)**, and **Nicholas Natile, DMD (DEN '17)**. These individuals exemplify the values and excellence of our community (p. 28).

Second, I am thrilled to announce the development of a new mentorship program. This initiative will connect seasoned alumni with students to provide guidance, career advice and professional insights. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please let us know by scanning the QR code on this page—we would love to have you involved.

Finally, we are focused on expanding our fundraising efforts. Philanthropy fuels the school's ability to provide top-tier education while also supporting technology improvements, such as the use of intra-oral scanners and lasers and student scholarships. I ask each of you to consider making a personally significant gift to the School of Dental Medicine each year. Your support directly impacts the next generation of dentists and ensures that our CWRU legacy of excellence continues.

If you are interested in serving on the board or have any questions, please contact me at drmgalls@gmail.com.

Thank you for your dedication and continued support. I look forward to what we will accomplish together.

Michael Gallagher, DDS (DEN '83)

President, Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine Alumni Association Board of Directors

Honoring generosity

Alumni, donors, students and faculty from the School of Dental Medicine gathered last fall for the Celebration of Philanthropy at the newly renovated Hotel Cleveland. The evening featured live music, heartfelt speeches and inspiring stories of donor impact—including a moving tribute to the legacy of **Jeffrey A. Mills** (see more about his story on p. 29). Here are some of the special moments from that evening of connection and appreciation.



School of Dental Medicine scholarship recipients



Hugh and Sherry Habas



Ronald Occhionero



School of Dental Medicine scholarship recipients, including Molina Foundation Scholars



D. Daniel Degesys and T. Roma Jasinevicius



Andre and Estomarys Mickel



David and Susan Mills

Smiles of success

Celebrating the Class of 2025

The School of Dental Medicine's Class of 2025 marked the culmination of their years of hard work and dedication at the diploma ceremony in May.

Surrounded by proud faculty, family and friends, graduates gathered at the Maltz Performing Arts Center's Silver Hall and reflected on their journey while looking ahead to the future.

Keynote speaker Gerard Bradley, DMD, president of the University of Louisville, offered graduates a message of encouragement and purpose. He emphasized the importance of compassion, integrity and adaptability as they begin their professional journeys.

The celebration continued with a reception in the Cosgrove Courtyard of the Sheila and Eric Samson Pavilion, where smiles and congratulations filled the air.

Relive the special moments in the photos below.



Photo by Annie O'Neill





Photo by Annie O'Neill

Cheers to the years

Highlights from Homecoming and Reunion Weekend

Alumni and friends came to campus to reunite over live music, inspiring speakers and demonstrations of the latest in dental innovation during Homecoming and Reunion Weekend in November. Here's a look at some highlights from that weekend.

SAVE THE DATE
for Homecoming and
Reunion Weekend 2025

Oct. 9–12



Homecoming and Reunion Weekend 2024 began with a welcome reception at the recently renovated Cleveland Museum of Natural History.



Dean Kenneth Chance, DDS, delivered the State of the School address during Homecoming and Reunion Weekend.



Dale Bauer, DDS, (far right) gave alumni and friends tours of the Dental Clinic.



Martin Nweeia, DDS, (right) and the CWRU Interactive Commons treated alumni and friends to a HoloLens experience with the Narwhal whale.



Jed Best, DDS, (second from right) joined Anil Parwani, MD, PhD, (far right) and Andrew Reimer, PhD, RN, second from left) for the presentation, "The Role of Healthcare Providers in the Age of AI."



CLASS OF 1964



CLASS OF 1974

BROWSE MORE
PHOTOS AND
CLASSES:



CLASS OF 1979



CLASS OF 1984



CLASS OF 1989



CLASS OF 1994



CLASS OF 1999



CLASS OF 2004



CLASS OF 2014

The School of Dental Medicine receives generous support from alumni, friends, corporations and more. Here are some of the gifts received in 2024.

- **David Mills, DDS (DEN '79)** and Susan Mills pledged \$1,000,000 through their estate to support the Jeffrey A. Mills Memorial Scholarship Fund.
- **Gerard Gizzi, DDS (DEN '83)** pledged \$1,00,000 through his estate to support DMD scholarships.
- The Ralph T. & Esther L. Warburton Foundation contributed \$800,000 to support The Bonacker-Warburton Scholarship in Dental Medicine.
- Bien-Air USA, Inc. contributed \$350,000 in-kind to support the renovation of the School of Dental Medicine Simulation Clinic.
- The Mt. Sinai Health Foundation donated \$180,000 to support the work of **Manish Valiathan, DDS**, and the Department of Orthodontics through advanced craniofacial orthodontic training.
- **Lisa Alvetro-Rossman, DDS (DEN '93)**, and Thomas Rossman pledged \$150,000 to establish the Lisa Ann Alvetro-Rossman, DDS, MSD, Technology Endowment Fund for Orthodontics.
- **Harry Rosen, DDS (DEN '77)**, pledged \$100,000 to the School of Dental Medicine through his estate.
- Straumann USA contributed \$85,000 in-kind to the predoctoral implant program.
- **Milton C. Jacobson, DDS (DEN '65)**, contributed \$80,000 to support DMD scholarships.
- **Charles Pfister, DDS (DEN '83)**, pledged \$50,000 to the School of Dental Medicine through his estate.
- **Philip H. Dixon, DDS (DEN '83)**, and Carolyn Dixon contributed \$30,000 to the Dean's Discretionary Fund.
- **Karen H. Klocko, DDS (DEN '85)**, pledged \$25,000 to establish The Dr. Karen H. Klocko Endowed Scholarship Fund which supports DMD students.
- **Peter M. Mazzeo, DDS (DEN '65)**, contributed \$25,000 through his estate to establish The Dr. Peter Mazzeo Endowed Scholarship Fund which supports DMD students.
- The MGM Resorts Foundation donated \$10,000 to support the work of **Suparna Mahalaha, DDS (CWR '98; DEN '01; GRS '04, public health)**, and the CWRU Geriatric Dental Van Program.

Congratulations to the 2024 Alumni Award winners

Distinguished Alumnus Award

Andre K. Mickel, DDS (DEN '91, DEN '94)

Chair and Professor, Department of Endodontics
Mickel, the second chair to direct the Department of Endodontics at the dental school, has made major contributions to his field. He is a prominent educator, researcher and leader in endodontics, having gained both national and international recognition, including the American Association of Endodontists' Dr. Edward Osetek award.

Special Recognition Award

Theresa Roma Jasinevicius, DDS (DEN '74, '76)

Associate Professor, Department of Comprehensive Care

Jasinevicius has dedicated 48 years to teaching dental students and preparing them for practice. In 2022 she received the CWRU Interactive Commons Fellowship Award for developing "JAWS at work," a HoloLens application used in her masticatory dynamics classes.

Outstanding New Dentist Award

Nicholas Nutile, DMD (DEN '17)

While at the CWRU School of Dental Medicine, Nutile was a natural leader who often encouraged his classmates to develop creative approaches to comprehensive care. Now in private practice, he carries forward this philosophy, where he performs a variety of general and specialty procedures, focusing on conservative and high-quality dentistry.



Alumni award winners (from left): Andre Mickel, DDS, T. Roma Jasinevicius, DDS, and Nicholas Nutile, DMD

Resilience and hope

Turning tragedy into possibility for others

In 1982, **Jeffrey Mills, DDS (WRC '79, DEN '82)**, was a promising young dentist and soon-to-be new father ready to begin the next chapter of his life. But four hours before commencement, Mills was shot and killed by a home intruder.

Having earned his undergraduate and dental degrees at Case Western Reserve University in only seven years instead of the traditional eight, Mills was recognized as a hard worker, conscientious, intuitive and eager to learn. He was a member of the men's glee club, sang in his church choir and was the treasurer of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

To honor Jeffrey's life and legacy, his brother, **David Mills, DDS (WRC '75, DEN '79)**, and their family created a scholarship in Jeffrey's name, ensuring future dentists have the support needed to succeed and thrive in dental school and launch successful professional careers.

"Jeff and I did not have parents who could pay for our education, but we were raised to know that education is the key to success," said David Mills. "Jeff would have been an outstanding dentist, and we were both so proud to have graduated from Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine."

For second-year dental student **Giancarlo Lombardozi**, the Jeffrey A. Mills Memorial Scholarship Fund offers more than financial support—it symbolizes resilience, hope and the enduring impact of generosity.



Giancarlo Lombardozi (left), expressed his appreciation for receiving the Jeffrey A. Mills Memorial Scholarship that was born by David Mills, DDS (center), to honor his brother.

Lombardozi's decision to attend Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine was easy, given its reputation for preparing students for successful careers in dentistry and its strong sense of community. However, financial concerns seemed to put the dream out of reach.

The Mills Scholarship is helping change that—allowing Lombardozi to put his full focus on his academics and immersive student experiences. At CWRU, he mentors incoming dental students and holds leadership positions in the Psi Omega fraternity and Hispanic Student Dental Association.

"Knowing that this scholarship was created in Jeffrey's memory and to honor his life makes it so much more meaningful," said Lombardozi. "It reminds me that despite tragedy,

there's a way to create something positive and lasting."

David Mills agreed: "It's been said that people die twice—once when they stop breathing, and again the last time someone says their name. This scholarship fund is about people saying Jeff's name for a long time."

—Amanda Brower

David and Susan Mills wish to add to the endowed fund to support more students in Jeffrey's name, and are offering to match contributions made by others to the scholarship fund. If you would like to remember and honor Jeffrey Mills in this manner, please contact Carolyn Gordon at 216.368.3481 or carolyn.gordon@case.edu.

Class notes

Submitted to the School of Dental Medicine between March 23, 2024, through April 1, 2025.



Ronald Occhionero, DDS (DEN '61), received the Thomas Callahan Memorial Award at the 2024 Ohio Dental Association Annual Session.



Mario Pavicic, DDS (DEN '92), is the supreme grand master of Delta Sigma Delta International Dental Fraternity and was

featured in the fall issue of *DESMOS*, the fraternity's magazine.

Richard Sellman, DDS (DEN '70), retired after 40 years of general practice and, since becoming certified by the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine in 2017, has been practicing dental sleep medicine, making oral appliances for patients who are unable to use continuous positive airway pressure machines.



Timothy A. Benich, DDS (DEN '73), delivered an Alumni Spotlight presentation at the School of Dental Medicine in

October 2023 to faculty, staff, alumni and students about how to balance a successful dental practice with a life full of responsibilities.



Thomas Van Dyke, DDS, PhD (DEN '73), vice president of clinical and translational research at the American Dental

Association's Forsyth Institute and a professor of oral medicine, infection and immunity at Harvard University, gave an Alumni Spotlight lecture at the dental school in April 2024 about changing dental practice through university-based research.

Stuart Levine, DDS (DEN '74), retired after 45 years of managing his general dental practice with his wife, **Dena Babin, DDS (DEN '77)**.

David A. Williams, DDS (DEN '75), was awarded the 2024 Illinois State Dental Society (ISDS) Distinguished Member Award by ISDS President Richard Bona at the 2024 ISDS House of Delegates in September.



CWRU School of Dental Medicine Dean **Kenneth Chance, DDS (DEN '79)**, visited the faculty of dental medicine at the

Universidade do Porto in Portugal in September for the 12th edition of the David Mosimann Foundation Annual Forum, where directors of dental medicine courses from all over the world gathered to discuss current topics, including artificial intelligence.



Thomas O. Marxen, DDS (DEN '83), delivered an Alumni Spotlight lecture at the School of Dental Medicine in November about controlling periodontal infections.



Veronica Glogowski, DDS (WRC '84, DEN '87), had artwork on display in "The Art of Healing: A Cancer Art Show," an exhibition at the Cancer Support Community in Cincinnati.

Edward Shellard, DMD (DEN '87), is the president, CEO and chairman of the board at United Concordia Dental Insurance Co., a nonprofit that employs 1,200 people and supports over 10 million members.

Mark Armstrong, DDS (DEN '89), was reelected as chair of the CDCA-WREB-CITA international dental testing organization, which administers the ADEX dental and dental hygiene licensing exam at every dental school and at 85% of hygiene schools in the United States.

Razan Abbass, DDS (DEN '91, '93), sold her private practice and joined Smile Programs, a mobile dentistry group in Michigan that provides care to medically underserved children.



Benjamin Neibaur, DMD (DEN '06), a direct descendent of Alexander Neibaur, the first dentist to practice in Utah,

is expanding to five practices under the brand name Salt Lake City Orthodontics.

The *Journal of the American Dental Association* commemorated the 20th anniversary of its “Ethical Moment” series in which **Alex Mellion, DMD (DEN '11)** and **Meredith A. Bailey, DMD (DEN '06)** shared their thoughts about the series and its impact, and reflected on their own co-published article, “Ethical principles and posting on social media platforms,” from the March 2023 issue.



Kari A. Cunningham, DMD (DEN '10), was the keynote—and first alumna—speaker at Case Western Reserve University's

2024 Unity Banquet and Scholarship Benefit, which honored the academic achievements of underrepresented graduate and undergraduate students receiving annual scholarship awards. Separately, Cunningham was featured in *Best Practice* magazine for her practice, Panther Pediatric Dentistry, in Euclid, Ohio. She also was inducted as a fellow of the USA Section of the International College of Dentists in September during their convocation in Nashville, Tennessee.

Gathering alumni

Over the last year, School of Dental Medicine alumni reconnected at professional events across the country. Take a look at where they met up in 2024.



American Association of Orthodontists Annual Session, May 4, New Orleans, Louisiana



American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Annual Session, May 25, Toronto



National Dental Association Annual Convention, July 27, Las Vegas



American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons Annual Meeting, Sept. 12, Orlando, Florida



American Association of Endodontists Annual Meeting, April 18, Los Angeles

**SEE ALL
UPCOMING
EVENTS:**



In memoriam

Includes death notices submitted to the School of Dental Medicine between Jan. 1, 2024, through Feb. 7, 2025.

Richard L. Porus, MD (ADL '52; DEN '52, '54; MED '58) of Portland, Oregon, died July 22. He practiced medicine in Seattle for 22 years, retiring in 1985.

David H. Leffler (DEN '53) of Massillon, Ohio, died Oct. 6. After serving in World War II, Leffler earned a bachelor's degree from Mount Union College before graduating from Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine. He ran a practice with his twin brother for 56 years, retiring in 2009.

Richard "Spike" Herz (DEN '59) of Kenosha, Wisconsin, died March 12, 2024. Herz practiced orthodontia in Kenosha, Racine and Waterford for nearly 50 years, and served on various nonprofit boards and committees. Hertz also taught at University of Michigan School of Dentistry, Saint Louis University Center for Advanced Dental Education and University of Illinois Chicago College of Dentistry, where he led the oral and maxillofacial surgeons of the multi-disciplinary craniofacial team. Hertz also traveled to South America, Africa and Lithuania, where he performed reparative surgery on children with cleft palates.

Howard C. Richmond (DEN '60) of Los Angeles died Feb. 7, 2024. Richmond served two years in the United States Air Force and practiced dentistry in Beverly Hills for more than 60 years.

Howard Allen Bloom (DEN '61) of San Francisco died Nov. 8. After graduating from dental school, Bloom served as a lieutenant in the United States Navy Dental Corps. In 1972, he co-founded the Serramonte Dental Group, a

general dentistry practice, where he worked until 1982. He then served as clinic director and assistant clinical professor at the University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry until 1995, when he retired. Later in life, Bloom stayed active as a consultant evaluating group practices with the California Dental Service and a private firm until 2016.

Benjamin F. Wetter (DEN '61) of Hendersonville, North Carolina, died Oct. 27. Wetter served two years in the United States Air Force at Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka, Kansas. Afterward, he returned to Ohio, where he managed a dental practice in Seville until he retired.

Peter M. Mazzeo (DEN '65) of Brunswick, Ohio, died Dec. 7. After dental school, Mazzeo served as a dentist in the United States Air Force at Peace Air Force Base in New Hampshire. He worked in dentistry until he retired in 2014.

Herb J. Robbins (DEN '65) of Los Gatos, California, died Dec. 7.

James Leroy Hurst (ADL '65, DEN '69) of Middletown, Rhode Island, died April 15, 2024. After dental school, Hurst earned a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Orthodontics from Boston University in 1978. Hurst practiced dentistry in the United States Navy Reserve for four years before opening a private general dentistry practice in Newport, Rhode Island. He later established a private orthodontic practice, which he operated for 39 years before retiring in 2017.

David L. Cross (DEN '67) of Tampa, Florida, died Oct. 12. After dental school, Cross earned a Master of Dental Surgery from University of Pittsburgh, then spent three decades working as a periodontist for the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa.

James P. DiLascio (DEN '71) of Walden, New York, died Aug. 17. Shortly after dental school, DiLascio opened a private practice in Lyndhurst, New Jersey, which he managed for 41 years.

William A. Evanko (DEN '71) of Bradenton, Florida, died Oct. 17. Evanko completed his residency in oral and maxillofacial surgery at Washington National Hospital in Washington, D.C., and served in the United States Navy from 1972 to 1978. He went on to practice in northeast Ohio and, in 2001, received the Ohio Dental Association's Humanitarian Award for performing hundreds of surgeries during two medical mission trips to the Philippines.

Charles "Chuck" D. Byram (DEN '74) of Redding, California, died May 11. After graduating from dental school, Byram served two years in the United States Navy and was stationed on Guam and in Long Beach, California. He later practiced dentistry for more than 50 years in San Francisco Bay and Redding.

Nick Palmer (DEN '75; GRS '78, orthodontics) of Sterling Heights, Michigan, died Jan. 16. While a student at CWRU, Palmer earned the Harry Sicher First Research Essay Award from the American Association of

Orthodontics for his master's thesis. After graduating, he established his orthodontic practice in Michigan, where he worked for 46 years. Palmer also was the associate clinical director of the Graduate Pediatric Orthodontics Program at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry, where he taught and mentored students for 20 years.

Paul M. Bertin (DEN '76) of Rocky River, Ohio, died Sept. 29. In addition to being a well-known oral surgeon in the Cleveland area, Bertin was a board certified examiner American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery for 10 years, and volunteered in Lithuania and Mexico.

Brian Edward Scott (DEN '78) of Gardnerville, Nevada, died Nov. 28. Scott served in the United States Navy until 1981 and continued to serve in the United States Navy Reserve until 2000, when he retired with the rank of captain. Scott practiced with the Palo Alto Dental Group in California from 1981 until his retirement in 2017. Scott served in leadership positions with the Mid-Peninsula Dental Society and the California Dental Association and its foundation, where he focused on reducing barriers to dental care. Additionally, he served as the American Dental Association second and first vice president, then as American Dental Political Action Committee director from 2013 until 2017.

Salvatore Anthony Cigna (DEN '82, '84) of Hopewell Junction, New York, died Feb. 1, 2024. After completing his residency in orthodontics at Fairleigh Dickinson University Dental School in 1987, Cigna managed a private practice for 32 years.

Susan Marie Burns-Sanchez (DEN '94, '95) of Albuquerque, New Mexico, died Oct. 23.

Lasting dental school legacies

Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine lost three community members recently.



Thomas J. De Marco, DMD, PhD, former professor and dean of the dental school from 1976 to 1984, died Feb. 6. When he became dean in 1976, DeMarco was the youngest dental school dean in the nation. In addition to his academic career, DeMarco practiced periodontics for 56 years, retiring at the age of 80. He secured a patent for the DeMarco curette, a specialty dental scaling tool.

He and his wife, Bonna, established the Thomas J. and Bonna P. De Marco Endowed Scholarship Fund to support Case Western Reserve University DMD students.

Sue Opsitnick, a radiology technician at the dental school, died Oct. 9. She joined the dental school in 2005 as support staff and, over nearly two decades, organized student rotations, assisted in teaching radiology, recorded competency evaluations, guided patients in their initial visits to the clinic and so much more.

Murray Stein, DDS, former professor and chair of oral and maxillofacial surgery at Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, died Dec. 2.

The first dentist to be awarded an American Cancer Society Fellowship for his research and graduate study of oral cancer and pathology, Stein joined the dental school in 1958, going on to serve in various roles such as associate dean, acting dean and senior advisor to the dean. He also established the Division of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in the Department of Surgery at University Hospitals. Stein retired in 1989 after 31 years with Case Western Reserve.

A look back

From the archives of the School of Dental Medicine

Innovation across the decades

Highlights from history as CWRU celebrates 200 years

When trustees signed a charter on Feb. 7, 1826, to create Western Reserve College, the concept of a dental school wasn't even on the horizon—in Northeast Ohio or anywhere in the United States. It would be a decade and a half before the first dental school opened in the U.S., and 66 years before a “dental department” would open at what was then Western Reserve University.

Much has changed since the 1800s—including the university's name, following the federation of Western Reserve University

and Case Institute of Technology in 1967. But, as Case Western Reserve University celebrates its bicentennial with a series of events and celebrations over the next 18 months, take a look back at some of the historic highlights of the School of Dental Medicine's role in the university's history.

To learn more about Case Western Reserve University's first 200 years—through photos, videos, a timeline, profiles of important facts and key figures, and more—visit case.edu/bicentennial.



The School of Dental Medicine was organized on June 21, 1892, as the Dental Department of Western Reserve University, and opened that September with 21 students. For the first 25 years of its existence, the school was located in downtown Cleveland, on East Ninth Street and St. Clair.



*In 1969, the dental school moved into a building adjacent to the medical and nursing schools. This move made it one of the most complete and modern educational and research units in the U.S. In the early 2000s, under the leadership of Dean **Jerold Goldberg**, DDS, the school was renamed to the School of Dental Medicine, the degree offering changed from a DDS to DMD, and a variety of community initiatives, such as the Healthy Smiles Sealant Program, launched.*



In 1917, the School of Dentistry became an integral part of the university, with a building on Adelbert Road.



In 2019, the dental school moved to the Health Education Campus of Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland Clinic, which includes Samson Pavilion, where dental students take classes alongside medical and nursing peers, and the Dental Clinic, where students and faculty provide care to thousands of patients in a state-of-the-art facility.



Reconnect and Explore Oct. 9-12

**Save the date for Case Western Reserve University's
2025 Homecoming and Reunion Weekend!**

Get ready to reunite with classmates, connect with current students, celebrate milestone class anniversaries and discover the latest innovations at the Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine. Take a look back at moments from the 2024 Homecoming at case.edu/dental/homecoming24.

Questions? Please contact Michelle Hoffman at mlh216@case.edu or **216.368.3924**.



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE
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