

School of Dentistry Dean's Newsletter

Fall 1997 Issue

Vol. III, No. 2



CREIGHTON
UNIVERSITY

A NEW YEAR

Our classes, clinics and laboratories are alive again with students. We welcomed 84 new freshmen to our School this Fall. We wish them all the best.

We graduated 81 students this past Spring. The Class of 1997 continued Creighton's tradition of excellence on national board and regional exams. More than 95 percent of our graduates passed the Western Regional exam on their first attempt. We believe these new alumni are well prepared to make significant contributions to our profession.

We owe much of our success to the generosity of our alumni, faculty and friends. Through your contributions, we are able to enhance programs and continue to offer our students an exceptional education using the latest technology.

In 1996-97, we realized a significant increase in gifts to our School's Annual Fund. Gifts to the Fund were up more than 23 percent over the previous year. Total dollars raised through the Fund were \$212,392 in 1996-97, up from \$172,041 in 1995-96. Total contributions to our School, including endowment and other special gifts, topped \$1.2 million in 1996-97.

In addition, the number of donors to our Annual Fund increased more than 8 percent over last year. We had 1,100 donors in 1996-97, compared to 1,014 donors in 1995-96. Currently, our School has more than 2,600 living alumni.

We are grateful for those who contribute to our School's Annual Fund, and we encourage those who have not contributed to consider a donation the next time they are contacted by a Creighton dental student requesting a pledge.

No matter how large or small the gift, our donors are leaving a legacy, ensuring our educational excellence for future generations of Creighton dental students.

Wayne W. Barkmeier
Wayne W. Barkmeier, DDS, MS
Dean, School of Dentistry

DR. BLANKENAU INSTALLED AS BELZER CHAIR HOLDER

Dr. Richard J. Blankenau, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Operative Dentistry, was installed as the first holder of the Dr. Oscar S. Belzer Endowed Chair in Dentistry in a ceremony Sept. 2.

Dr. Blankenau, a 1966 Creighton dental graduate, has taught at the School for nearly 30 years. He served as Chair of the Department of Operative Dentistry for 12 years and became a full professor in 1985. Dr. Blankenau is an authority on restorative materials and the use of lasers in dentistry.

In 1996, Dr. Blankenau received the T.H. Maiman Award for Excellence in Laser Dental Research from the Academy of Laser Dentistry. His Creighton awards include being named the Best Clinical Instructor and receiving the Distinguished Faculty Service Award. Dr. Blankenau is a Fellow in the American College of Dentists.

The Belzer Chair was established through a \$1 million gift to the Creighton 2000 Campaign from the estate of the late Jerome Belzer, M.D. He bequeathed the gift as a tribute to his father, Oscar, a 1928 graduate of our School.

Dr. Oscar Belzer, who died in early August, practiced dentistry for 25 years in Omaha's Medical Arts Building and was known as the "singing dentist" because he often sang to patients as he worked. Dr. Jerome Belzer was a pathologist and member of the faculty at the UCLA School of Medicine until his death last November.

The Belzer Chair is the 16th endowed faculty chair at the University and the second endowed faculty chair in our School. The Dr. Raymond W. Shaddy Endowed Chair in Operative Dentistry, funded by hundreds of alumni and friends, was established in 1994.

CREIGHTON TO HOST RECEPTION AT ADA MEETING

Creighton will host a reception for alumni and friends attending the American Dental Association meeting in Washington, D.C., this fall. The reception is scheduled for Sunday, October 19, from 5-7 p.m., at the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

NEW MEMBERS ELECTED TO ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD

The School welcomed four new Alumni Advisory Board members in April and bid a fond adieu to departing Board members Kim (Wieckert) McFarland, DDS'87, of Lincoln, Neb., and Richard Ellenbecker, DDS'68, of Sioux Falls, S.D. Newly elected Board members are: John Christophe, DDS'95, of Milwaukee, Wis.; Vic Cuccia, DDS'65, of Pasadena, Calif.; Frances Hammon, DDS'91, of Independence, Ohio; and Donald Vap, DDS'65, of Omaha.

RECENT GRADUATE INDUCTED INTO ALPHA SIGMA NU

Dr. Gavin Smith, a May graduate, was inducted into the student chapter of Alpha Sigma Nu, the national Jesuit honor society, in April. W. Patrick Kelsey, DDS'76, Professor and Chair of Operative Dentistry, was named to the Alpha Sigma Nu Board.

20 NEW CHAIRS INSTALLED IN CLINICS; MORE TO COME

Since March, the School has installed 20 new chairs and units in its clinics. Fourteen more will be installed next summer to complete the replacement of all chairs and units in the clinical areas.

The Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (Dr. Gene Huebner, Chair) was selected by the senior class this past spring as the School's Outstanding Clinical Department, while Dr. William O'Brien, Assistant Professor of Removable Prosthodontics, was named Outstanding Clinical Instructor.

FACULTY & NEWS NOTES

Other honors presented at the 1997 Senior Awards Banquet: Dr. John Barton, retired Associate Professor of Oral Biology, received the Dr. Theodore J. Urban Memorial Award for outstanding dedication to preclinical education; the Dr. Raymond Shaddy Memorial Award for outstanding clinical faculty was presented to Dr. Huebner; and Dr. Roger Curry, Adjunct Associate Professor of Comprehensive Dental Care, received the Dr. Ann M. Garred Memorial Award for outstanding dedication in providing dental education. Outstanding instructors were selected by the following classes: senior, Dr. Jared Smith, Associate Professor and Chair of Removable Prosthodontics; junior, Dr. Dennis Nilsson, Associate Professor of Removable Prosthodontics; sophomore, Dr. Tom Larkin, Adjunct Instructor in Removable Prosthodontics; and freshman, Dr. Neil Norton, Assistant Professor of Oral Biology. Clinic staff member Jean Kalina received the annual Sara K. Susman Memorial Award for outstanding service.

Dr. Neil Norton attended the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology's April meeting in New Orleans. His presentation was titled "A Morphometric Analysis of Hepatic Degeneration in Male Rats with Thioacetamide Induced Fulminant Hepatic Encephalopathy."

Four part-time faculty members became full-time faculty members this fall. Dr. Lucinda (Brauckman) Carroll, Instructor in Oral Diagnosis and Radiology, joined

the part-time faculty in February of 1997. Dr. Carroll received a bachelor's degree in biology from Creighton in 1980. Drs. Rozalia Pitruzzello, Assistant Professor of Comprehensive Dental Care, and Laura Romito, Assistant Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, both joined the School in 1995. Dr. Timothy McVane, Assistant Professor of Periodontics, has been a part-time faculty member at Creighton since 1987.

Dr. Gary Westerman, Professor and Chair of Community and Preventive Dentistry, performed clinical work and provided instruction to dentists in Tobolsk, Russia, for three weeks in June. The visit was part of an on-going exchange program between health professionals from Omaha/Council Bluffs and Tobolsk. This was Dr. Westerman's fourth visit to the Siberian city. His daughter, Amy, a dental student at the University of Iowa, accompanied him.

The Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations has appointed Dr. W. Patrick Kelsey to serve on the Operative Dentistry Test Construction Committee. He will start a one-year term on Jan. 1, 1998. The Joint Commission can renew the appointment for four consecutive years, for a total of five years.

Retired Associate Professor Ralph Herrman rejoined the faculty this fall to teach in Removable Prosthodontics for one year.

ALUMNA AAWD PRESIDENT

Dr. Virginia Hughson-Otte, DDS'88, of Castaic, Calif., was inducted as President of the American Association of Women Dentists in a ceremony this past May in Scottsdale, Arizona.

OMICRON KAPPA UPSILON ELECTS NEW MEMBERS

Seven faculty members and 10 graduating seniors were elected members of the Omicron Kappa Upsilon Dental Honor Society's Epsilon Chapter. Faculty inducted were Brad Carson, DDS'89, Clinical Instructor in Removable Prosthodontics; Valmont Desa, DDS'92, Instructor in Comprehensive Dental Care; Dr. Timothy McVane; Dr. Dennis Nilsson; Tarnjit Saini, DDS'92, Associate Professor of Oral Diagnosis and Radiology; Dr. Peter Triolo, Associate Professor of Operative Dentistry; and Dr. Karen Wuertz, Assistant Professor of Fixed Prosthodontics. Graduating seniors elected were John Anderson, Cameron Buhler, Dan Hauser, Michelle Jorgensen, David Koelliker, Brett Miles, Lee Reddish, Rudy Schneider, Reid Swenson and Travis Talbot. Current senior Daniel Burr received the Dr. William S. Kramer Award of Excellence.

FACULTY, ALUMNI, STUDENTS VISIT D.R.

Faculty members Frank Ayers, DDS'69, Associate Professor of Pediatric Dentistry, Director of Admissions and Associate Dean for Student Affairs; John Marley, DDS'57, Professor of Oral Diagnosis; and Dr. Saini joined four dental students and five other alumni participating in Creighton's Institute for Latin American Concern programs in the Dominican Republic this summer. The alumni were Christopher Douville, DDS'92, of Tucson, Ariz.; Juan Salvat, DDS'95, of Miami, Fla.; Michael S. Ryan, DDS'84, of Grand Junction, Colo.; Michael McDermott, DDS'75, of Omaha; and Holly Bartman, DDS'94, of Portland, Ore. Students were Christina Bachicha, Marissa Rubio-Ellis, Andrew Moffitt and Bryan Dryden.

RETIRED GENERAL SPEAKS TO FACULTY ON ETHICS

Retired Brig. Gen. Malham M. Wakin, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus at the U.S. Air Force Academy and a nationally recognized ethicist, spoke on dental ethics, education and leadership at the School's annual Faculty Retreat this summer.

The School of Dentistry's Web Site can be accessed via
the University's World Wide Web address:
<http://www.creighton.edu>