

Serving Our Communities





One of my first initiatives upon my appointment in 2017 was to activate the School of Dentistry's Community-Based Clinical Education (CBCE) program.

Through CBCE, fourth-year D.D.S. candidates engage in six weeks of rotations at 17 partner clinics in traditionally underserved areas throughout Southern California and further afield. In its first half-decade, more than 22,000 patients have received more than 55,000 treatments.

CBCE is a relatively recent example of the School's deep commitment to serving our communities, as you'll learn on the following pages. Providing care to patients where they live dates back to our founding in the 1960s, while advocacy for marginalized populations is woven into our fabric.

Thousands of HIV-positive patients have received oral health treatments in our clinics thanks to grants administered through the Ryan White Care Act, the funding for which was established in part by the lobbying efforts of late Dean Henry Cherrick. Our magazine's feature story explores this life-changing program, currently directed by Dr. Fariba Younai.

Something that brings me immense joy is the altruism of our students and residents, much of it happening outside the

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."

– Mohammed Ali

parameters of their formal education. D3 Tiffany Kim serves as president of the Special Patient Care Club, a passion born from the needs of her autistic younger brother and a longstanding family relationship with Dr. Eric Sung, our Momentum Endowed Chair in Special Patient Care.

Serving our communities also means supporting each other. Dr. Yvonne Hernandez-Kapila, associate dean for research, introduces you to some early-career researchers whose work at UCLA is being fueled by NIH training grants. Mentorship is not limited to the faculty-student dynamic. You'll meet D3 Yi-Ling Loo, who enrolled in the School's Basic Dental Principles course as a Bruin undergrad and now serves as one of its directors.

Finally, we take some time to honor newly retired faculty members and remember others who recently passed away.

Sincerely,

Paul H. Krebsbach, D.D.S., Ph.D.
Dean and Professor

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1986

UCLA Dentistry Board of Counselors members Bob Wilson, Gerald Jennings, and Bill Bloomfield collaborate to purchase – and generously donate to UCLA – a building across the street from the existing Venice Dental Center. The establishment of the Wilson-Jennings-Bloomfield UCLA Venice Dental Center quadrupled the size of the clinic's old space and dramatically increased the ability to serve the community.

1992

UCLA School of Dentistry supported the fledgling non-profit organization Homeless Not Toothless (HNT) by sending fourth-year dental students on an externship basis to render care for people with disabilities and the poor at no charge. HNT was founded by Dr. Jay Grossman, a volunteer faculty member in the School since 1995.

1999

The Jane and Jerry Weintraub Center for Reconstructive Biotechnology at UCLA was established, dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of oral, head, and neck tissue defects. This world-class facility seeks to revolutionize treatment for patients suffering from disfigurement and loss of oral function following oral cancer surgery, as well as for children born with head and neck deformities.





2003

At the first Give Kids a Smile Day, organized nationally by the American Student Dental Association, third- and fourth-year dental students screened children alongside pediatric residents. In addition, first- and second-year dental students entertained the kids with stories, games, and puppet shows while teaching the importance of oral hygiene and good nutrition.

2007

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery residents accompanied by faculty and D.D.S. students made their first trips to Ensenada, Mexico to perform life-changing cleft lip and palate procedures. The visits continue quarterly to this day in conjunction with partner 1000 Smiles Foundation.

2011

The School first joined other UCLA Health entities at Care Harbor, a multi-day clinic in downtown Los Angeles offering free essential services to those in need. As volunteer dentists and hygienists perform cleanings, fillings, extractions, root canals, and oral cancer screenings each year, Bruin pre-doctoral students assist while overseen by faculty members.





2015

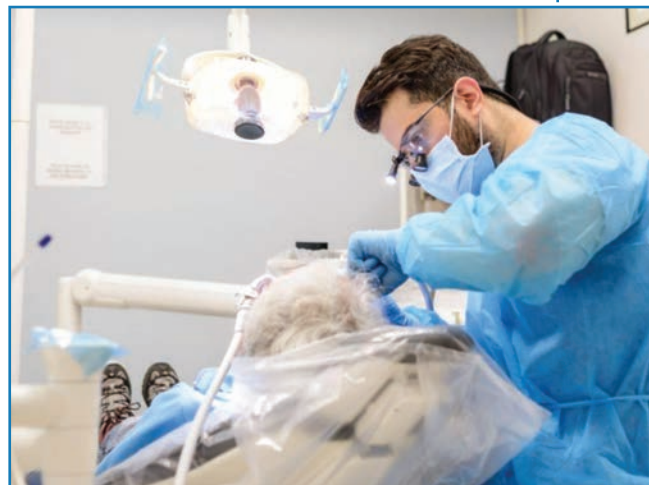
A generous gift from Ralph, Shirley, and Peter Shapiro establishes the Momentum Endowed Chair in Special Patient Care as a way to address the critical lack of essential support systems for the medically vulnerable in our society. This support enables the chair holder, Dr. Eric Sung, to help UCLA dentists improve access to care – and quality of care – for people with developmental disabilities.

2018

The Community-Based Clinical Education (CBCE) Program was established to increase access to care for disadvantaged populations while advancing dental student training in community clinic settings. Thanks to the foundational support received from the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation and the UniHealth Foundation, more than 50,000 dental procedures have been completed on more than 22,000 patients through rotations performed by fourth-year D.D.S. candidates.

2022

With a \$1.67M gift from the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation, the MINDFUL Project (Mobile care IN Dentistry For Underserved populations Living in long-term care facilities) was established with a specific goal of enhancing oral health care and literacy for geriatric and special needs patients throughout Southern California.





Marginalized No More

Under the direction of Dr. Fariba Younai and with funding through the Ryan White Care Act, thousands of patients living with HIV and AIDS have received critical oral health care at UCLA

In the late 1980s, as a newly-minted dentist working at New York University during the height of the AIDS epidemic, Fariba Younai, D.D.S., found herself at the darkest point of her career.

“We had the names of four gay dentists who announced they were willing to see HIV-positive patients,” recounted Dr. Younai. “Any infected patient who came through our oral medicine clinic where I treated them for oral manifestations of HIV – whether they needed basic dental care or if they had a bombed-out tooth – I was required to refer them out. It really killed me to do that.”

As the years passed and exhaustive AIDS research helped destigmatize the disease, Dr. Younai worked her way up the NYU College of Dentistry faculty ranks. In 1990 she was appointed director of Hospital Dentistry and Special Patient Care. Serving in a leadership role gave Dr. Younai the confidence to advocate for these marginalized patients.

“I had a heart-to-heart with our dean, Edward Kaufman, and told him I think it’s time that we started opening our doors to patients with HIV. He agreed, with the condition that they be seen in Special Patient Care,” Dr. Younai said.

For a clinic that historically treated adults with intellectual disabilities and wheelchair-bound patients with neurological issues, absorbing a population with a still-mysterious and often-terminal disease brought a host of challenges. There were questions such as what medications could be prescribed and how patients might physically respond to an extraction. Dr. Younai began networking with fellow healthcare professionals working with New York’s HIV and AIDS-infected population; they exchanged best practices and formalized standards of care. Soon thereafter NYU Dentistry started mainstreaming patients throughout its clinics.

There was also a research component to Dr. Younai’s work, leading her to the epidemic’s sociological side.

“In 1990 I got a grant from HRSA [Health Resources and Services Administration], studying social factors that put people at risk for HIV and using oral manifestations as a proxy for identifying them,” she explained. “That had me working with homeless women, runaway adolescents, and a lot of patients in substance abuse programs. This study helped put our clinic on the map in New York City.”

Three-thousand miles west, additional advocacy was taking place. According to HRSA's A Living History: The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, the idea for a Federal program to support dental care for those infected germinated in the late 1980s from conversations between then-UCLA School of Dentistry Dean Henry Cherrick and Dr. Jay Gershen, chair of its Public Health section.

Not only was the School providing substantial unreimbursed care for people living with HIV/AIDS, but as a pathologist, Dr. Cherrick realized that dentists, if properly trained, could be a key first line of defense in AIDS patient care due to the soft-tissue lesions they encountered. In collaboration with American Association of Dental Schools (now the American Dental Education Association) peers and with support from several California congressional members, the UCLA visionaries successfully lobbied the House of Representatives to authorize HRSA's Dental Reimbursement Program in 1991; funds were first allocated in 1994.

"Early on, policymakers asked us why they should fund fillings for people who were dying, but once we explained the need and the important role dentists could play in diagnosing and treating people with HIV, they came on board," Dr. Gershen recounted in 2008.

These two forces of change converged in 1997 when Dr. Younai accepted a faculty position at the UCLA School of Dentistry. She immediately connected with oral medicine professor Dr. Frank Lucatorto, an author of numerous papers on diagnosing and treating oral lesions in HIV/AIDS-infected patients, and who – according to his 2001 obituary – "treated every patient with compassion and dignity."

Using her experience from NYU administering the Ryan White Care Act (RWCA) federal funds that UCLA administrators had advocated for nearly a decade earlier, Dr. Younai took on the challenge of scaling up the School's care for those living with HIV and AIDS; at the time averaging less than 100 patients per year.

"The experience I brought to UCLA was that you can expand services, you can provide care to a large population of patients,

and you can find ways of identifying streams of funding for the provision of care," Dr. Younai said. "We developed a way of capturing and reporting the cost of patient care and every year we were able to increase funding from HRSA."

On top of her faculty responsibilities, in 2002 Dr. Younai was asked to serve as the UCLA Medical School representative on the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV. What she expected to be a two-year term turned into a 14-year commitment. During this time, Dr. Younai not only helped allocate approximately \$50 million in annual federal Part A funds, but she also co-chaired the Commission's Standards of Care Committee, which developed treatment standards in over 30 categories; LA County lacked such checks and balances prior to their introduction in 2006.

\$13.7M

**in funding from
the County of Los
Angeles under the
Ryan White Care Act
Part A since 2014**

While serving as a commissioner, Dr. Younai negotiated an oral health contract between the School and the County. In May 2014, with then-Dean No-Hee Park serving as primary investigator and clinic-side support from Associate Dean Paulo Camargo, the School received its first Los Angeles County Department of Public Health grant of \$2.36 million over two years.

Completing her civic tenure in 2016 allowed Dr. Younai to redouble her efforts in directing UCLA's oral health services to people with HIV and AIDS. After building a program for general dentistry, recruiting patients, and developing administrative systems across the School, in 2018 she secured additional County funding for specialty care. Combined, these grants now total more than \$2 million per year, supporting an average of 1,700 patients annually and providing invaluable opportunities for dental students and postgraduate trainees alike.

"Patients come here with tremendous oral health needs, and once they complete treatment, they are happy, they find employment, they have a better quality of life," Dr. Younai said. "Of course, in the process, we are training the next generation of oral health providers who are comfortable treating patients with HIV and AIDS. As an educator, this is the best thing I can ask for."

story continues p. 8



**Watch Dr. Younai describe the
history of UCLA Dentistry's care for
patients living with HIV and AIDS.**

Scan the QR code.





Periodontics resident Dr. Masooma Rizvi consults with patient Murray Mead.

The Patient

“I crushed up my Marlboro Reds and yelled out the window as loud as I could, ‘I’m going to live!’”

That was Murray Mead’s visceral reaction in 1990 upon learning he had ulcerative colitis, a potentially fatal inflammatory bowel disease that Mead’s gastroenterologist said was triggered by years of hard living. It provided the jolt he needed to give up his many vices and commit to a healthy lifestyle. Mead began distance running and rekindled a love affair with pole vaulting, the sport in which he won a Hawaiian high school state title.

Less than a year after that diagnosis, Mead received an even more sobering one: He was HIV-positive.

Undeterred, Mead threw every still-unproven therapeutic he could at the virus in hopes of keeping his t-cell count high: Oxygen therapy, hydrogen peroxide-infused water, and copious yams in his diet. However, there was one area that clean living couldn’t help with.

“The damage done in my low times directly affected my dental health. I had poor gums, tooth decay. I avoided dentists because my job offered poor dental insurance,” Mead admitted.

In 2019, his physician at Kaiser Permanente suggested he look into a new grant-funded program at the UCLA School of Dentistry. Mead did so immediately, and after completing the application to determine his qualification for RWCA Part A-funded treatment, he was accepted.

Mead underwent two complex implant procedures in the Postgraduate Periodontics and Implant Surgery Clinic involving

bone grafts, and he continues as a patient for all his oral health care needs. The School has performed nearly 600 such dental implants since Part A funding was expanded in 2018.

“I find that the residents at UCLA are so meticulous because they’re fresh out of dental school,” Mead said. “Their level of kindness is incredible. I never feel like they’re rushing to get to their next patient.”

Mead remains healthy and has transitioned to a once-daily antiretroviral therapy with limited side effects compared to the longstanding HIV “drug cocktail.” Now semi-retired, Mead coaches the next generation of pole vaulters at a local high school. He is grateful to UCLA Dentistry not only for the care received but for how it’s alleviated his financial burden.

“There’s just no anxiety, knowing everything is going to be covered,” Mead said. “I was born a poor child, and I’ll die a poor man ... but I’m rich in experience!”

57,000

patient visits since 2014 through RWCA-funded programs

The Practitioner

When Masooma Rizvi, D.D.S. ‘21, P.D. ‘24, moved from Pakistan to enroll in UCLA’s Professional Program for International Dentists, she was surprised that reality didn’t match her preconceptions.

“I went to a lot of community events which exposed me to low-income populations around Los Angeles. This was news to me because, coming from a third-world country, I always thought of LA as being this fancy, luxurious city,” she intimated.

Now in the second of a three-year periodontics residency, Dr. Rizvi’s service work includes seeing patients living with HIV and AIDS. In addition to performing Mead’s recent teeth cleaning, she inspected the health of tissues surrounding his implants.

The scale of UCLA Dentistry’s clinical operation allows it to treat more patients than any other dental provider contracted with the LA County Division of HIV and STD Programs. General restorative services are typically performed by third- and fourth-year D.D.S. candidates – averaging 7,000 patient visits per year – with more complex procedures in the hands of residents like Dr. Rizvi.



Ryan White Care Act Program Coordinators Aaron Shearer and Vanessa Porter

The impact of Part A funding and similarly-altruistic School of Dentistry initiatives have helped shape Dr. Rizvi’s post-residency goals.

“I plan on having a community service day twice a month in my private practice where we provide basic exams and cleaning and oral hygiene tips and tricks free of charge in order to make a difference for all populations,” she said.

The Support Staff

The phrase “it takes a village” can often seem cliché, but it is certainly applicable to UCLA Dentistry’s oral health services for people living with HIV and AIDS. One of the first villagers whom patients meet is program coordinator Vanessa Porter.

Hired by Dr. Younai soon after the first County contract was awarded in 2014, Porter oversees much of the RWCA Part A funding administration, including determining patient eligibility. She also collaborates with dental students, residents, faculty, and staff, as well as other medical and dental offices, all working towards one common goal: Helping people.

Having engaged with thousands of individuals in her nine years at UCLA, one success story particularly resonates with Porter.

“I often think about a patient who entered the dental clinic in a low state. He told me you don’t realize how important your teeth are to you until you no longer have them, and how scary it is if you don’t have a way to fix them,” she recounted.

“This was humbling and made me grateful for the grant program we have at UCLA. By the time he finished his dental treatment, he was a completely different person. It was

incredible to witness his journey a see him become a person he was no longer ashamed to be.”

Joining Porter on the School’s core RWCA team is program coordinator Aaron Shearer, who oversees fund administration for more complex, specialty-level dental services such as implants, crowns, and root canals. Finally, the program also employs a licensed clinical social worker (although the position is currently vacant), focusing on holistic patient care and addressing some of the personal challenges those living with HIV and AIDS often experience.

The Future

Dr. Younai has worn many hats during her 26 years as a UCLA School of Dentistry faculty member, including her current role as chair of the Division of Diagnostic and Surgical Sciences. However, she remains focused on continuing to enhance the program which has become a personal passion. She says donor funding for those outside LA County who don’t meet Part A’s strict qualification criteria, as well as a corporate partner to provide needed supplies would take this initiative to the next level.

6,900

advanced dental procedures (implants, crowns, dentures, extractions, and root canals) since County funding was expanded in 2018.

As a change agent for four decades, seeing this patient population transition from marginalized to mainstream has been especially gratifying for her.

“Because of the sacrifices that the first generation of HIV-positive patients and practitioners made, money became available that we can continue to use for our patients,” Dr. Younai said. “But the reality is that you have to always be at the table and speak up; I want to see the next generation of dentists care about advocacy, too.”



Unbreakable Bonds

Special Patient Care Club President
Tiffany Kim, D.D.S. '24, is driven by her
brother's autism and Dr. Eric Sung's
mentorship

Tiffany Kim's story exemplifies the many deep connections formed within the UCLA School of Dentistry.

The third-year D.D.S. candidate is the daughter of Steven Kim, D.D.S. '90, a successful private practice general dentist in Riverside, Calif.

She's also the sister of Ryan, who, at 26 months, was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. It was difficult for Tiffany, three years Ryan's elder, to watch her brother's normal stages of early childhood development regress rapidly.

"I remember very distinctly there was a point where he knew how to count from one to 10; we were all cheering him on in the car as he was reciting it," she recalled. "Then, within the next six months, his language significantly regressed. And by the time he was diagnosed with autism, he was completely nonverbal."

For the past 18 years, Ryan has undergone significant speech and behavioral therapy – including at UCLA's Center for Autism Research and Treatment – and is now able to verbalize his wants and needs. However, as is typical for those with moderate to severe autism, Ryan's anxiety is heightened in new environments, reacting strongest in institutional settings like a dental office.

It became apparent that the Kims couldn't keep Ryan's oral health care in the family.

"I have a lot of respect for the kind of dentistry my dad does. He has a small family practice that everyone in the community comes to see," Tiffany said. "But he really doesn't have the training or staff or equipment necessary to handle my brother."

A decade ago, Dr. Kim reconnected with his fellow UCLA School of Dentistry Class of 1990 alumnus Eric Sung, D.D.S. As chair of the School's Section of Special Patient Care, Dr. Sung welcomed Ryan into his clinic. It is one of the region's few oral health care centers providing advanced comprehensive general dentistry for patients with severe medical, physical, and mental challenges.

"Since autism is a spectrum, you identify what the patient's triggers are and go from there. For some it's light, some it's sound, some may be other types of sensory," said Dr. Sung, who holds the Momentum Endowed Chair in Special Patient Care. "Recently we had a young individual whose trigger is other young children; as you can see, it is quite variable."

Tiffany does not have fond memories of her brother's first visit to UCLA Special Patient Care; Ryan was screaming, grabbing the walls, and had to be administered a sedative to help him relax. However, Dr. Sung's professionalism and dedication to his patients made her want to learn more about the Clinic. She



The Kim family in 2005: (l-r) Ryan, Nina, Tiffany, and Steven

started volunteering there at age 14, continuing through high school as her schedule allowed, assisting with clerical work and absorbing Dr. Sung’s knowledge of different patients and their conditions.

“I remember one patient, he was deaf and blind, and he had a device to type out his responses,” Tiffany said. “I kept him company and texted with him during his appointment. That interaction really stood out because I thought, ‘there’s a population here that I feel comfortable being around and I feel like I can do something for.’”

Despite family ties to dentistry and her profound experiences in Dr. Sung’s clinic, Tiffany chose to enroll in the pre-medicine track at Claremont-McKenna College (CMC). Her undergraduate decision was motivated, in part, by CMC’s renowned on-campus autism clinic as well as being close to home to assist with Ryan’s care.

It was during twice-weekly shifts in the Claremont Autism Center that Tiffany began contemplating a switch to dentistry. After talking to families, she learned most hadn’t taken their children with autism to the dentist since an early age, given what a scary, weighty environment it can be.

“I realized what I loved about my dad’s practice is that patients grew with him; one of them now works as one of his assistants,” she said. “So many kids with autism or even adults with autism



Members of the 2022-23 UCLA Special Patient Care Club

don’t have dentists who feel comfortable seeing them, so I wondered if that’s something I could do. There are kids [from the autism center] I still talk to who are waiting for me to become a dentist so I can treat them!”

Knowing she has a pool of future patients as eager to see her as she is to treat them motivates Tiffany to fully embrace the UCLA dental student experience. In year one, she joined the Special Patient Care Club (SPCC), founded by Jonina Capino, D.D.S., ’22. An older sister to two siblings with autism, Dr. Capino is currently engaged in a general practice residency at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, further training her to serve this patient population.

Taking over as SPCC president this academic year, Tiffany has helped ensure a robust event calendar of learning opportunities from established practitioners. One was an event with Dr. Joe Samona, who operates a successful practice despite suffering from bilateral profound hearing loss. The club also organized a holiday card-writing campaign, delivering these messages to hospitalized children.

“Our club’s goal is to increase understanding, awareness, and empathy for this population. As you can imagine, this population is incredibly underfunded and underserved,” said Tiffany, who was justly recognized with the 2023 Shapiro Family Endowed Scholarship for Special Patient Care.

Tiffany envisions a professional path that merges her father’s career with that of her mentor’s, Dr. Sung. Next year she plans to apply for a general practice residency, which will prepare her to treat individuals like Ryan in a community setting.

“During our time in the SPCC, Dr. Capino introduced me to the idea of seeing special needs patients in private practice. That is so vital, both to meet patients where they’re most comfortable and to alleviate the huge caseloads that places like UCLA’s Special Patient Care Clinic have.”



Watch as Tiffany explains her family’s history and her motivation to work in special spatient care dentistry.

Scan the QR code.



Seeing the Smiles Once Again

As we transition to a post-pandemic world, the School of Dentistry community is reconnecting



◀ Class of 2025 White Coat Ceremony



All-School Picnic, hosted by ASB ▶



◀ Twenty-year reunion for the Class of 2002



2023 Scholarship Ceremony

2023 Research Day



Residency Match Celebration for the Class of 2023

Harbor-UCLA Medical Center's annual Diabetes Day



TRAINING THE NEXT

Generation

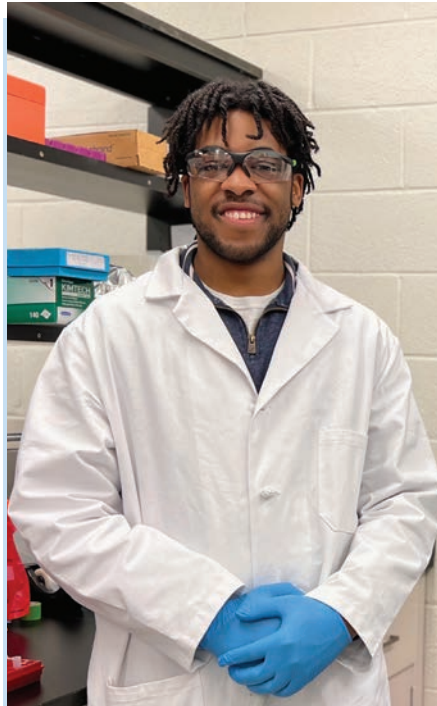


Dr. Yvonne Hernandez-Kapila serves as UCLA School of Dentistry's associate dean for research, holding the Felix and Mildred Yip Endowed Chair.

She joined our faculty on May 1, 2022, from the UC San Francisco School of Dentistry, with a resume of more than 140 peer-reviewed journal articles and a research focus on molecular biologic mechanisms that regulate the pathogenesis of head and neck cancer and periodontal disease.

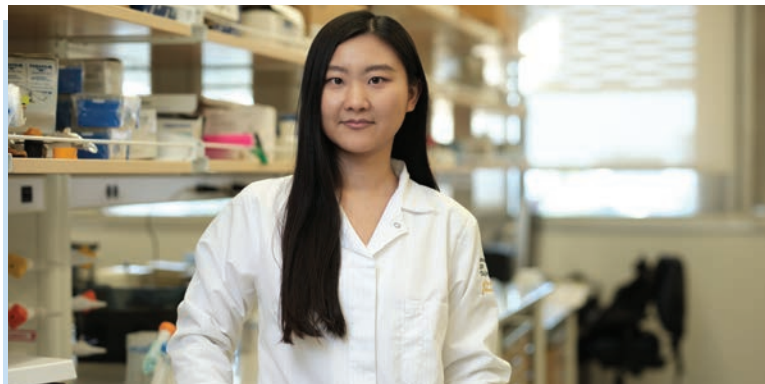
Stewarding a portfolio of more than \$20 million in funded research opportunities, Dr. Hernandez-Kapila is passionate about supporting not only established principal investigators among the School's acclaimed faculty, but also freshly-minted scientists with a passion for oral health discovery. She is well-positioned for such a role: Over a 25-year career, Dr. Hernandez-Kapila has mentored more than 100 Ph.D., D.D.S., M.D., Masters, and undergraduate students in dissertation work, lab rotations, summer research projects, NIH fellowships, and global research projects.

To the right, Dr. Hernandez-Kapila introduces you to four such researchers and the School of Dentistry programs empowering their scientific discoveries ... as well as their professional growth.



Abdul-Rakeem Yakubu,
University of Pennsylvania '23
Bruins-in-Genomics: Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research Training Program Scholar

"Under the umbrella of the Institute for Quantitative and Computational Biosciences' Bruins-in-Genomics program, through the R25 'BIG DOC' grant students are immersed in eight weeks of graduate-level coursework exploring cutting-edge research tools and methods led by leading scientists. Rakeem's participation in 2021 inspired him to pursue a dual D.M.D./D.M.Sc. program at Harvard University."



Leah Ye, M.S., D.D.S.
R90 Dentist-Scientist Trainee

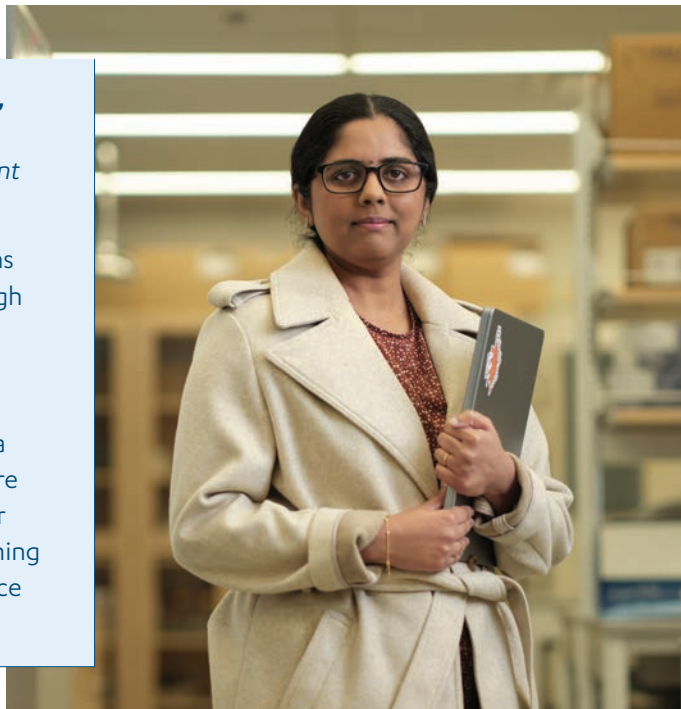
"The NIH-funded R90/T90 Program is designed for dentist-scientists and other pre/post-doctoral scholars interested in oral, dental, and craniofacial research. They are provided with multidisciplinary research training opportunities in broad areas of science – from cancer biology to regenerative medicine – and they too become our academic and science leaders of tomorrow. One such scholar, Dr. Ye, is uncovering life's intricate signals responsible for forming the jawbones and face."

Through the National Institute of Health’s grant-funded programs, early-career researchers are making important discoveries and gaining leadership skills inside UCLA School of Dentistry labs

Vidhya Venkateswaran, B.D.S., M.P.H., R '21, Ph.D. '23

K12 Institutional Career Development Program Trainee

“This program helps dental clinicians advance their career training through a combined clinical residency and Ph.D. program that enables these scholars to work with top scientists in their chosen research fields. It is a critical workforce pipeline to prepare future academic leaders. One of our scholars, Dr. Venkateswaran, is pushing the boundaries of oral cancer science with big data discoveries.”



Yi-Wei Chen, M.S., Ph.D.

Postdoctoral Cancer Group Researcher

“The UCLA School of Dentistry’s postdoctoral scholars are the key engines of our scientific discoveries; making the latest breakthroughs while also elevating our communities through their mentoring and teaching efforts. Dr. Chen is one such hero, who has been a Bruin since 2019 and made seminal contributions to our understanding of cancer development in the context of host-microbe interactions.”



JOAN AND NAOMI: *In Conversation*

The current and past chairs of the UCLA School of Dentistry's Board of Counselors discuss how the seeds of service were planted in them from a young age and share advice for new alums looking to get involved beyond patient care.

School of Dentistry: Did either of you observe any examples of leadership, mentoring, giving, or serving others growing up, and if so, how did those influence you?

Dr. Joan Otomo-Corgel: My childhood sport was auto racing. When I asked my dad why he let me drive at 5 years of age, he said, "Because you are special." My parents, who were my devoted mentors, empowered me – don't see barriers, see opportunities and always think of others before yourself. Being a collegiate cheer "leader" helped me earn scholarships from the National Cheerleaders Association that paid for tuition at the UCLA School of Dentistry. Throughout my life, the philosophy was when you get, don't forget to give.

Dr. Naomi Ellison: I went to a one-room country schoolhouse until I was in the eighth grade and service started early in my life because, in order to survive, you had to help your neighbor. My parents taught me that you always help when you can. I started out in 4-H; you had to put your little book together and say what you'd done for someone else. I began looking for areas where one could be of service. Oh, and I was a cheerleader too, Joan!

Later, when I had the opportunity to give some money to UCLA, I went, "Wait a minute, why can't my school have some of this? After all, it's given me my career!" And that moment of giving landed me on the School of Dentistry Board of Counselors.

SOD: Looking at the long lists of leadership roles, boards, chairing of committees etc., on each of your resumes, it seems that you said "yes" to many opportunities and requests for your time. What drives you to say, "let's do this"?

JOC: Martin Luther King said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter." You look at where you can make the biggest impact, where you can make a positive difference, or where you can be the best mentor for others. A person needs to find what gives them energy, inspiration, and passion in order to improve your community.

NE: You learn, and then you can serve as an example for others. I think that's a huge thing. When I first got involved with organized dentistry, there were no women. Joan, it was probably similar for you; there were no other women on any of the boards I sat on, but I had such a wonderful, respectful time with these men. And one of them in particular knew how to run a meeting. I watched that and learned so much from him. I still use those skills today!

JOC: I have learned a ton from Naomi Ellison about how to chair a meeting. I've learned patience from you, Naomi!

In board service and beyond, you create really, really nice attachments with other people that you normally would never meet. And I think from there, it's almost like planting a seed. It grows.

"Service is like an echo, resonating bigger and bigger. I've never been in a situation where you don't get more than you give."

– Dr. Joan Otomo-Corgel

SOD: Do you have any advice for the next generation of leaders, say, someone just graduating from the School of Dentistry, or a recent alum who may be reading this article?

NE: I would recommend they join their local dental society because there's nothing better than having other dentists to talk to. Don't isolate yourself. Meet other dentists, share things with them and, you know, dentists aren't just dentists. There are dentists that do a lot of different things. UCLA is always willing to have you come back and help with the students, too.

JOC: I agree with Naomi; for the new dental grad, local organizations are great. You can also get involved in your local community; look at your city council. You will be a better person. You'll have a better quality of life because you will look at the values of other people in a different way.

NE: Yes, and your patients love hearing about what you do outside of the office. It makes them proud. It really does. They like knowing that their dentist is involved and more than just their dentist!

Dr. Naomi Ellison (D.D.S. '81) built a successful private practice while simultaneously holding several leadership positions within the dental field, including with the California Dental Association. Dr. Ellison served as chair of the UCLA School of Dentistry's Board of Counselors from 1996 to 2022 and remains an active member of the Board. During more than 26 years of service, she has helped raise more than \$55 million to support UCLA Dentistry's mission. Dr. Ellison is also deeply involved in campus-wide philanthropic activities, including as a Centennial Campaign for UCLA cabinet member and past president of Women and Philanthropy at UCLA. Last October, Dr. Reuben Kim was installed as the inaugural Naomi and Jim Ellison Endowed Chair in the Section of Restorative Dentistry at UCLA.

Dr. Joan Otomo-Corgel (D.D.S. '76, M.P.H. '80) took the baton from Dr. Ellison as Board of Counselors chair in July 2022 after serving as vice-chair since 2020. A clinical professor in the School's Section of Periodontics, Dr. Otomo-Corgel also also serves as a faculty member at the Greater Los Angeles VA Health Care Center Dental Service where she is chair of postdoctoral research. She has maintained a thriving periodontics and implantology private practice for over four decades. A member of the ADA Council on Dental Education and Licensure and the CDA Board of Directors, Dr. Otomo-Corgel is the past president of the American Academy of Periodontology, among numerous other present and past appointments. She chaired the fundraising effort for the Dr. Ronald Mito Award for Professionalism, Leadership, and Service and co-chaired the fundraising effort for the Dr. Henry H. Takei Endowed Periodontal Symposium.

2022 ALUMNI OF THE YEAR:

Konita Wilks, D.D.S. '11, P.D. '14



Dr. Konita Wilks, Chief Executive Officer at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center, was named the UCLA School of Dentistry's 2022 Alumni of the Year.

The first dentist to ever serve as CEO of an LA County Health Services hospital, Dr. Wilks previously spent nearly seven years (2016 to 2022) at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in both dental and hospital leadership roles. In dentistry, she has devoted her career to working with special needs patients.

"I am humbled and truly honored. So many faculty members from the UCLA School of Dentistry played a huge part in shaping the person I am today, so this award means so much to me."

– Dr. Konita Wilks

As a D.D.S. candidate, Dr. Wilks was appointed to the Omicron Kappa Upsilon National Dental Honor Society and initiated a collaboration between UCLA and the Kids Community Clinic in Burbank. That partnership continues to this day through the School's Community-Based Clinical Education initiative.

Dr. Wilks entered dental school after serving seven years active duty as a commissioned officer in the United States Navy, which included combat experience in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The School's 2023 Alumni of the Year will be announced in May 2023.



From Mentee to Mentor

Double Bruin Yi-Ling Loo Thrives in Basic Dental Principles Course

Yi-Ling Loo, '20, D.D.S. '24, moved from student's desk to instructor's podium in near-record time.

The third-year D.D.S. candidate serves as course co-director and lecturer for the UCLA School of Dentistry's Basic Dental Principles (BDP) program, having participated in BDP herself as a Bruin undergraduate a few short years ago.

BDP was conceptualized in 2005 through a collaboration between faculty member Carol Bibb, D.D.S. '78, and Jennifer Crowe, D.D.S. '06, then a third-year dental student interested in becoming an educator in the field. The program is offered over two academic quarters – the first consisting of a lecture series covering a broad range of topics, the second involving four hands-on sessions in the preclinical lab – BDP gives prospective dental students an opportunity to enhance their understanding of the field and explore dentistry as a career choice.

Dr. Bibb considers BDP her most treasured contribution to the School in nearly 40 years as a faculty member.

"BDP is an opportunity for pre-dental students to confirm their interest in the field by experiencing lecture and lab courses like they will take in dental school. The opportunity to meet current dental students as mentors and role models is also invaluable," Dr. Bibb said. "It is common to hear that the BDP experience inspired pre-dental students to choose UCLA Dentistry in hopes that they will be able to participate as student teachers themselves."

At the same time, Dr. Bibb delights in the platform BDP provides for faculty members to mentor D.D.S. students interested in teaching. Several BDP course lecturer alumni have moved on to serve as faculty at the School of Dentistry.

Loo is a shining example of somebody taking full advantage of this program. Originally from St. Louis, Mo., Loo moved to Los Angeles at age one. Her first exposure to the UCLA School of Dentistry came not through BDP, but as a patient in both its Pediatric Clinic and Bales Orthodontic Clinic. These experiences piqued an early interest in the field, as resident practitioners were very friendly and took the time to explain procedures.

Loo knew since middle school that she wanted to pursue a career in dentistry and put herself on that path as a biochemistry major at UCLA, graduating in 2020. She started in BDP as a sophomore, then completed the lab series the following year.

That was in addition to a robust slate of extracurricular activities that saw Loo embrace her half-Japanese heritage; she joined the drumming group *Kyodo Taiko*, volunteered at the Japanese American National Museum, and worked with patients at *Keiro*, a senior care organization.

While Loo was focused on dentistry from an early age, she sees incredible value in BDP for students still uncertain about the field.

“The breadth of topics covered and the quality of how lectures are delivered is what I really liked about the program,” she said. “The lab component is a great opportunity to practice drilling before getting to dental school, as many people like the idea of dentistry but do not get to practice before delving into the field.”

“The lecture series does not merely scratch the surface level but rather goes into detailed topics such as organized dentistry, public health, endodontics, and so much more. The knowledge gained from the program is highly applicable towards shadowing experiences as well,” Loo added.

Basic Dental Principles moved its lecture series online during the COVID-19 pandemic and has remained virtual ever since, from which opportunity has sprung. When Loo took the course in 2018, enrollment was limited to 80 students due to classroom capacity. The new online platform has allowed pre-dental students from beyond UCLA to participate in the lecture series, and this year there are more than 200 enrollees from across the country and the globe. After completing BDP, Bruin undergrads earn transcript credit for undertaking upper-division research, while those from outside the university gain a valuable CV addition for their dental school applications.

“I’m grateful for opportunities such as BDP, which have helped me develop my teaching and communication skills.”

Current BDP students see benefits in learning from instructors who are still on personal journeys in dentistry themselves.

“BDP has solidified my interest in dentistry, and it has been an amazing opportunity to learn more about the field before jumping into it,” said Astha Patel, a third-year UCLA student majoring in biochemistry. “I really enjoy the variety of topics offered and that our instructors are always friendly and open to helping. They constantly encourage students and remind us that the long journey is worth the wait.”

Loo’s path to becoming a BDP program director began last academic year when she applied to become a lab coordinator. In this role, she procured course supplies, administered exams, guided students on their poster projects, and helped lead a team of D2 classmates working one-on-one with pre-dental students in the simulation lab.

Alongside fellow third-year Myriam Hakimeh (herself a double Bruin), Loo ascended to her current role leading the lecture



Hani Hijazi, D.D.S. '25, (left) instructs a BDP course participant in the School's simulation lab.

component. In addition to lesson planning, they select lecturers and new lab coordinators from the School of Dentistry student body and organize quarterly teach-backs, which allow D.D.S. candidates to practice their BDP lectures in front of peers and faculty members.

Much like her undergraduate experience, Loo dove head-first into extracurricular activities at the School of Dentistry. She’s part of the Board of Counselors’ Leadership Institute cohort – which introduces UCLA dental students to established professional mentors – and recently, she participated in an educational and cultural exchange with two Japanese dental schools. In March, Loo was awarded the Dorothy Schick Endowed Scholarship, recognizing academic excellence.

As her UCLA School of Dentistry student journey enters its home stretch, Loo is planning to pursue specialty training in pediatric dentistry and looks forward to a career as a clinician, educator, and patient advocate.

“I had a really great experience with my dentist when I was growing up that made me feel dental care and oral hygiene are super important. My goal is to become a practitioner who can make a similar impact on my patients’ lives,” Loo said. “I’m grateful for opportunities such as BDP, which have helped me develop my teaching and communication skills. I hope to be able to use all of the valuable experiences UCLA has afforded me and continue to grow and become a great dentist!”

One Final Send-Off

Recent Faculty Retirements



Lillian Cheng, D.D.S.
18 Years of Service

Dr. Lillian Cheng retired on June 29, 2022, after serving as director of the Wilson-Jennings-Bloomfield UCLA Venice Dental Center as well as director of the Advanced Restorative Dentistry Clinical Training Program.

As an associate professor, she taught courses ranging from fixed and removable prosthodontics to emergency dental care and comprehensive oral health care for medically compromised patients. Dr. Cheng also maintained a busy schedule seeing patients at UCLA's Faculty Group Dental Practice focusing on advanced restorative dentistry, including implant and cosmetic dentistry.

After earning her D.D.S. as well as several advanced certificates and practicing for over a decade in her native Taiwan, Dr. Cheng emigrated to the U.S. and obtained a second dental degree from UCLA in 2004, joining the faculty soon after.

Among many professional affiliations, Dr. Cheng was a sponsoring organization editor for the Journal of Prosthodontic Dentistry and a member of the American Dental Association, California Dental Association, and Academy of Operative Dentistry.



James J. Crall, D.D.S., M.S., Sc.D.
19 Years of Service

Dr. James J. Crall, a professor and former chair of the Division of Public Health and Community Dentistry, retired on June 29, 2022.

Dr. Crall is a renowned expert in caries prevention, oral health disparities, healthcare delivery and financing, and quality improvement, with over 150 peer-reviewed publications, chapters, and policy briefs. He served as American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Child Advocate from 1995 to 2014 and received the Pediatric Dentist of the Year Award in 2005 and the Distinguished Service Award in 2008.

During his time at UCLA, Dr. Crall served as Director of the HRSA/MCHB National Oral Health Policy Center and led several large projects to expand access to pediatric oral health care for underserved children, including the Give Kids a Smile initiative.

Dr. Crall earned his D.D.S., master's degree, and certificate in pediatric dentistry from the University of Iowa. He also held a doctoral degree in Health Policy and Management from the Harvard School of Public Health and was the first Dental Scholar-in-Residence at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He came to UCLA in 2004 after holding academic appointments at Columbia University, the University of Connecticut, and the University of Iowa.



Perry Klokkevold, D.D.S., M.S.
25 Years of Service

Dr. Perry Klokkevold is a board-certified periodontist, implant surgeon, and educator who retired from UCLA on June 29, 2022.

He graduated from the UCSF School of Dentistry and completed postgraduate training in Hospital Dentistry, Periodontics, and Implant Surgery at UCLA. Dr. Klokkevold was a professor of clinical dentistry and director of the periodontics

residency program during his UCLA tenure. A renowned lecturer, he was an invited expert to world conferences on periodontics and implantology.

While at UCLA, Dr. Klokkevold was a member of numerous professional societies and organizations, including the American Academy of Periodontology, the California Dental Association, the Delta Sigma Delta Alumni Association, and a fellow of the American College of Dentists. He published over 60 articles and more than 100 book chapters and served as a co-editor of *Clinical Periodontology*, the most widely read and respected textbook in the field of periodontics.



Barry Margolis, D.M.D.
8 Years of Service

Dr. Barry Margolis retired from his position as Associate Dean of Student Services on March 31, 2022.

Dr. Margolis served as a group practice director at the School of Dentistry for four years before being appointed to his role overseeing Student Services in 2018. During his three-year tenure as associate dean, he prioritized the professional development and mental well-being of students, while also implementing management protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After earning his Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry from Tufts University, Dr. Margolis started his career at Pennsylvania’s ChesPenn Health Services, a National Health Service Corps practice. He then practiced privately in West Newton, Mass., for 30 years before moving to UCLA in 2014.



Ben Wu, D.D.S., Ph.D.
23 Years of Service

Dr. Ben Wu retired from the School of Dentistry on Dec. 31, 2022, after most recently serving as chair of the Division of Regenerative and Reconstructive Sciences, Director of the Weintraub Center for Reconstructive Biotechnology, and

Executive Director of the Innovative Digital Dentistry Systems (iDDS). He continues to hold a professor emeritus title.

While at UCLA, Dr. Wu specialized in the treatment of advanced and complex oral rehabilitation using implants and fixed and removable prosthodontics while also providing multidisciplinary patient care in the Faculty Group Dental Practice.

Concurrently, Dr. Wu held faculty appointments in UCLA’s Samueli School of Engineering Department of Bioengineering – which he first joined in 2000 – and the David Geffen School of Medicine’s Department of Orthopedic Surgery.

A prolific researcher, Dr. Wu has authored more than 260 peer-reviewed articles, secured 30 patents, won numerous research awards, and is a fellow of the Academy of Prosthodontics. His work spans multiple clinical disciplines, including dentistry, orthopedics, radiology, and plastic and reconstructive Surgery. He helped develop biomimetic apatites – a materials-processing strategy to mimic natural bone healing – and investigated the 3D mass transport and cell-cell interactions of stem cells in large clinical-size defects.

Staff Retirements

2021

Paul Silva

FGDP Prosthetist/Orthotist

Grant Yano

Analyst, Computer Services

Lorraine Poster

Patient Appointment and OD Coordinator

2022

Nenad Avejic

Financial Services
Administrative Analyst

Rochelle Bache

Practice Manager

Carlos Dominguez

Storeroom Manager

Mina Farsany

AEGD Dental Assistant

Sandie Ferrer

Periodontics Administrative
Specialist Supervisor

Victoria Ibarra-Sandoval

Administrative Officer

Rio Martinez

Oral Radiology Supervisor

Belinda Van Dorn

FGDP Dental Hygienist

Linda A. Vallano

Patient Appointment and
New Patient Assessment
Coordinator

Rebecca Lopez-Piraino

Clinic Administrator

2023

Lisa Gotori-Koga

Facilities Planning Manager

Always in Our Hearts

Remembering Faculty Members Who Recently Passed Away



Henry Cherrick, D.D.S., M.S.D.

Dr. Henry Cherrick, former dean of the UCLA School of Dentistry, passed away on Jan. 24, 2023, at the age of 84. Dr. Cherrick joined the faculty as an assistant professor of oral pathology in 1971 and later became a full professor. He left UCLA in 1978 to serve as dean of two different dental schools before returning in 1988. During his tenure, Dr. Cherrick established a geriatric dentistry program and signed a partnership agreement with two Japanese universities to promote educational and cultural exchange. He also advocated for dental care for HIV-positive patients, successfully lobbying Congress to authorize the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part F Dental Reimbursement Program. Citing poor health, Dr. Cherrick stepped down as dean in July 1995 and retired following a sabbatical. The author of more than 45 published articles, Dr. Cherrick conducted extensive research in areas such as surgical management of pathological processes, oral pathology, and bone transplantation. He received his education from the University of Florida, the Medical College of Virginia, the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, and Indiana University-Indianapolis. Dr. Cherrick and his wife Naomi were married for nearly 60 years until her passing in November 2020. He is survived by a son, Andy, and two grandsons, Jackson, and William.



Donald Duperon, D.D.S., M.S.

Dr. Donald F. Duperon, a longtime professor and chair of the Section of Pediatric Dentistry at the UCLA School of Dentistry, passed after a four-year battle with cancer on May 29, 2022. A native of Canada, he earned his D.D.S. from the University of Alberta in 1961 and was recruited to UCLA in 1974.

He served the School for more than four decades, including 26 years as the chair and program director for Pediatric Dentistry. After retiring in Dec. 2004, Dr. Duperon continued to lecture in the Section of Pediatrics until 2019. He was a devoted educator, a fellow of the Canadian and American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and a member of several professional and community organizations. Dr. Duperon will be remembered as a warm individual, an intelligent instructor, and a true Renaissance man. Outside the dental profession, he was a black belt in karate (earning a gold medal in the Senior Olympics for karate), barbershop singer, tap dancer, saxophonist, scuba diver, sailor, motorcycle rider, and car enthusiast.



Moustafa El-Ghareeb, B.D.S., M.S.

Dr. Moustafa El-Ghareeb, a highly respected oral and maxillofacial surgeon and educator at the School of Dentistry, passed away on Feb. 25, 2021. He was known for his expertise in maxillofacial reconstruction, dental implant surgery, outpatient anesthesia, and ambulatory oral surgery. Dr. El-Ghareeb joined the faculty in 2005 as an adjunct assistant professor in the Section of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, where he taught predoctoral students, residents, and fellows. He also provided low-cost care to patients at the Venice Dental Center. Dr. El-Ghareeb completed his dental education and residency in his home country of Egypt before furthering his training in oral and maxillofacial surgery at The Ohio State University and completing a fellowship in Surgical Implant Dentistry at UCLA. In addition to his professional achievements, he enjoyed outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, and photography.



John Jones, D.D.S.

Dr. John Duane Jones, a continuing lecturer in the UCLA School of Dentistry's Section of Orthodontics, passed away on Oct. 22, 2022, at the age of 83, after an extended illness. At the time of his passing, Dr. Jones was serving as director for the School's Orthodontics ACT, Preceptor, and Residency Programs, and as Orthodontics clinic director. He commuted from Phoenix to Los Angeles nearly every week during his more than 24-year affiliation with UCLA, spending two full days in the graduate orthodontics clinic and teaching up to four seminars per week. Dr. Jones was recognized by orthodontics residents with numerous Clinical Educator of the Year awards. In his 54-year career, he treated tens of thousands of patients and was a prominent member of the professional orthodontic community. Serving in the U.S. Army for two years and stationed in Anchorage, Alaska, he provided orthodontic care to military families. Until his death, he also practiced privately in the greater Phoenix area. Dr. Jones was a very active father and held various positions in the Boy Scouts of America. He is survived by his wife, six children, one foster daughter, 19 grandchildren, and one great-grandson.



Thomson Sun, D.D.S.

Dr. Thomson Sun, a continuing lecturer in the UCLA School of Dentistry's Section of Restorative Dentistry, passed away on Aug. 20, 2022. He was 83. Dr. Sun had been teaching in the School since 2003, including serving the Venice Dental Center, the restorative dentistry clinic, and the UCLA student clinic. He also maintained a private general practice in Santa Monica and treated patients at Cal State Northridge's Klotz Student Health Center. Dr. Reuben Kim, his section chair, said that Dr. Sun had been an exemplary faculty member in the Section of Restorative Dentistry for 19 years and that his vast experiences in dentistry and many story-telling analogies

were always loved by students and colleagues alike. After receiving his B.S. from UCLA in 1965, Dr. Sun earned a D.D.S. from the University of Michigan School of Dentistry in 1969. He is survived by his wife, Joan, and children, Ari and Gia.



Phillip Trask, D.D.S., M.S.

Dr. Philip Alan Trask passed away on Jan. 21, 2022, at the age of 79. An accomplished pediatric dentist and a mentor to many School of Dentistry students, he practiced for over 50 years and left a lasting impact on the Los Angeles community. Despite a challenging upbringing that included time spent in an orphanage and involvement with a juvenile gang, Dr. Trask put himself through college by working full-time for the telephone and gas companies in Los Angeles. He eventually found his true calling as a pediatric dentist, opening a large practice in Santa Monica and accepting a faculty appointment at UCLA. Dr. Trask was known for his patient care and devotion to his students, providing them personalized recommendations and opportunities to gain experience in his private practice. He was also committed to serving underserved communities, testifying before city councils, and serving as supervising faculty at UCLA's Give Kids a Smile outreach events. Dr. Trask will be remembered as a "gifted and tirelessly giving friend, teacher, and supporter of all things UCLA," according to his colleague Dr. James Crall.

The logo features the text "UCLA" in white, bold, sans-serif font inside a blue rectangular box.**Dentistry**

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- California Dental Practice Act (2 units)

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- Bonding Agents: Material and Techniques
 - Cardiovascular Disorders and Dental Care
 - Composites in the Modern Practice
 - Endocrine Disorders
 - Intro to Dental Photography
 - Pulmonary Conditions and Dental Care
-

In-Person Courses

Friday, June 2

Guided Bone Regeneration (GBR)

Friday, June 9

Temporomandibular Disorders and Orofacial Pain Diagnosis and Management

Saturday, June 17

Pulp Therapy for Primary and Immature Permanent Teeth - Myths and Facts

Saturday, July 22

Soft Tissue Grafting Workshop for Functional and Esthetic Needs

Saturday, July 28

Platelet Rich Fibrin (PRF)

Friday, Aug. 25

Sinus Graft Workshop

Saturday, Sept. 30

Connective Tissue Graft Stabilization by Subperiosteal Sling Suture

Saturday, Oct. 7

State of the Art Restorative Dentistry in 2023

Saturday, Oct. 14

Detection and Management of Oral Cancer

Thursday, Oct. 19

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Saturday, Nov. 4

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Board Member, Osteology Foundation; Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor at the Department of Periodontology and Oral Medicine at the University of Michigan
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Inaugural Dr. Henry H. Takei Endowed Periodontal Symposium

Saturday, Aug. 5, 2023 | 1 to 5 p.m. | Los Angeles, CA

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Three units of CE credit will be given to eligible attendees

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