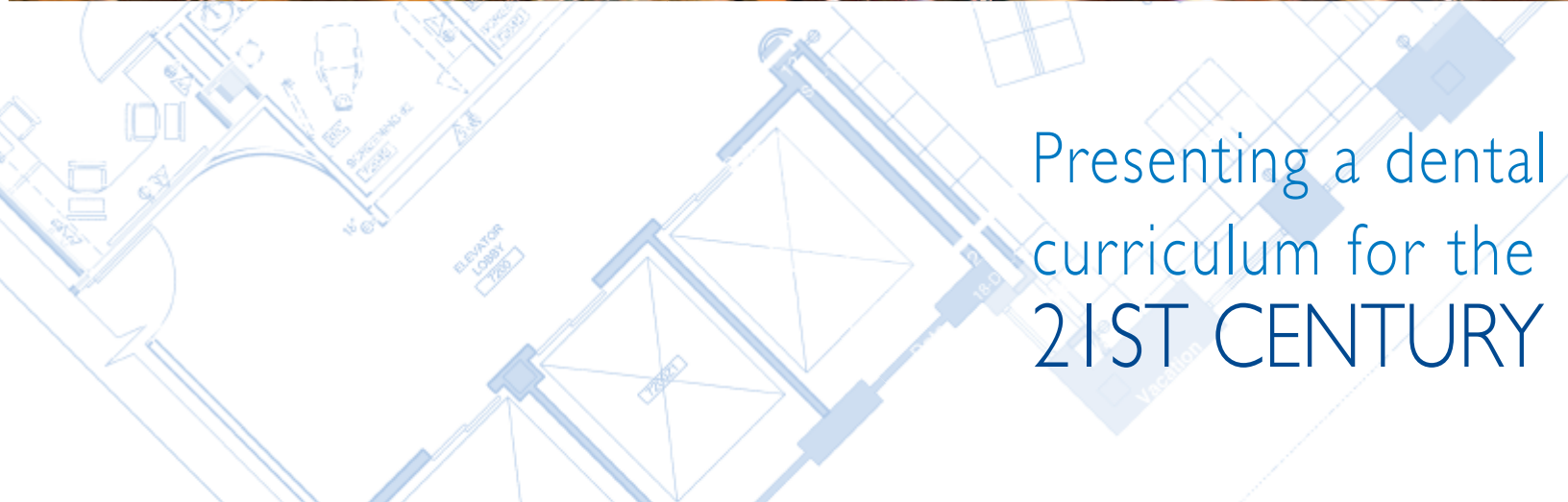
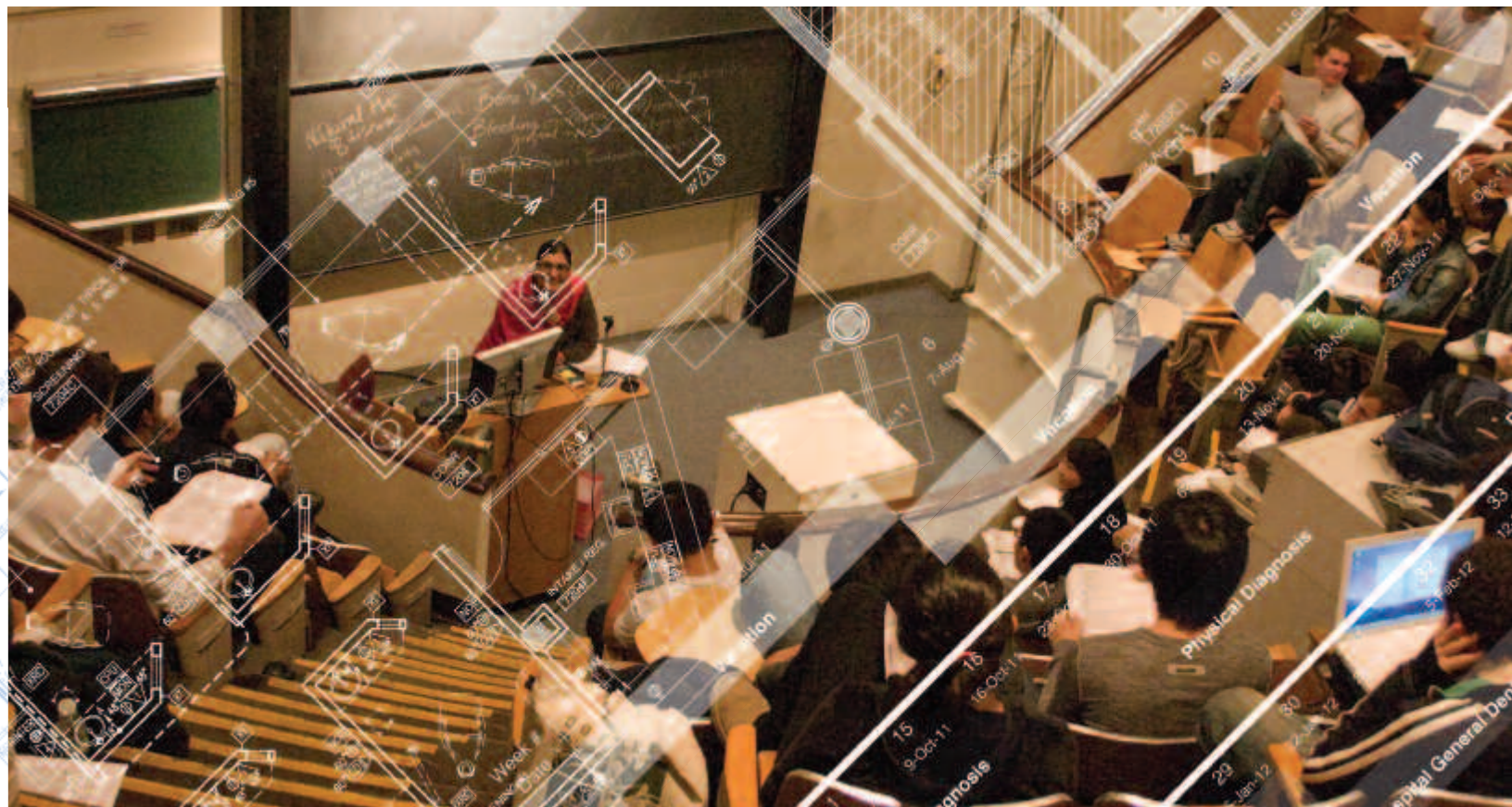




COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
College of Dental Medicine

primus
winter/spring 2009 vol 14



Presenting a dental
curriculum for the
21ST CENTURY

primus

winter/spring 2009 vol 14

published annually by the

Columbia University College of Dental Medicine

2009

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Margot Jaffe '80, Peds '81, Ortho '85 *President*

Paul R. Kamen '75, *Vice-President*

Renee F. Litvak '02, Endo '04, *Treasurer*

Julie A. Conolly '01, Perio '05, *Secretary*

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dean Ira B. Lamster

MANAGING EDITOR

Patricia Farmer

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Melissa Welsh

Zoila Noguerole

DESIGNER

Graphyte Design LLC

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Charles Manley

Doug McAndrew

CONTENTS

From the Dean... 02

From the President... 03

CDM AT WORK

A New Curriculum for the 21st Century 04

Waugh Professorship 10

SCHIP Dental Care Passes 11

New Junior Faculty 12

Dean Myers on Kuwait University Dental Program 19

CDM NEWS

Faculty & Student News 20

George Huang DDS, MSD, DSc 24

Jarvie Society Presents 2009 Birnberg Research 25

Development Notes 26

Alumni Notes 27

Dr. Jurgenson '80: In Africa 30

Obituaries 32

Primus Notable:

Martin Taubman '65 [inside back cover](#)

Thanks to staff, alumni and students who shared their photographs for this issue of *Primus*.

from the Dean



To Alumni and Friends:

The 2009-2010 academic year will be both exciting and challenging for the College of Dental Medicine (CDM). As I wrote to you in December, today's difficult financial climate affects CDM in many ways, but we maintain a careful monitoring of our revenues and expenses, and continue to search for ways of reducing the impact of the economic downturn.

At the end of September 2009, the Commission on Dental Accreditation will visit our campus. Every seven years the team interviews administrators, faculty, staff and students to decide if the College's pre- and postdoctoral programs meet accreditation standards. They also determine how closely the school's operations agree with data provided in a self-study report prepared by CDM staff prior to the visit. In addition, as you will read in this issue of *Primus*, CDM will introduce a reconfigured predoctoral curriculum this fall for the class of 2013. We believe it will redefine predoctoral dental education and be the most innovative program in the United States.

The College is also looking forward to two major construction projects. With a grant of \$2.8 million from New York State, the Vanderbilt Clinic 7th floor triage, radiology, and emergency services area will be rebuilt to streamline patient intake, giving the College its first space dedicated to emergency care. We have also been assigned Vanderbilt Clinic Building's 12th floor for research, where construction will soon begin on a large new laboratory devoted to CDM's program in regenerative medicine/dentistry.

These ambitious plans need continued support from our alumni and friends. Your interest and investment in the College's future make it possible for us to continue introducing and developing innovative programs in education, patient care, and research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ira B. Lamster', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Ira B. Lamster, DDS, MMSc
Dean

from the President

Dear Alumni, Faculty, and Friends,

As president of the Association of Dental Alumni, 2008-2010, it is a pleasure to report on achievements and innovations at my alma mater; not only to my fellow alumni, but also to my colleagues and to the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine's many valued friends.

There have been numerous significant advances in dental education at CDM over the past decade. Among the most exciting is the new Global Externship Program, administered by Associate Dean for Student and Alumni Affairs Martin Davis. The program sends approximately 60 students a year to underserved areas of the world where they treat patients who have little – or no – access to dental services. As part of a CDM-wide conversion to digital radiography, Dr. Christos Angelopoulos, director of the Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology Division, has begun to provide training for students, residents, and faculty in the use of CDM's Cone Beam Computed Tomography System. Another major event, the introduction of the College's reconfigured predoctoral curriculum, will occur when the class of 2013 enters in the fall of 2009. As CDM and P&S condense teaching time for the basic sciences, the dental school has taken the opportunity to give its students increased weeks of crucial clinical experience and greater time in which to pursue rewarding externships.

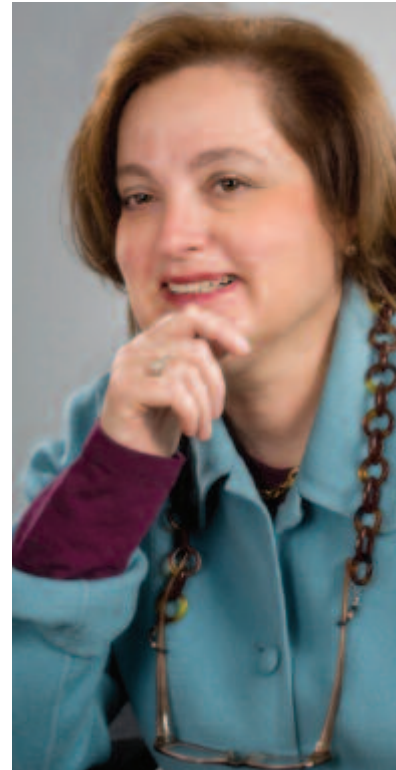
My longstanding membership on the Admissions Committee and my faculty position in the Division of Pediatric Dentistry have given me the pleasure of interacting with students, as well as with the residents. I am constantly amazed by their intelligence, energy, and enthusiasm. Because we strive to treat members of today's exceptional student body as junior colleagues, their experiences at the College and their relations with the faculty have become increasingly positive. Administrators, faculty, and alumni continue to work to provide the most positive student experience possible.

We have inaugurated a successful Student Cultural Club, directed by Dr. Michelle Mirsky, and continue to support the Dean's Professional Society events, informal gatherings for faculty and students led by Dr. Al Thompson. In December, 250 alumni attended our reception at the Greater New York Meeting and, in April, Dr. Renee Litvak, Alumni Association Treasurer, was the host for another popular Young Alumni Reception.

By becoming involved in the lives of our promising students and attending activities for your alma mater, you are helping to influence and secure the future of our profession. We look forward to your continuing participation

Sincerely,

Margot Jaffe '80, Peds '81, Ortho '85
President, Association of Dental Alumni





COMING NEXT FALL:
A NEW CURRICULUM
FOR THE 21st CENTURY

“The ultimate goal is the training of dental practitioners who can more precisely evaluate oral, dental, and craniofacial diseases and help promote early diagnosis of systemic diseases.” • 2006 Report of Josiah Macy Foundation Panel I: “New Opportunities for Dentistry and Primary Health Care”

“It was a sincere pleasure working with the faculty on this project. We met, discussed, agreed, disagreed, and in the end I believe we have developed a plan for the future of the college and also for the profession.” • Ronnie Myers '79, Peds'80 Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, Columbia University College of Dental Medicine

Columbia University College of Dental Medicine recently seized a unique opportunity to move forward with an historic remodeling of its dental curriculum. Based in part on earlier strategic planning efforts, and on a mutual decision by medical and dental faculty to modify biomedical science studies shared by their classes in the first four semesters, the predoctoral curriculum for dental students entering in the fall of 2009 will change dramatically.

CDM's administration and faculty took advantage of the biomedical science course changes to introduce a visionary approach for dental education – built on a concept always central to the College's teaching philosophy – that would reinvigorate and reinforce attention to the patient's total health. The result refocuses the way dentistry will be perceived, taught, and practiced in the 21st century.

Dean Ira Lamster asked Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs Ronnie Myers to take charge of coordinating work on the ambitious task. Dr. Myers, Dean Lamster, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Letty Moss-Salentijn, Benfield Associate Professor of Clinical Operative Dentistry Richard Lichtenthal, and members of the College's Governance Committee, identified four areas – biomedical sciences, preclinical studies, clinical education, and space demands relevant to class size – as essential to reshaping the

College's educational foundation. Dr. Lichtenthal took on responsibility for the preclinical portion of the plan, and Dr. Myers revamped the clinical class work, while Dean Moss-Salentijn was in charge of sequencing course information continuity throughout.

The eventual plan for CDM's changes to the predoctoral curriculum and schedule was outlined at a retreat for the College's senior leadership in July 2008. It was described as the conversion of a “traditional, discipline-oriented, preclinical dental curriculum” into “a 21st-century educational model emphasizing coordinated preclinical education and an expanded definition of the practice of general dentistry.” The new curriculum's strong orientation toward interdisciplinary presentation is demonstrated by its integrated platform of instruction. Students will be constantly reminded of the strong and persistent relationship that exists between the mouth and the remainder of the body, in both health and sickness.

One method for keeping this important concept uppermost in the minds of the students will be the inclusion of new courses in the remodeled curriculum that identify and incorporate information from the earlier biomedical semesters as issues relevant to dentistry. Their goal will be to build stronger bridges between biomedicine and the dental sciences, leading to the cultivation of

ideas unique in current dental education. According to Dean Lamster, "their purpose is the transfer of biomedical information to the dental domain, with the end goal of educating our graduates as contributors to primary health-care in the dental office."

A major plank used in rebuilding the curriculum is the considerable gain in teaching time made available by the compression of the College's first four semesters. In past years, when biomedical classes took up the major portion of the first two years of classes, the dental faculty was forced to cram all preclinical studies into the same period of time. Now, through careful consolidation of the biomedical studies into three semesters, it is possible to devote CDM's fourth semester entirely to the students' preclinical preparation, and to do so in the months immediately before they enter the clinic.

PRECLINICAL PROGRAMS

The first semester's biomedical instruction, *Molecular Mechanisms in Health and Disease*, will cover molecular mechanisms in cellular development, normal and abnormal interactions between different cells, and normal and abnormal molecular interactions between cells and their extracellular environment. The material will be presented in lectures and through team-based exercises, using new media technology as a time-saving teaching tool. Faculty from the subspecialties will discuss dental implications for the course, wherever applicable.

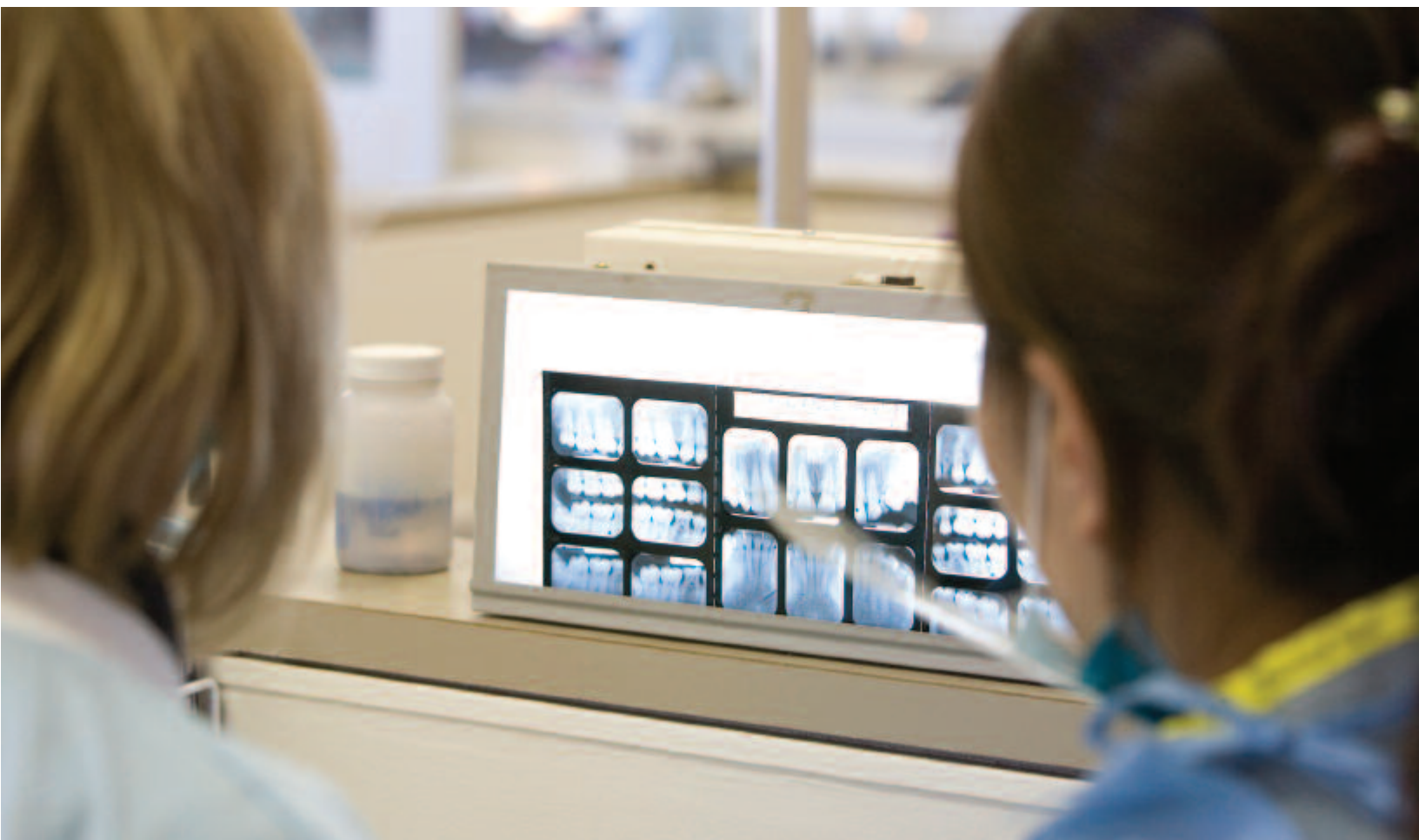
Semesters two and three will introduce *The Body in Health and Disease I and II*, a series of lectures taught by clinicians from both the medical and dental schools that addresses each organ system in the body. They will reference topics from the



basic science introduction of the first semester – physiology, histology, embryology, and pathology – in relation to the new material, once again guiding students to a clearer perception of connections between dentistry and the larger biological picture. For instance, if a dental patient has a cardiac problem, what should his dentist know before treating him? An increased number of small group sessions, with no more than nineteen students in each, will further explore how the class material is specifically related to dental practice.

In the same semesters, the expanded interdisciplinary course, *Health Promotion and Disease Prevention I and II*, will stress the substantial role dental professionals can play in primary health care. It will be coordinated with clerkships where students put the course's didactic information to practical use. They will acquire new interpersonal skills for the clinic setting: taking and documenting medical histories, investigating the current state

of a patient's general health by checking vital signs, and noting the type and amount of medications used, as well as any habits that may endanger the patient's well-being. This broad range of hands-on experience will give dental students direct insight into how dentists can participate in primary health care activities. The clerkships will be a chance for students to see that their observations and subsequent interventions can have far-reaching and positive health benefits. For example, they will learn when and how to provide effective and patient-sensitive smoking cessation counseling. Since dentists often see patients before a physician has had the opportunity to check their health, the early diagnosis of medical conditions – some that are potentially debilitating or even fatal, including HIV, heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis, among others – may be made first in the dental setting. The second-year lectures and clerkships are accompanied by the *Dental Core Skills Laboratory*. It is also designed to reduce redundancy in teaching by



covering such basic tasks, common to all dental disciplines, as impression-taking, model-making, instrument use, and hand and body position – in a single course.

During a three-month break between semesters two and three, students will be given time to pursue research, work with an international health care organization, do extra coursework at Columbia or another institution, or volunteer for other learning experiences.

Throughout the preclinical coursework, the emphasis is placed on closing the gap between biomedical science and clinical care. Students

will, for instance, now be expected to add risk assessment for oral disease – caries in children, periodontal disease, and oral cancer; are examples – to their preparation for dental practice and to assess when it is necessary to do so. It is one of several new prerequisites driving the curriculum toward a primary health care model. By omitting the lengthy period that once existed between the preclinical and clinical portion of the curriculum and consistently demonstrating a scientific rationale for making clinical care decisions, CDM's administration and faculty expect to greatly improve student retention of the bio-scientific foundation for their studies.

“... patient care that is “predictive, personalized, preemptive, and participatory.”

• The Josiah Macy Foundation Report, *Contemporary Issues in Dentistry*

“Clinically, we have developed a program that will increase the hours for our third-year clinical education by more than thirty percent, allowing for expansion of its content as well. And, by providing our fourth-year students with increased potential for global experience, outreach activities, or research initiatives, we will tap into the extreme talents of our incredible students.” • Ronnie Myers '79, Peds'80, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, Columbia University College of Dental Medicine

CLINICAL PROGRAMS

The positive effect of placing students, beginning with the class of 2013, in the clinic three months earlier than before will be increased with the College's new arrangements for third-year rotations. The additional use of off-campus general practice sites at affiliated hospitals will augment the experience gained at on-site locations, making it possible for students to experience three-week-long clinical rotations spent with actual patients.

Principles of Geriatric Dentistry/Clinical Practice will be added in the first semester of the third year, giving students insight into the dental needs of

this rapidly increasing population. They will discover the special conditions that mold treatment for the older patient. Attention to developmental processes characterizing dental diseases for this group, combined with attention to the socioeconomic influences on their well-being, is essential to determining the optimal approach to their dental care.

Another fresh addition to this dynamic agenda comes at the end of the program, when fourth-year students who have satisfactorily completed their basic competency requirements for graduation may apply to a new honors program. A selection committee from the CDM faculty will

decide if an applicant is eligible, based on their first three years of academic and clinical performance. The administration expects that about one-third of the class will be qualified. Honors program participants will have many activities to choose from. They may elect to work on a research project, undertake a hospital clerkship, volunteer in community care, join a foreign health mission, or select from a number of equally interesting and instructive ventures. In contrast to the existing Area of Concentration elective, the new program gives seniors a full-time, in-depth experience, lasting from one month to as long as three months.

It will take energy and dedication to implement these changes. There will be financial, logistical, and personal challenges. The faculty in place will need to adjust to radically new ideas and be willing to sacrifice some long-held pedagogical beliefs and habits. It will be necessary to bring new personnel on campus to reinforce existing resources. They will expand the critical mass of expertise necessary to take on this extensive challenge, provide increased stamina to see it through, and infuse the environment with a sense of what is possible.



WAUGH PROFESSORSHIP IS A MAJOR ASSET FOR ORTHO

As the first Leuman Waugh Professor in Clinical Orthodontics, Dr. Thomas Cangialosi cannot say enough in praise of both the man for whom the chair is named and the opportunities it presents for faculty and students studying orthodontics at CDM. Chairman of the Section of Growth and Development and Director, Division of Orthodontics, Dr. Cangialosi had long admired Dr. Waugh's extraordinary accomplishments in dentistry and his many major contributions to the subspecialty of orthodontics and to the College during nearly half of its history.

Dr. Waugh was a founder of Columbia University's dental school and a member of the faculty for 29 years. Orthodontics became Dr. Waugh's field of academic and clinical interest, but he was also an inventor, and carried out historically valuable research in dentistry. A pioneer in x-ray development, he designed a unit for use at the dental chair, refusing to accept any patent rights or royalties for his gift to dentistry. His sev-

eral trips to the Arctic to study the incidence of dental caries among native people were unprecedented and produced valuable research on the role of nutrition in tooth decay. A founding member of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) and of the William J. Gies Foundation, Dr. Waugh was also president of the American Association of Orthodontics (AAO), as well as the American Board of Orthodontics (ABO). Coincidentally, Dr. Cangialosi is only the second member of CDM's faculty to be elected to the ABO's top leadership role, serving the Association as its president from 2003 to 2004.

The Waugh Professorship is a major resource, offering both financial support and academic distinction, which Dr. Cangialosi says will benefit the entire Division of Orthodontics. The endowment supporting the Waugh chair has already made it possible to begin recruiting and hiring new faculty for full- or part-time openings left by the recent losses of Drs. Malcolm Meistrell and Michael Yuan, as well as Dr. Stella Efstratiadis's retirement. Dr. Cangialosi also hopes to make changes to the Division offices, upgrade his clinical facilities, and put aside seed money for junior faculty research. In addition, his plans for the Division call for development of three-dimensional treatment-planning methods, requiring cone beam technology, for use in patients with skeletal discrepancies and craniofacial syndromes.



Leuman Waugh Professor
Thomas J. Cangialosi.

DR. EDELSTEIN CELEBRATES SCHIP DENTAL CARE PASSAGE

For the last decade, Professor of Clinical Dental Medicine Burton L. Edelstein, chair of the Section of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, has traveled regularly between New York and Washington, DC. Dr. Edelstein, a pediatric dentist, has been spending these years working with Congressional committees on the need to provide dental care for children from the nation's low-income families. This is essentially his other job, the work he does as Founding Director of the Children's Dental Health Project (CDHP), a group "dedicated to assisting policymakers, healthcare providers, advocates, and parents to improve children's oral health and increase their access to dental care."

Last month, Dr. Edelstein, CDHP and staff, and other supporters of efforts to save children from the adverse – sometimes deadly – effects of untreated oral disease, reaped the reward for

their unsparing diligence in this quest. The CDHP website reported the moment of triumph as follows: "On February 4, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) that for the first time addresses children's oral health and dental care. When CHIP was created in 1997, Congress defined dental care as an 'optional' service and left it to states to determine whether a dental benefit would be included. The new law will seek to improve access to dental care in addition to expanding efforts to prevent dental disease, improve quality of care, and increase accountability."

Thanks to a last-minute amendment by Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, the law also allows states to supplement low-income children's private medical coverage with SCHIP dental coverage.

Dr. Burton Edelstein, a leader in the successful effort to provide SCHIP dental care for low-income children.



NEW JUNIOR FACULTY BRING FRESH INSIGHT, WIDER HORIZONS

Columbia University's College of Dental Medicine enjoys one of the most knowledgeable, talented, and loyal faculties in dental education. One hundred and seven full or part time salaried professors and instructors work with 364 volunteers to provide CDM students with the academic foundation and technical command necessary to practice dentistry. They have trained generations who have gone on to some of the highest positions in dental education and administration, as well as government and private industry. The men and women of the faculty are the driving force behind Columbia's position in the vanguard of dental schools

around the world, and their continuing presence is invaluable. Any additions to this distinguished group are undertaken with great care.

To meet multiple innovative advancements in 21st century dental education, CDM has carefully sought candidates who have recently completed postgraduate training to fill new junior faculty posts. The College has been extremely fortunate in attracting graduates from prestigious universities, who bring with them a diverse range of contemporary scientific information, an understanding of changing and innovative approaches to teaching and

research in dentistry, and an interest in helping to broaden the horizons of career goals in dentistry.

The faculty members introduced here have been teaching at CDM for less than three years. Recent postgraduates in eight different areas of dentistry, they represent a diversity of specialized interests and training. Each of these men and women has chosen an academic career not instead of one devoted entirely to practice but as a way of contributing to the continued progress of dentistry in all its aspects.





DR. JENNIFER BASSIUR, director of Columbia University's Center for Oral and Facial Pain, joined the CDM faculty in 2007. Her expertise bridges medicine and dentistry, a boon for patients with symptoms in both camps, who are often perplexed about where to turn for treatment. Dr. Bassiur says that from an early age she wanted to work in health care. Granddaughter of a dentist, and daughter of an oral surgeon, she entered her career on the family-oriented path to dentistry. The moment that defined her career occurred when she was a student at the University of Maryland. Assigned to treat a patient with trigeminal neuralgia, about which she knew nothing, made her determined to "go after" all the information she could find on this and similar problems. It was then that she decided to study neuropathic pain, with emphasis on its oral and facial manifestations. Some of the common problems she now treats – sleep apnea for instance – might seem unlikely cases for a dentist when compared to seeing patients with temporomandibular discomfort or oral cancer pain. In truth, loss of sleep from snoring or sleep apnea can lead to debilitating headaches or chronic pain so severe that only an expert can make the correct recommendation for gaining relief.

In three predoctoral courses, Dr. Bassiur introduces the basics of her subspecialty to students,

whom she enthusiastically describes as "great!" For second-year classes, she covers anesthesia, while third-year students learn about pain and anxiety, pharmaceutical and nonpharmaceutical sedation, and are introduced to the essentials of diagnosing and treating facial pain. Her class discussion of handling pain is quite different than most of her students are accustomed to hearing. She emphasizes the importance of giving the diagnosis and treatment of chronic pain the same serious attention routinely paid to patients suffering from acute distress.

Dr. Bassiur

Although orofacial pain management is not yet formally recognized as a dental specialty, an American Board of Orofacial Pain examination provides certification. Eligibility for the exam requires "two years in graduate or postdoctoral study in the field of orofacial pain, supported by didactic training in pain science, biomechanics, neuroscience, neuropsychopharmacology, physical medicine, and behavioral medicine and clinical experience in numerous medical and dental areas." A tall order, which Dr. Bassiur has filled with distinction.

Assistant Professor of Clinical Dental Medicine, Section of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Division of Community Health, **DR. COURTNEY CHINN PEDS '03, MPH '07** has been very grateful for the support received from other CDM faculty members when he was considering his appointment in 2007. "They understand what it takes to have a career in academics," he says, "and they let me know that if I took this position they would do all they could to help me succeed. That's a big thing."

Now a full-time faculty member, Dr. Chinn came to CDM as a part-time dental public health resident holding a Head Start Fellowship in Pediatric Dentistry. Today, as a member of the faculty, he is still able to relate strongly to the pediatric residents he helps to train, saying, "I remember when I was in their shoes how challenging it was to find enough time to get everything done." Nevertheless, Dr. Chinn finds his postdoctoral

Dr. Chinn



students not only admirably well-qualified academically, but also quite adept at managing their overbooked lives.

In addition to regular teaching responsibilities, Dr. Chinn works with Dr. Burton Edelstein in Columbia's two-year-old Leadership Program, Alternative Careers in Pediatric Dentistry. Supported by federal funds from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau and accredited by the ADA Council on Education, the program is one of only three in the United States. Applicants, who must have excellent academic records and physical skills, are asked to identify personal goals that transcend established expectations in their field. Dr. Chinn thinks those who say "I don't know" may be the best candidates for the program, "because they are so open to new ideas." Choices may include advanced work in teaching, research, community health, public policy, state-of-the-art care for children with special health needs, and the exploration of innovative ideas on providing dental care for children. The program seeks, above all, to draw attention to caring for the whole child.

Dr. Chinn is the first pediatric dentist to work in the CDM clinical practice in a number of years. He hopes to build a patient base for future Columbia dentists in his specialty.

Dr. Graham

"I believe, through my teaching, that I can make a positive impact on the way dental students prepare for their careers." These words from Assistant Professor of Clinical Dental Medicine ROSEANNA GRAHAM '05, Section of Adult Dentistry, Division of Operative Dentistry, are not an empty boast. She is on a pedagogical mission!

As a little girl, Dr. Graham wanted to be just like her pediatric dentist, but didn't think beyond treating patients. After entering CDM, however, she chose dental education as her area of concentration. Eager to learn as much as possible about teaching dentistry, Dr. Graham proposed combining her DDS requirements with MA studies at Columbia University's Teachers College, where she could add courses like instructional theory and practice, adult learning, and instructional design. She says, "I wanted to be the best educator I could possibly be ... for the students." She is grateful to CDM's administration for approving her project and especially for the encouragement of her mentor, Marlene Klyvert, EdD. With their help, Dr. Graham became the first Columbia student to receive both a DDS and an MA in education, pioneering a new dual degree program, possibly the first of its kind in the United States.



And, that is not the end of it. Dr. Graham is back at Teachers College, preparing her doctoral thesis on methods of assessing clinical readiness among predoctoral students. Next year, in addition to directing the third-year diagnosis and treatment planning curriculum in CDM's Section of Adult Dentistry, she will teach in the same science education program where she earned her own MA.

In 2008, Dr. Graham received the Dental College's Stanislaw Brzustowicz Award for Excellence in Teaching, honoring faculty who have been teaching at Columbia less than five years for dedication and compassion. Good teaching practices are at the heart of Dr. Graham's research, which seeks methods that meet student needs while still remaining true to the educational goals of the College. She believes that expanding and improving the pedagogical role in preparing dentists will be an important new direction for dental education in the 21st century and hopes that more students will receive the kind of mentoring she enjoyed so that they will be ready to educate the next generation.

When Assistant Professor of Clinical Dental Medicine, Section of Oral and Diagnostic Sciences, Division of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology, **GEORGE JENKINS** began working toward a DDS, he thought his goal would be achieved as soon as he earned his degree. But he soon took on much more. Dr. Jenkins and his two best friends had pledged to overcome their difficult childhood in a poor Newark, New Jersey, neighborhood by all becoming doctors. Against extreme odds they succeeded, and their horizons broadened. The three realized that having careers in medicine and dentistry could be a means of helping – not only themselves – but their community as well. According to Dr. Jenkins, it was a natural fit, so he and his friends established the Three Doctors Foundation in Newark, providing programs and activities for families and children that emphasize education, careers, and health awareness.



Dr. Jackson

After earning his DDS at UMDNJ, Dr. Jenkins completed two rounds of postgraduate study in general practice and in oral medicine, and also joined the faculty at his alma mater. At the same time, he was working to make the new foundation a success and coauthoring books with his friends to support it. Overwhelmed with responsibility, Dr. Jenkins turned for advice to a new acquaintance, CDM Associate Dean for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs Dr. Dennis Mitchell. He also met Dr. Allan Formicola, former dean of Columbia's dental school, and both men began helping him to balance his activities around a traditional academic career.

Now a faculty member at CDM, Dr. Jenkins says he is very happy among his new colleagues and was pleasantly surprised by his welcome to Columbia. "I thought there might be some stiffness toward me, but I got none of it." He says he sensed a real concern for the welfare of new faculty members and found resources for growth that were new to him. He is hoping to make time for Dean Letty Moss-Salentijn's course in developing lectures, which he thinks will be very helpful.

In addition to other responsibilities at the dental college, Dr. Jenkins works with Columbia's Summer Medical and Dental Educational Program (SMDEP) for high school students. He also continues to

Dr. Raghavan

travel and lecture for the Three Doctors Foundation, where he still finds time to be a mentor, providing insight into his profession and emphasizing the importance of education for everyone.

At the age of ten, **DR. SRIKALA RAGHAVAN**, Assistant Professor of Epithelial Cell Biology (in Dentistry and in Dermatology), had already decided she wanted to have her own laboratory. When her father, a physiologist in India, brought the little girl on visits to his own laboratory, she found it exciting to watch the animals he worked with there. "Of course," says Dr. Raghavan, "I didn't understand then what it all entailed and certainly didn't find out until I came out at the other end of my studies, when I had to start writing grants and trying to establish myself."

Although she has no dental degree, Dr. Raghavan, who earned her doctorate in the biological sciences at Cambridge University, holds a dual appointment at Columbia. The College of Dental Medicine partnered with the Department of Dermatology to recruit Dr. Raghavan because of her focus on mucosal biology. This area of research is directed at a better understanding of the biology of the oral cavity, as well as other important areas of cell research central to many biological and pathological processes. Her own studies explore the role of $\beta 1$ -containing epithelial integrins in regulating basement membrane organization and cell-substratum adhesion. Delighted with Dean Lamster's encouragement of Columbia dental students to "think of things in a scientific way," Dr. Raghavan says that her experience at CDM has been enriched because of the College's effort to interest students in research. She has already experienced the satisfaction of seeing one of her students, Armando Retana '10, recognized with the 2008 Hinman Award (see School News) for his work, under her supervision, on β -6 integrin.

Dr. Raghavan's "really good experience" at Columbia extends beyond her students to her



faculty colleagues, many of whom are, or will be, her collaborators in the laboratory. She is excited by the prospect of joining with diverse specialists throughout the Columbia University Medical Center in a multipronged approach to a single problem, gaining both the broad outlook and the very intense examination of scientific detail. But Dr. Raghavan says her greatest satisfaction is having the opportunity to pass knowledge on to the next generation.

"I always thought I wanted to be tethered to an institution... I wanted to stay up on advances, [to be] at the forefront of my profession," says **DR. DANA WOLF**, assistant professor of clinical dental medicine, Section of Oral and Diagnostic Sciences, Division of Periodontics. "But," she added, "I didn't know in what capacity – that kind of evolved. Initially, I thought I might be volunteer faculty, but in 2006 I changed my mind and decided to accept a full-time teaching position; it was something I thought I would enjoy."

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, who received her DMD from Harvard and an MS in periodontics at Columbia, Dr. Wolf is now convinced that her decision to enter academic dentistry was the right one. Initially, she had no interest in any area of medicine, but it was not long before she concluded that studying the body



would be the most fulfilling pursuit of lifelong learning. While Dr. Wolf first thought she would be a physician, she recalls her eventual decision to enter dental medicine as “a sort of epiphany, that would enable me to do exactly what I wanted to.” Selecting periodontics as her dental subspecialty “for its procedural diversity and strong relationship to medicine, especially in its connections to systemic disease,” Dr. Wolf headed home from Boston to New York, and to Columbia’s College of Dental Medicine, her top choice for postdoctoral periodontal studies.

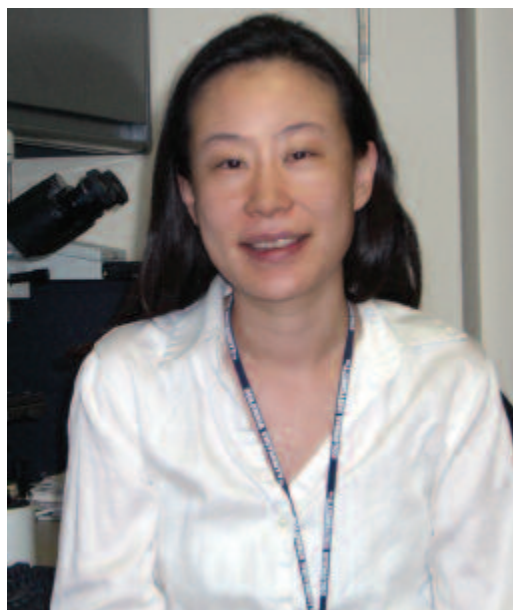
In her role as program director of predoctoral periodontics at CDM, Dr. Wolf has responsibility for introducing the fundamental principles of periodontics to second-year CDM students, and guiding third- and fourth-year students through the clinical experience of dealing with periodontal disease. She also supervises the fourth-year clinical component of the Periodontics Area of Concentration Program, where students gain direct experience by assisting postdoctoral residents during implant surgery and treating more advanced cases of periodontal disease. Dr. Wolf says she is impressed by the qualities her CDM students bring to their studies, and enjoys the opportunity to help in shaping their education. She was recently singled out for her work in the classroom and clinic, receiving the American

Academy of Periodontology 2008 Award for [Dr. Wolf](#) Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring.

Now in her third year as a faculty member of the College of Dental Medicine in the Section of Hospital Dentistry, Division of Oral Pathology, Assistant Professor of Dental Medicine [ANGELA YOON '03, '05 ORAL PATH](#), says she is finally used to the idea that she is no longer a student or resident.

Dr. Yoon was the first Oral Pathology resident at the College of Dental Medicine. The program is still in its infancy, and Dr. Yoon is now helping to build its academic foundation for future graduates who choose to work in this specialty at Columbia. “One of my students,” she reports with pleasure, “even told me there was not enough pathology!” Her present teaching responsibilities include giving an intense “cover the bones” two-week course in oral pathology for the second-year class, an oral pathology conference for the postdoctoral students, and continuing education courses for residents and faculty with a special interest in oral pathology.

Dedicated to scientific research, which she describes as “looking into things where there are no answers yet,” Dr. Yoon feels strongly that



[Dr. Yoon](#)

Dr. Zernick

research specialists have a responsibility and obligation to continually explore ways of improving treatment, as well as methods leading to the early detection of disease. Clinical research, she emphasizes, plays an important part in raising the quality and outcomes of patient care, and she hopes that some of her students may find the idea of following this approach an appealing one.

Dr. Yoon admits that she once feared lecturing to large groups of students, and it took time to build up her self-confidence. Also, like many neophyte teachers, Dr. Yoon found it grueling to put together lecture materials gleaned over many years of study and research, a task that could often require from 15 to 20 hours to prepare for just one hour's presentation. Now with some experience behind her, and new electronic visual aids, Dr. Yoon has gained greater assurance, feeling that her lectures are smoother and that her students are enjoying them more!

All-in-all, Dr. Yoon finds her professional life to be a good mix of patient care, microscopic analysis, research, and teaching. But – if it were possible – she would move CDM to California!

Assistant Professor of Clinical Dental Medicine **CANDICE ZEMNICK PROSTH '06**, in the Section of Adult Dentistry, Division of Prosthodontics, is the Director of Predoctoral Prosthodontics at CDM. Dr. Zernick laid the foundation for her career by studying biochemistry as an undergraduate at NYU. Then, after passing entrance exams for both medical and dental schools, she chose to earn an MPH in Emergency Medicine from New York Medical College before acquiring a DMD from Tufts. Next, she completed her Maxillofacial Prosthodontics certification at Columbia, in association with the Bronx VA Medical Center, where she now serves on the medical staff.

The rich background she has amassed in her field allows Dr. Zernick to lay out the basics of dental prosthodontics, while relating them to the multidisciplinary levels of care involved in maxillofacial prosthetics.



Her first realization that she might want to teach occurred when she was put in charge of gathering and disseminating educational materials for a predoctoral class at Tufts. "I saw that if you presented complicated material in a cohesive way, in pictures as well as words, students could grasp it much more quickly." She seeks to provide her classes with a "continuum of knowledge," correlated with patient cases, "so that disparities between the clinical and didactic realms are minimized."

In her role as a maxillofacial prosthodontist, Dr. Zernick treats patients with deformities of the face and head, congenital, acquired, or developmental. She is the only specialist in her field to see patients at both the Columbia faculty dental clinics and New York-Presbyterian Hospital, where, working with a multidisciplinary team that includes professional visual artists, she creates replacements for eyes, ears, and noses, as well as missing areas of bone or tissue, for both cosmetic and functional purposes. Dr. Zernick is an instructor in oral surgery and also oversees hospital externships in her subspecialty.

Columbia, says Dr. Zernick with approval, "has the progressive belief that through education we can forge an inclusive alliance between medicine and dentistry ... which will enhance comprehensive care."

KUWAIT UNIVERSITY DENTAL PROGRAM EARNS HIGH GRADES FROM DEAN MYERS

Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs Ronnie Myers traveled to the Middle East this winter as CDM's representative in a group of ten external examiners requested by the Dean of Kuwait University's Faculty of Dentistry. The group was asked to test dental graduates' readiness for entering practice. Four examiners were from countries outside Kuwait: one each from Australia and Sweden; Dr. Myers and a member of the Boston University faculty representing the United States. The remaining six were Kuwaiti dental faculty.

Dr. Myers reports that all graduates tested were very well prepared for their profession. He also commented on the excellence of the dental faculty and the state-of-the-art physical quarters. It takes seven years to earn a DDS in Kuwait, because students must begin working toward their career choice while still in secondary school. If they select a career in health, their earliest studies will introduce all the health sciences, after which they may apply for concentration in medicine, dentistry, or pharmacology.

Dr. Myers noted a clear acceptance of women in the profession; the head of endodontics at the school is a woman and there are a number of female professors and students. He also saw no rigidity in the way women dressed, observing that their choices ran the gamut from casual clothing, that would look familiar anywhere in the United States, to the full-body covering dictated by religious tradition. Some women wore head scarfs, others did not, but either way was apparently acceptable.

Kuwait does have a national health program, as well as private health services. But no one pays taxes, because there are none to pay! And prices are lower – like gasoline, which was selling for approximately \$.70 a gallon during Dr. Myers' visit. He also mentioned that every one of the examiners was assigned a private driver.

And – oh yes – in winter, the temperature is 70 degrees fahrenheit!



Faculty and Student News

THE WILLIAM J. GIES AWARDS FOR VISION, INNOVATION, AND ACHIEVEMENT, honoring strategies for advancing excellence in the nation's dental schools, were presented on Saturday, March 14, 2009, at the Sheraton Downtown Phoenix Hotel, Phoenix, Arizona. The Gies Awards, named after William J. Gies, a pioneer in dental education and a founder of Columbia University's dental school, recognize contributions to, and support of, global oral health and education initiatives. Dr. Gies's grandson, also named William, was invited to the ceremony as a special guest in order to present CDM Dean Ira Lamster with the award honoring Columbia University College of Dental Medicine for outstanding vision among academic dental institutions, particularly for its commitment to global

CDM Dean Ira Lamster receives a golden bust of William J. Gies from Bill Gies, grandson of the scientist for whom the ADEA Gies Awards are named.



oral health and its unique approach to the education of dentists.

LAWRENCE BAILEY, DDS, MPH '86, assistant clinical professor, Division of Community Health, Section of Social and Behavioral Sciences, received the New York State Academy of General Dentistry Meritorious Service Award at a ceremony held on May 2, 2009. Dr. Bailey was also honored this year with the Patient Safety Champion Award from Generations/ Northern Manhattan Network. Dr. Bailey is the Chief of Dental Services at Renaissance Diagnostic and Treatment Center in Central Harlem and currently serves as Director for the Harlem Hospital Center General Practice Residency Program. Dr. Bailey is a past President of the New York County Dental Society and the New York State Academy of General Dentistry.

COURTNEY H. CHINN, DDS, PEDS '03, '07 MPH, assistant professor of dental medicine, Division of Community Health, Section of Social and Behavioral Sciences, is one of two dental professionals chosen to head the New York State leadership for the American Academy of Pediatric Dentists' Head Start Dental Home Initiative. The Dental Home Initiative is designed to provide Head Start and Early Head Start children with coordinated, family-centered and continuously

accessible oral health care. Six states currently participate in the program; another 12, including New York, have been selected for a 2009 spring launch. Plans are under way for the eventual inclusion of all 50 states in the project.

BURTON EDELSTEIN, DDS, MPH, professor of clinical dental medicine, director, Division of Community Health, chair, Section of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and professor of clinical health policy and management (Mailman), was awarded a five-year, \$1.9 million competitive renewal of funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, for a community-based dental partnership program. Dr. Edelstein chaired the most recent semiannual meeting of the Global Child Dental Health Taskforce. The European-based taskforce, aligned with the World Health Organization and the World Dental Federation, was established four years ago in a coordinated global action to make tangible improvements in child oral health worldwide by 2025.

A small ceremony was held last fall when **DR. IRVING KITTAY '41** presented a much needed storage unit to the Orofacial Pain Center in the Section of Hospital Dentistry. Dr. Kittay, who is a longtime member of the volunteer faculty, made the gift in memory of **DR. BERTRAM J. WEISSMAN '46**.

JOHN GRBIC, DMD, MS, MMSC, professor of clinical dental medicine, Director, Division of Oral Biology and Center for Clinical Research in Dentistry, has received \$402,000 from the Israeli pharmaceutical company Izun to lead a multicenter clinical trial of a host-modulating periodontal patch for the treatment of gingivitis.

FRAYA KARSH, DDS, PERIO '78, was promoted to assistant clinical professor of dental medicine, Division of Periodontics, Section of Oral and Diagnostic Sciences. She has been on faculty since 2002. Dr. Karsh was the first female president of the First District Dental Society of New York (now

the New York County Dental Society) and of the Northeastern Society of Periodontists. She is president of the Osseointegration Foundation, one of the top leadership positions in implant dentistry.

CAROL KUNZEL, PHD, associate professor of Clinical Division of Community Health, Section of Social and Behavioral Sciences; **EVANTHIA LALLA, DDS, MS**, associate professor of dental medicine, Division of Periodontics, Section of Oral and Diagnostic Sciences; and **IRA LAMSTER, DDS, MMSC**, dean of the College of Dental Medicine and professor of dental medicine, have received \$315,000 from Colgate-Palmolive for an 18-month pilot study to develop and assess a targeted screening protocol for undiagnosed diabetes in patients who present to a dental office or clinic.

MICHAEL LEIFERT, DDS, ORTHO '04, assistant clinical professor of dental medicine, Division of Orthodontics, Section of Growth and Development, has been honored with the New York State Dental Association New Dentist Leadership Award. Dr. Leifert was selected for his commitment to dental health in the northern Manhattan community and for his service to dental education.

JEREMY MAO, DDS, PHD, professor of dental medicine, Division of Orthodontics, Section of Growth and Development, has led a team of interdisciplinary researchers from the College of Dental Medicine, the University of Wisconsin, and Case Western Reserve University in a breakthrough tissue engineering project. The investigators designed a new way to generate bone and other types of tissues more rapidly, working with a combination of stem cell lines not typically used together for healing. Dr. Mao's research circumnavigates a major roadblock in tissue regeneration and has significant implications for, and beyond, oral health care. Earlier in the year, Dr. Mao and colleagues developed another novel technique – the use of porous structures as drug delivery systems – to help integrate host tissue



Dr. Irving Kittay '41



On Give Kids a Smile Day, one little girl learns how to keep her teeth looking as shiny as her fingernails.

with implants. The new approach, based on a concept that also underscored the development of the drug-eluting stent, has implications for a number of seemingly disparate medical disciplines, from dentistry to orthopedics.

Dr. Mao, who was recently elected to the board of directors of the Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine International Society, gave the keynote speech – on the transformative potential of stem cells and bioengineering in dentistry – at the FDI World Dental Foundation 2008 annual dental congress, held last September in Stockholm. In February 2010, Dr. Mao will headline the New York Academy of Dentistry's annual conference.

PANOS N. PAPAPANOU, DDS, PHD, professor of dental medicine, chair of the Section of Oral and Diagnostic Sciences, and director of the Division of Periodontics, has received a \$119,000 grant from Colgate-Palmolive to investigate gene

expression signatures in gingival tissues during the development of bacterially induced inflammation.

ZEHRA PRADHAN, DDS, MDS, joined the CDM faculty as assistant clinical professor of dental medicine, Division of Orthodontics, Section of Growth and Development. A graduate of Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine and the University of Connecticut postgraduate orthodontics program, Dr. Pradhan has won accolades and awards from the American Dental Education Association, the American Association of Women Dentists, and the American Association of Orthodontists.

CDM STUDENTS GIVE KIDS A BIG SMILE: TWICE IN FEBRUARY

On February 6, 2009, nearly 1,000 children from across Upper Manhattan received oral health education, and more than 500 of them received free screenings and treatments. These services were donated by Columbia University College of Dental Medicine faculty, residents, students, and staff as part of the American Dental Association's national "Give Kids a Smile Day." The New York event, which took place under the umbrella of Columbia's Community DentCare program, made visits to seven public schools in Harlem and Washington Heights, and to children in CUMC's pediatric dental clinic on Haven Avenue.

In another February event, close to 300 dental/medical students from Columbia and NYU attended a Smile Train/ASDA evening, which raised sufficient funds through ticket sales and sponsorship to cover the cost of eight surgeries on cleft palate children in India. Smile Train is an organization focused on solving a single problem: helping children worldwide who suffer with cleft lip and palate. The group trains healthcare providers to help these children and raises support for the necessary surgery, which can cost as little as \$250, and take as little as 45 minutes to accomplish.

Late last year, the National Hispanic Health Foundation awarded three of the 10 available 2008 Hispanic Health Professional Student Scholarships to Columbia students. [MARVIN ABARCA '11](#) was one of those honored with the \$2,000 scholarship, presented to students in health professional programs for exceptional academic performance, leadership, and commitment to their communities. The three were officially recognized at a December 2008 awards dinner in New York City.

[ARMANDO RETANA '10](#) won a basic science award at the 2008 Hinman Student Research Symposium, held in Memphis. His research project identified specific proteins inside cells that bind to beta-6 integrin, a key protein in the maintenance of tissue integrity. The research was directed by Srikala Raghavan, PhD, assistant professor of Epithelial Cell Biology (in Dentistry and in Dermatology).

Three students, working with [DR. CAROL KUNZEL](#), associate professor of clinical dental medicine in the Division of Community Health, Section of Social and Behavioral Sciences, presented posters at the New York Academy of Dentistry on February 12, 2009. [SANDRA MBIBI '11](#), presented Age-Related Differences in Beliefs about Oral Health and Disease among Harlem Adults; [JOCELYN PADILLA '09](#) showed Dental Care at Harlem United: a Comparative Analysis on New and Established Patients; and [KEITH DASILVA '07](#), a second year resident in Pediatric Dentistry, was responsible for Utilization of Emergency Services for Non-Traumatic Dental Disease.

University of Norway dental students visited CDM in the fall of 2008. Student Government Vice President Ken Z. Wang (far lower right) acted as their guide, and Dean Martin J. Davis (lower right) presented a comprehensive overview of the Columbia University Medical Center and CDM. They were also greeted by Dean Lamster and Dean Moss-Salentijn. Dr. Davis holds flowers presented by the visitors in appreciation of the warm welcome they received on campus.



GEORGE HUANG DDS, MSD, DSC

In January 2009, GEORGE HUANG, DDS, MSD, DSC, one of dentistry's leading bioscientific researchers in the field of endodontics, became Director of the Division of Endodontics at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, with an academic appointment as an associate professor of Dental Medicine in the Division of Endodontics, Section of Oral and Diagnostic Sciences.

porary advancements in bioengineering, Dr. Huang anticipates a not-far-distant time when regenerated tissue will become the basis of treating root decay, making the use of gutta percha obsolete. To imprint his zeal for research on future dental scientists, Professor Huang requires each of his students to formulate a research project in the field of endodontics and then apply for grants that will support the proposal.

(below) Speakers for the "Endodontics: Staying Up to Date," CE course held at CDM, February 27, 2009: left to right: Dr. George Huang, director of the Division of Endodontics (Section of Oral and Diagnostic Sciences) and associate professor of dental medicine, CDM Division of Endodontics; Dr. Kenneth N. Namerow, Endodontics Division Chief and Section Chair, Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine; Dr. Fred Goodman, Associate Clinical Professor, CDM Division of Endodontics, who helped to organize the course; and Dr. Mitchell Kellert, Assistant Clinical Professor, CDM Division of Endodontics.

Dr. Huang, who holds a DDS from Taipei Medical College also earned his certificate in endodontics, a Master of Science in Dentistry, and a Doctor of Science in Oral Biology, all from Boston University. A postgraduate in immunological research at UC San Diego and former associate professor at the University of Maryland College of Dental Surgery, he is currently principal investigator on an NIDCR ROI grant investigating the ability of stem cells to regenerate dental pulp. He has published extensively on the subject in peer-reviewed journals. With contem-

Outside of research science, Dr. Huang's passion has always been art. He was encouraged from a very young age – especially by his artistically talented mother – to draw and paint. Today, even though dedicated first to his work in the laboratory and classroom, he still steals a few moments here and there to produce delightful sketches documenting life in the clinic, in the lab (see below), and at the coffee shop.



JARVIE SOCIETY PRESENTS 2009 BIRNBERG RESEARCH



Dr. Deborah Greenspan, Chair of the Department of Orofacial Sciences and Clinical Director of the Oral AIDS Center at the University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry was the Birnberg Research Program Award recipient for 2009. She presented "Global Oral Health: Implications of the HIV Pandemic" at the March 25th and 26th program. In addition to bringing a distinguished guest lecturer to campus, the Birnberg Research Program exhibits student research posters. The following students were recognized this year for the excellence of their work:

[JEFFREY NICHELINI '10](#) (Mentor: Dr. Srikala Raghavan; Poster: Identifying Functional Domains of $\beta 1$ Integrin Required for ECM Integrity) and [MICHAEL HUANG '11](#) (Mentor: Dr. Jeremy J. Mao; Poster: Differentiating Dental Pulp Stem Cells to Insulin-Producing β Cells) were selected to represent CDM at the 2009 Hinman Student Research Symposium

[KIMBERLY SOLEIMANI '10](#) and [JEREMY ZUNIGA '10](#) (Mentor: Dr. Srikala Raghavan; Poster: Effects of Pamidronate on Primary Human Oral Fibroblasts) presented the poster that was selected to represent CDM at the 2009 ADA annual meeting. Both Kimberly and Jeremy will have their names engraved on the Dentsply Student Clinician Award plaque; either Kimberly or Jeremy will present the poster at the ADA meeting. The poster presented by [RAY CHENG '10](#) (Mentor: Dr. Helen H. Lu, Poster: Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP)-Enriched Alginate Hydrogel

Promotes Angiogenesis of Dental Pulp-Derived Cells) was recognized for special mention in this category.

[STACI T. ROBINSON '11](#) (Mentor: David A. Albert; Poster: Current Status of Tobacco Cessation Education in U.S. Dental Schools) presented the poster that was selected to represent CDM at a 2009 Oral Health (Public Health) national meeting. The poster presented by [BETTY HUANG '09](#) (Mentor: David A. Albert; Poster: Dental Caries among Disadvantaged Three- to Four-Year-Old Children in Northern Manhattan between 2007 and 2008) was recognized for special mention in this category.

[DR. JULIA E. VLACHOJANNIS, PERIO '09](#) (Mentor: Dr. Zeynep Ülkü; Poster: A Comparison of the Levels of Biochemical Inflammatory Interleukin- 1β in Gingival Crevicular Fluid (GCF) between Adults with a Healthy Periodontium and Adults with a History of Periodontal Disease during Orthodontic Treatment) was recognized for the best postdoctoral student poster presentation.

The Birnberg Research Program is run by the William Jarvie Society, an organization established at CDM by Dr. William J. Gies in 1920 for students interested in research. The Jarvie Society also publishes student research abstracts in the *Jarvie Journal* annually, organizes the Jarvie Lecture Series, and produces the *Jarvie Newsletter*, containing a research database with information on student research at CDM and externship opportunities. Dr. Richard Abbott and Dr. Jeremy Mao serve as the Society's faculty advisors.

Members of the Jarvie Society enjoy the success of their program during the 2009 Birnberg weekend. Left to right: Max Serebro '10, President of the Jarvie Society Zi Wang '10, a copy of the *Jarvie Journal*, Mina Kim '10, and Barry Lin '10.

Development Notes

NICHOLAS A. DISALVO '45, PHD '52, ORTHO '57: 1920-2007



Dr. Nicholas DiSalvo with his wife, Pauline, and sons, Allan (left) and Peter, (right), celebrate a family Christmas.

Dr. Nicholas A. DiSalvo loved teaching. It is a memory his family intends to keep alive at the College of Dental Medicine.

After earning his DDS from Columbia, Dr. DiSalvo served as a naval officer during World War II, but returned to Columbia to teach. He took on his academic duties at the dental school while also studying for a PhD in Physiology and for his certificate in Orthodontics. In 1958, Columbia named him Professor of Dentistry and Director of the Division of Orthodontics, a position he held for nearly 30 years. Dr. DiSalvo served the Northeastern Society of Orthodontists in many capacities and was its president in 1973-74. He was also a longtime member of the Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontists, Eastern Component, and served as its president in 1973 and 1974.

Dr. DiSalvo's active life as a leader in organized dentistry was matched by his enthusiastic involve-

ment with Project Hope, the world's first peacetime hospital ship, which delivered health care in more than 90 countries around the world. Dr. DiSalvo provided treatment at many of the sites where Project Hope brought its services, and also taught at local universities while in residence. His sons remember visiting him in both Egypt and Taiwan while he was teaching there. Although Allan and Donald DiSalvo felt no pressure from their father to enter dentistry – Allan is a lawyer, Donald a radiologist – they recall that he did hope they would find time to enjoy teaching as much as he had.

It was Dr. DiSalvo's devotion to his students and his desire to help others that inspired his family's recent gift of a \$50,000 endowment to Columbia University. Their generosity will provide funds to support a postdoctoral resident in the Division of Orthodontics, commemorating Dr. DiSalvo's lengthy and much-honored career there.



CDM Director of Development
Geraldine Connors

NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT BRINGS WIDE EXPERIENCE TO CDM

Geraldine Connors started her new position as Director of Development at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine in March. Her goal is to increase support for CDM students and faculty, as well as for projects that build responsibly on the College's leadership position in progressive dental education.

Ms. Connors, who comes to CDM from many years of fundraising for both the National Kidney Foundation and the National Brain Trauma Foundation, is unusually well-prepared for carrying out her responsibilities at the dental school. When she says, "I've always been in health care," she means it.

A lifelong New Yorker and graduate of Manhattanville College, Ms. Connors also holds

an MS from Iona College in Health Services Administration. Although she had planned for a career in the field of genetics and began to work in research at Cornell, she soon realized how lonely the lab could be. In search of more companionship during work hours, but still faithful to her interest in the health sciences, she joined the agency responsible for procuring and distributing human organs used in vital transplant procedures at New York hospitals. Subsequently, she broadened her experience with several years in managed health care, recruiting physicians and dentists for the Fortis Benefits organization, and arranging contracts for her company's services with corporate clientele. With this deep and informed interest in the health sciences and history of strong interaction in all areas of the field, Geri Connors is a welcome addition at CDM.

Alumni Notes

JOHN O. GRIPPO '53, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Biomedical Engineering, Western New England College, will lecture this spring at Aristotle University in Greece on the topic of Occlusion. Dr. Grippo's paper, "Attrition, Abrasion, Corrosion and Abfraction Revisited," a new perspective on tooth surface lesions, appeared in the *Journal of the American Dental Association* in 2004. His article, "Non-Carious Cervical Lesions Among Non-Tooth Brushing Population with Hansen's Disease: Initial Findings" appeared in *Quintessence International* in 2006. Dr. Grippo's brother, Enrico Grippo '58, died in November '08. An obituary notice appears in this issue of *Primus*.

KENNETH MEIERDIERKS '55 is seeking a copy of the SDOS 1955 yearbook. Please contact Melissa Welsh in the Alumni Office at 212-305-6881, or at mmw7@columbia.edu, if you have a copy to spare.

ARTHUR ASHMAN '61, clinical professor, Ashman Department of Periodontology and Implant Dentistry at NYU College of Dentistry, was presented with the Isaiah Lew Award by the American Academy of Implant Dentistry at their

fall 2008 annual meeting in San Diego. Dr. Ashman was recognized for his contributions and accomplishments in teaching and research, and for his achievements in the field of implant dentistry. The inventor of Bioplant HTR synthetic bone substitute, Dr. Ashman recently teamed up with MIT's Dr. Robert Langer in the development of a light-hardened, strong, synthetic bone replacement for immediately functioning dental implants, for spinal fusion, and for fracture repair in orthopedics.

DENISE M. HART, MS HYG '73, EDD, has published a new book, *Prior Learning Portfolios: A Representative Collection*, written with Jerry H. Hickerson. Dr. Hart has been a faculty member at Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) since 1973 and received her EdD there in 1984. She is currently a professor of Education at FDU and director of Adult Education and the Success Program, the University's baccalaureate adult-learner program, which she created more than two decades ago. Her research focuses on adult and higher education, measurement and evaluation, and gender issues. She has a wide selection of publications, serves as a consultant-evaluator for the North Central Association Higher learn-



Denise Hart MS, Hyg '73, EdD, at the 2008 Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) meeting in Philadelphia, preparing to sign copies of her recently released publication, *Prior Learning Portfolios: A Representative Collection*, coauthored with Dr. Jerry Hickerson. Dr. Hart is joined by Kendall Hunt publisher's representative, Heather Lundin (center), and Dr. Hickerson.

ing Commission, and is a member of the Association for Continuing Higher Education and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

PAUL KAMEN '75 has received the 25-Year Medal of the American College of Dentists. He has also been named an Active Fellow of the New York Academy of Dentistry and was appointed chairman of the Research Submission Committee of the Academy of Osseointegration. Dr. Kamen is a member of the Review Panel of the *Journal of Special Care in Dentistry* and a board member of the Academy of Dentistry for Persons with Disabilities. An associate clinical professor in the Division of Periodontics at CDM, Dr. Kamen is currently Vice President of the Association of Dental Alumni.

NATHANIEL HERSHKOWITZ '86, MPH '86, was elected President of the NYS Academy of General Dentistry, a leading organization for the continued education of general practitioners in New York.

JOHN TOUMANIOS '87 visited classmate **DANIEL BERMAN '87** in Jerusalem during a trip to Israel last summer (photo on left). Dr. Berman lives in Betshemsh.

PURNIMA HERNANDEZ, PEDS '90, received the Frances Black Humanitarian Award from the Friends Health Connection, a network of health and wellness services based in New Jersey. The award recognizes its honorees for excellence in healthcare throughout New Jersey.

ARMAN ROKSAR '96 and his wife, Jasmine, celebrated the birth of their third child, Benjamin, in March 2008.

JONATHAN SHENKIN '96, MPH, a pediatric dentist practicing in Bangor, Maine, was presented with the Roselle Huddilston Award by the American Lung Association of Maine in October 2008 for his work in establishing the first city-wide ordinance in the nation to ban smoking in

UNIVERSITY HONORS DR. LOIS JACKSON WITH ALUMNI MEDAL

LOIS A. JACKSON '77, PEDS '80, immediate past president (2006-2008) of the Association of Dental Alumni, assistant clinical professor in the Division of Pediatric Dentistry, and a member of the Dean's Advisory Council, is among those chosen to receive the prestigious Columbia University Alumni Medal for 2009. This distinction, conferred annually on a select few graduates, acknowledges exceptional service and commitment to the University. President Bollinger will present the medalists during Commencement Exercises on Wednesday, May 20, 2009. They will also be recognized at a dinner in their honor to be held at Low Library on November 7, 2009, during the Annual Worldwide CAA Alumni Leaders Assembly.

vehicles carrying minors as passengers. Dr. Shenkin was also recently appointed to the American Dental Association Council on Communications.

NICHOLAS TOSCANO '98, Coeditor-in-Chief for the new *Journal of Implant and Advanced Clinical Dentistry*, invites everyone to register for a free journal subscription at <http://jiacd.com/user/register>

FARISA SURATTANONT '01, PEDS '03, and **TOM MULVEY '96, PEDS '02**, parents of Rosemary and Thomas, welcomed their third child, Patrick, in November 2008.

ARTHUR VOLKER '03 received the highly regarded Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) Fellowship Award in July 2008 after completing 500 hours of Continuing Education, passing a written exam, and fulfilling three years of membership with the AGD. Dr. Volker practices in Queens, NY. He and his wife, Jennifer, have two children, William and Amelia.

John Toumanios '87 (left) with Daniel Berman '87 in Jerusalem.



SIAMAK ABAI '04, AEGD '06 entered the Advanced Graduate Prosthodontic Program at Harvard in July 2008.

AMY BREYER '04 earned the Fellowship Award of Academy of General Dentistry in July 2008. She is currently completing her Navy service in San Diego, having already served for three years aboard the USS Enterprise in Norfolk, Virginia.

CHRISTINE YU '06 and JEFFREY LIN '06 were married in November 2008.

MENG CHIEH LEE '07 presented Effects of Gingival Color on Ceramic Crown Color at the IADR meeting in Toronto, Canada, in July 2008.

SHAHNAAZ NISTAR '08 writes about completing US Army officer field training in August 2008. "Ten days of field training where roughly 25 girls slept in a tent and were not allowed to shower...well, they let us take ONE five-minute shower at the midpoint. We did all kinds of 'warrior tasks'...we had weapons training in M16 and M9s, we did gas mask training, and we learned how to do both land navigation and mounted navigation. We had a bunch of field training tests:

we had to disassemble, reassemble, and do a functions check on a M16 rifle in four minutes. We had to place a gas mask on in nine seconds, and we had two hours to find four points on a map using a compass and a map.

"The first week we arrived, I was assigned Platoon Sergeant. Overall, it was challenging, but actually kind of fun. I NEVER thought I would say that! Officer training was intense, but after having gone through it, I think it really builds character. It also helped a lot to speak to other medical and dental professionals who have the same goals in mind. I met a lot of really great people who are committed to helping our soldiers."

Shahnaaz is currently stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, and working at one of the seven dental clinics there. After her four-year commitment is completed, she plans to return to school to study oral surgery or go into private practice.



Shanaaz Nistar '08 with fellow trainee, Cassi Strohbach, a medical student from Loma Linda University in California

OUT OF CALIFORNIA – AND INTO AFRICA

Ron Jurgensen '80 is a busy man. He owns three pediatric dental practices in southern California. But now he's studying Swahili to improve communication with his fourth group of patients – in Africa.

About 20 years ago, Dr. Jurgensen got a call from a missionary friend working in the Philippines, who said, "I need you Ron. My villagers' teeth are thrashed!" In spite of his wife's opposition, Dr. Jurgensen decided to go to the jungle village, where he extracted many decaying teeth – the result of too much sugar cane consumption. He says, "I freed a lot of people from pain – and it was a joy! It felt as if I had finally discovered what I went to school for." Soon he was being called upon to help out the missionary's many friends – in Thailand, Laos, Haiti, India, Russia, and Africa, where he gladly provided dental service for all. But it is to Africa and its people that Dr. Jurgensen has really given his heart. His wife, Kathy, has overcome her previous objections and now travels with him to Sudan, Kenya, and other parts of Africa, where she helps women with health or work problems.

Dr. Jurgensen spends his time in such remote areas of Africa that small children may scream at their first glimpse of a white face. But he has come to love the people. "They hold your hand," he says, adding, "It's a bit awkward walking around holding another man's hand." His African friends have even honored him with an African name, "Musau," meaning "emitting light." As Dr. Jurgensen discovered, however, the name refers not to his spiritual qualities – just to the sun's reflection on his bald head!

While oral health is his chief mission in Africa, Dr. Jurgensen says he has actually been pressed into service to remove shrapnel and close wounds at a jungle MASH unit. At one point, he successfully executed both an appendectomy and, another time, a hernia procedure. Deeply devoted to his activities abroad, Dr. Jurgensen recently organized a village clinic capable of caring for 5,000 patients at a location where he recently removed 600 teeth. He has also earned an MA in Intercultural Studies in preparation for leading groups of travelers on visits to the remote areas of Africa where he works.

Ron Jurgensen '80, with one of the hundreds of patients he treats during frequent trips to remote areas of Africa.



CDM ALUMNI STUDY CLUBS

The College of Dental Medicine holds semiannual alumni study club meetings in the NYC metropolitan area, organized and hosted by alumni in these areas. The clubs offer alumni a chance to mingle and network while catching up on current CDM activities.

CURRENT CLUBS AND REPRESENTATIVES:

Northern New Jersey Alumni Representative:
Dr. Nicholas Vero '72

Westchester County Alumni Representative:
Dr. Thomas Bazdekis '90;

Queens & Long Island Alumni Representative:
Dr. Karen Lewkowitz '82.

Two Continuing Education credits are awarded to attendees at each meeting, which typically consists of dinner and a lecture by a CDM faculty member or alumnus.

For further information, or to help organize a club in your area, contact:

Melissa Welsh, Alumni Director
212-305-6881
or mmw7@columbia.edu.



Denise Shapiro '84, Alan Gold '83, past Chairman, Yankee Dental Congress, and Ellen Karandis-ecky '83 get together at the 2009 Boston event.



CDM alumni gather at the 2009 Yankee Dental Congress in Boston, where they were Dean Ira Lamster's luncheon guests.

Obituaries



Dean Paul Goldhaber

PAUL GOLDHABER, PERIO '54, died on July 14, 2008. After completing his postgraduate work at Columbia, Dr. Goldhaber joined the Harvard School of Dental Medicine faculty. By 1966, he was a full professor and, in 1968, became Harvard University's first Jewish dean, remaining in the position until 1990. Dr. Goldhaber was a renowned researcher whose studies in bone biology introduced a new era in dentistry, making tooth implantation a routine dental procedure. A visionary in dental education, he achieved ethnic, racial, and gender diversification of the student body, encouraged graduates to enter public service, and added a mandatory fifth year for dental students to pursue research or advanced degrees. He established several new degree programs: four years of study leading to a doctorate of medical sciences in oral biology; five- and six-year plans for oral and maxillofacial surgery, general surgery, and a medical degree; and three- and four-year dual-degree programs that combine advanced clinical training and research in health-care systems, health policy, or biomedical sciences. In honor of his achievements at Harvard, the University established the Paul Goldhaber Award, presented annually to individuals who have made major contributions to dental education, research, and the dental profession. Dr. Goldhaber was chairman of the Dental Study Section at the National Institutes of Health and president of both the American Association of Dental Research and the International Association of Dental Research. He was a member of the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine.

Recalling his personal relationship with Dean Goldhaber, Dean Ira Lamster said, "I was a postdoctoral Perio student at Harvard when Paul Goldhaber was Dean. He was not only an extremely important presence at the school at that time, but a major national and international figure." Dr. Ralph Kaslick '56, Perio '59, dean of Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU), College of Dental Medicine from 1976 to 1987, also remembered his colleague and friend, saying, "Paul's intense absorp-

tion with the training of dental researchers was legendary. The first two directors of FDU's Oral Health Research Center, Mike Alfano and Ira Lamster, were products of his precedent-setting training program. Many of today's top investigators came from Paul's program."

MALCOLM E. MEISTRELL JR., DDS, ORTHO '67, died on October 14, 2008, from complications of heart disease. A clinical professor of dental medicine, Section of Growth and Development, Division of Orthodontics, at CDM for the past 35 years, he was responsible for much of the didactic and clinical teaching in the Postdoctoral Program. Dr. Meistrell, a graduate of Princeton University, received his DDS from the University of Michigan and completed his orthodontic training at Columbia. He was active in organized dentistry, serving from 1994 to 1995 as President of the Northeastern Society of Orthodontists. In March 2009, the Orthodontic Alumni Society dedicated a portrait of Dr. Meistrell, which will hang in the Orthodontic Student Lab on the 9th floor of Vanderbilt Clinic, where Dr. Meistrell spent hundreds of hours teaching two generations of orthodontists.

Recalling Dr. Meistrell, Associate Clinical Professor Melvyn Leifert said, "Twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays, for the past thirty-four and a half years, I've had the pleasure and privilege of spending time with my friend and colleague, Malcolm E. Meistrell Jr. My personal and professional life has been greatly enhanced by ... his observations, his thoughts, and unique perspectives on life and orthodontics. I've also witnessed his empathy, compassion, depth of knowledge, and dedication to his partner, family, friends, colleagues, and students, and to the Division of Orthodontics of Columbia University ... With his passing, there is an emptiness in our lives and hearts and, for me, there will always be something missing in the orthodontic clinic..."

More than 400 people gathered on October 29, 2008, to celebrate the life and achievements of [DR. MICHAEL SHENGTIEN YUAN](#), associate professor of Clinical Dental Medicine, who died on September 14, 2008. Family members, students, and colleagues shared stories and memories of Michael's unfailing spirit, energy, kindness, and wit. During his all-too-brief academic career, Dr. Yuan became one of the most beloved teachers in both the medical and dental schools at Columbia.

Born in Taiwan (ROC), Dr. Yuan acted in films before taking up his dental career. He played a leading role in the Taiwanese motion picture "Jade Love" (1984). In 1988, after earning his dental degree at National Taiwan University and completing two years of military service, he came to the United States for additional studies at Columbia University. Between 1988 and 2000, Dr. Yuan specialized in orthodontics, earned a Master's degree in dental sciences, and a PhD in anthropology. He joined the faculty of the College of Dental Medicine as assistant professor of Clinical Dental Medicine in December of 2000, assuming teaching responsibilities in human anatomy (for both medical and dental students), oral biology, and orthodontics, while continuing additional teaching activities in anthropology. He was one of two authors for a major anthropological text, *The Human Fossil Record, Brain Endocasts, The Paleoneurological Evidence*.

The recipient of three Teacher of the Year Awards in 2008, Dr. Yuan's empathy for, and devotion to, his students were legendary. Even as his disease took its toll, he continued to deliver meticulously crafted lectures for each of his classes.

Dr. Yuan is survived by his mother, Mrs. Li-Juan Wu Yuan (Tainan City, Taiwan), his sisters Grace and Susan, and their families. He will be remembered fondly by many friends and colleagues throughout the world.

[FREDA JACOBS, HYG '28](#), passed away in 2007. According to her son, David, she was the oldest living licensed hygienist in New York when she died at age 98. She "broke the rules about talking to dental students" by marrying a classmate in 1932. They were married for sixty years.

[MICHAEL KALMAN '38](#).

[IRENE ROSCHEFSKY, HYG '42](#).

[SELIG FINKELSTEIN '41](#), on June 19, 2008.

[FRANCIS DEVLIN '43](#), on May 7, 2008.

[ADOLPH DITTMAR '43](#), on May 22, 2006.

left: (l. to r.) Orthodontic Alumni Society President Sean Rooney '00, AEG '01, Ortho '04; Peter Costalos, Ortho '03, immediate past president of the Society; Assistant Clinical Professor, Division of Orthodontics and partner of Dr. Meistrell, Joy Hudecz '87, Ortho '88; and Associate Clinical Professor, Division of Orthodontics, Melvyn Leifert unveiled a portrait of the late Malcolm Meistrell, DDS, Ortho '67, during the Society's 2009 Annual Meeting on March 13 at the Harvard Club.

right: Michael S. Yuan, DDS, MA, PhD



[JEROME A. ZANE '43](#), on January 21, 2009. Dr. Zane served on the faculty of Columbia University College of Dental Medicine Division of Prosthodontics as an associate clinical professor from 1994 to 2006.

[FRANCIS KENEALLY '44](#) died January 29, 2009. Dr. Keneally had a dental practice in Woodside, Queens, for 40 years.

[GEORGE WEISS '44](#).

[AARON YALE '45](#), on October 14, 2008.

[WILBERT SCHULTZ '46](#).

[DAVID GROHER, ORTHO '48](#), was an orthodontist for almost 40 years in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and a past president of the Bridgeport Dental Association. He was a longtime member and a past president of the Fairfield Civitan.

[STANLEY MAND '48](#), on September 29, 2008.

[SEBASTIAN BRUNO '48](#), on March 30, 2008.

[JACK BREUER '49](#), on May 23, 2008.

[HUGH WRENN, ORTHO '52](#), maintained a private practice in Richmond, Virginia, from 1952 to 1988. Dr. Wrenn was an associate clinical professor of Orthodontics at the Medical College of Virginia School of Dentistry until 1972. He was a past president of the Richmond Dental Society and of the Virginia Orthodontic Society.

[CHARLES HILL '53](#) passed away October 10, 2008. Dr. Hill served as a captain in the United States Coast Guard, fulfilling his internship and residency in the public health services. He then returned to White Plains, New York, where he practiced dentistry until 1997. Dr. Hill volunteered his professional services to children at the Cardinal McCloskey Home for Orphans from 1956 until 1975, when the facility closed. He was a member of the American Dental Association,

the New York State Dental Association, the Ninth District Dental Association, and the Academy of General Dentistry. He was a lifetime gold master in bridge, an avid golfer, and a member of Westchester Country Club since 1958.

[LESTER ROSENTHAL '53](#) passed away on March 15, 2009. Dr. Rosenthal was a clinical professor in the Division of Prosthodontics at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine for more than 15 years. He was a past president of the Greater New York Academy of Prosthodontics.

[ROBERT KELLY '55](#), on February 1, 2008.



[PHILIP E. KOSKI '57](#) died on December 24, 2008. Dr. Koski practiced dentistry in western Massachusetts for 50 years. In addition to his private practice, Dr. Koski also provided services to those less fortunate by treating state hospital patients who suffered from oral deformities. He served for many years at the Cooley Dickinson Hospital, treating emergency room patients experiencing dental trauma. Dr. Koski's son, Flip, shared the accompanying photo (above) and a brief commentary: "Attached is a photo of my father, with two of his friends. Left to right: Philip Koski, Bob Lester, and Herb Frommer, all Class of '57. All three were members of what they (and their bios in the '57 yearbook) called the "Harvey Society." I never thought to ask what that was when my dad was alive, but I spoke with Dr. Frommer over the weekend and he explained to me that, after not making the Jarvie Society, they decided to found their own society and called it the 'Harvey Society.'"

ENRICO GRIPPO '58 died at the age of 81 on October 22, 2008. He practiced in his hometown of Bellows Falls, Vermont, where he treated the community until his retirement in March, 2008. He was recognized by the Vermont State Dental Society for 50 years of providing dental health services to residents of Vermont.

JOHN MCLEAN '65, ORTHO '72. The son of former Dental Hygiene Program Director Patricia McLean, Dr. McLean maintained an orthodontic practice in Ft. Collins, Colorado. He helped establish the Patricia McLean symposium in Dental Hygiene held annually at CDM.

SALVATORE SQUATRITO, JR., PERIO '67, died on July 14, 2008. Dr. Squatrito had a periodontal practice in Manchester, Connecticut, for nearly 40 years. He was a member and former president of the Connecticut State Dental Association.

TERRENCE O'SHAUGHNESSY, ORTHO '68, died on February 4, 2009. Dr. O'Shaughnessy main-

tained an Orthodontics practice in Framingham, Massachusetts, from 1968 through 2000, limiting his practice to patients afflicted with TMJ, craniomandibular dysfunction, craniofacial pain, and associated cervical dysfunction.

BERNIE STUBBS, ORTHO '68.

JOHN SOPCHAK '79, on August 30, 2008.

ROY LEE '00, in April 2008. He is survived by his widow, Somi, and their three-year-old daughter.

TIFFANY HUANG '06, in January 2009.

DANIEL D. SCHUBE DDS, a retired oral surgeon, died on December 19, 2008. He was on the faculty in the Division of Oral Surgery at the College of Dental Medicine for many years. Dr. Schube was active in community affairs and professional societies.

CDM REMEMBERS SAM PRITZ '33 WITH GREAT AFFECTION

A commemorative gathering, celebrating the life of Dr. Samuel "Sam" P. Pritz '33, 101, who died in June, 2008, was held on January 15, 2009, in the Faculty Club of the Columbia University Medical Center. Family, friends, faculty, alumni, and students all shared fond memories and favorite stories of time spent with Sam. Dr. Richard Lichtenthal, director, Division of Operative Dentistry, recalled the moment when, at 83 years of age, Sam first walked into his office and offered to volunteer on the faculty to "repay his debt" to Columbia! "We hit it off in about five minutes," said Dr. Lichtenthal, adding, "[his] old fashioned values. . . a slight case of impatience, [being] just a tad outspoken, are all traits dear to my heart."

Dr. Pritz taught, and then served on CDM's Admissions Committee, for nearly 20 years. Summing up this unforgettable personality, Dr. Lichtenthal said, "The students and faculty loved Sam. He was aware of his own dignity, able to be mild with the mild, shrewd with the crafty, confiding to the honest, rough to the ruffian, intolerant of the liar, and generous to everyone."

Dr. Pritz's grandson, Richard Kulick, closed the program on behalf of the family by sharing stories of travels with his grandfather and recounting the valuable lessons he learned at his side.



Dr. Richard Lichtenthal with
Dr. Sam Pritz

PRIMUS notable

MARTIN TAUBMAN '65

Q. Dr. Taubman, you've devoted your career to finding an effective vaccine against dental caries. Why has it been so important to you?

A. Of course, as a dentist, I'm concerned with oral health. Dental caries is caused by one of the most ubiquitous bacterial infections affecting humans and is the most common chronic disease among children in the United States. It can lead to terrible pain and devastating physical problems at all ages.

Q. How did you get started on this path?

A. At Columbia, after working in research with Drs. Austin Kutscher and Irwin Mandel – who made saliva an important component of my education – I wanted to study IgA, a newly discovered class of immunoglobulin and a major antibody in mucous secretions, including saliva. I realized IgA and saliva could be the major defense against dental caries, which is primarily



related to a group of organisms called “mutans streptococci.” Dr. Mandel suggested I contact former Columbia professor Dr. Solon Ellison, chair of the State University of New York at Buffalo’s new oral biology department. I got an NIH fellowship, enrolled at Buffalo, and was one of the first to work under Dr. Bob Genco, a pioneer-to-be in dental immunology.

Q. Why did you come to the Forsyth Institute?

A. Originally, the Forsyth Dental Infirmary for Children in Boston was where kids paid a small amount for dental work and, even for tonsillectomies. In mid-20th century, Forsyth became interested in research and began looking for an immunologist to start a program there. Thirty-eight years later, I am still chair of the Department of Immunology at Forsyth and, also, Professor of Oral and Developmental Biology at Harvard.

Q. So, how close are we to having a viable vaccine?

A. Well, it’s almost 50 years since the serious exploration of mutans streptococci began. After demonstrating that salivary IgA antibody could interfere with cariogenic bacteria to prevent formation of dental caries in rodents, we also found that it developed earlier than other types of antibody in the blood. Infants under 12 months are immunocompetent with respect to salivary IgA, but mutans streptococci can colonize at between 18 to 36 months of age, although 40 to 50 percent of children are not infected until later. The most appropriate time for immunization, therefore, is sometime before 18 months of age.

Q. Is immunization of such young children a problem?

Theoretically, no. However, the pediatric medical community is becoming more averse to increasing the number of childhood vaccines, particularly for diseases not considered life-threatening. They may also think this population is too young for a study subjecting them to testing their saliva for antibodies.

Q. Are you discouraged?

A. No. We’re still working on the active vaccine and there is more than one approach to the problem. Rather than vaccinating, we can use passive immunization. A human monoclonal antibody, in a form that could basically be considered food stuff, can be ingested to interfere with the bacteria. We have produced some already and hope it may be a more acceptable prescription for preventing caries.



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

Memorial Presbyterian Hospital

622
West 168th Street

Vanderbilt
Clinic
College of
Dental
Medicine



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
College of Dental Medicine

630 WEST 168TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10032-3795

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
New York, NY
Permit No. 3593