

# ALUMNI ANCHOR

2023 | 2024



Dr. Ben Davis:

## Looking ahead to the next five years

+ Faculty  
spotlight:  
Pierre-Luc  
Michaud

Clinical trials  
launched with  
ground-breaking  
study on oral  
cancer prevention

\$1 million gift to  
create paediatric  
and adult  
special needs  
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**On our cover:** Dr. Ben Davis has been renewed for a second five-year term as dean of the Faculty of Dentistry. What does he feel he has achieved so far and what are his plans for the future?

Did you receive more than one *Alumni Anchor* magazine at your home or office? If you would prefer not to, please contact us at alumni.dentistry@dal.ca. It will help us all to be more environmentally friendly.

**ALUMNI ANCHOR**



# Dean's message

You will see that I have a new photo to kick off my second five-year term as dean. It was taken in front of a boldly coloured mural that staff and faculty created together at our Faculty professional development day and holiday luncheon last December and now hangs prominently on the main level of the Dentistry Building. Creating the mural was a fun way to bring us together after so much time apart during COVID. I am proud of what it says about us as a Faculty.

Looking back over the last year, I am pleased with what we have accomplished. We attended PDC and ODA this spring and hosted alumni gatherings in New Brunswick. Visits are planned for PEI, Newfoundland, and Alberta over the next few months. There really is nothing better than getting together and catching up in person.

And it's not too soon to put DentDays on your calendar for October 27-28. It's your opportunity to get some CE points, connect with classmates, celebrate our OAA winners,

and enjoy live music at our Maritime Kitchen Party.

So far in 2023 we have hosted three federal MPs. Andy Fillmore visited in January to announce ACOA funding of \$948,750 for ClearDynamic, one of the companies that Dr. Danny Boyd helped to found. In April, Jagmeet Singh, leader of the NDP Party of Canada, and Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos were here to announce \$1.3 billion over five years to implement the new Canadian Dental Care Plan. It was a great opportunity to talk to them about the work we do in the Faculty.

In September, Dr. Theresa Chiang (DDS'65) and her family were here to cut the ribbon on the new Tze/Chiang Paediatric and Adult Special Needs Clinic, for which Dr. Chiang donated \$1 million. In May, we celebrated again when GreenShield was here to announce a further \$500,000 in funding for outreach. We could not be more grateful for the people who value and support our work.

You will see from the special insert that



PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

it has been five years since the Dr. William Murphy Dental Clinic was officially named and opened. So many alumni, friends, and corporate donors helped to make it possible. Our new campaign focuses on four priority areas – enriching the student learning experience, community outreach, research, and improving our facilities and technology. We are spreading the word and we would love to talk to you about getting involved.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue. As always, we have graduate and alumni profiles, feature stories, and lots of good news about awards and achievements.

Ben Davis – Dean, Faculty of Dentistry

## Dentistry Alumni Committee Update 2023/24

After holding steady during the early days of COVID-19, the DAC executive changed over in fall. Denise Zwicker (DDH'04, BDH'12) took over as chair, Simone Abbass (DDS'85) is now vice-chair, Kristen Gamache Flinn (DDH'18, BDH'19) became secretary, and past-chair is Lee Erickson (DDS'81). We thank Lee for extending his term as chair to see us through the recent challenging years. His commitment to keeping alumni and students connected to our Faculty is inspiring. We also congratulate Kristen Flinn on her recent marriage.

Homecoming weekends normally include reunions, CE Day, a gala dinner, and OAA presentations. But COVID-19 and post-tropical storm Fiona have played havoc with our plans over the past few years. In 2022, most events were cancelled. The annual JD McLean Lecture, featuring Starr Cunningham, president and CEO of the Mental Health Foundation of NS, finally took place in January 2023.

We were able to present Dr. Theresa

Chiang (DDS'65) with her OAA in September, but others had to be put on hold. Dr. Robert S. Roda (DDS'81) received his award in June when he was here in Halifax. Dr. Aaron Burry (DDS'86), Dr. Jason Noel (DDS'00), and Ms. Wendy Stewart (DDH'01) will receive their OAAs this fall.

The DAC decided to re-envision what our alumni weekend could look like, based on feedback we had from you. We heard that you want time to connect independently with your classmates and to gather with the larger group in a casual environment. You also want CE sessions. But it was clear that large, formal gatherings are not as popular as they once were.

That is why we are inviting all our alumni, friends, and community to be part of DentDays, October 27-28, 2023.

On Friday, October 27, reunion groups are invited to campus for a clinic tour, to receive their reunion pins, and other class activities. On the 28th, CE Day will take place in the Dentistry Building, featuring some great

speakers and topics. OAAs will be presented to Dr. Toby Gushue (DDS'73), Dr. Lex MacNeil (DDS'73), and Ms. Palmer Nelson (DDH'89). This event is open to all alumni and friends.

We will wrap up the weekend with a Maritime Kitchen Party in the Grawood Pub, featuring music by the Harbour City Band and maybe even the cries of "sociable". Halifax is beautiful in the fall, so it's the perfect time to come together. We can't wait to see you all in person.

The DAC was pleased to support the hiring of a summer student, Bronwen Barter (DDS2), to work with the University Archives team to digitize historic dentistry materials. The Dental Archives Committee is chaired by Dr. Doug Chaytor, who has been working with Marilyn Klein and other alumni to preserve our history. If you would like to be involved, please contact [alumni.dentistry@dal.ca](mailto:alumni.dentistry@dal.ca).

Mark your calendars for DentDays, October 27-28, in Halifax!

## CE Day 2023

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2023

8:30 AM TO 11:30 AM | 3 CE CREDITS

**Esthetic YET time efficient composite veneers**

DNTL-DENTO181-002

Presenter: Dr. Augusto Robles

8:30 AM TO 11:30 AM | 3 CE CREDITS

**Ergonomics, wellness, and the dental professional: The importance of self-care while providing care**

DNTL-DENTO181-003

Presenter: Nadine Hassanain

12:30 PM TO 3:30 PM | 3 CE CREDITS

**Oral care for persons with intellectual disabilities: Barriers to accessing care and practical advice for oral health professionals**

DNTL-DENTO181-004

Presenters: Drs. Heather Carr, Tracy Doyle & Evan Shaw

Part of  
**DentDays**  
2023

## NL CE Day 2023

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2023

8:30 AM TO 11:30 AM | 3 CE CREDITS

**Managing endodontic complications following dental trauma**

DNTL-DENTO182-002

Presenter: Dr. Isabel Mello

12:30 PM TO 3:30 PM | 3 CE CREDITS

**Ridge preservation: Evidence-based approach, rationale and expected outcomes**

DNTL-DENTO182-003

Presenter: Dr. Haider Al-Waeli



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## In-person CE Courses

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

8:30 AM TO 12:30 PM | 4 CE CREDITS

**Bone grafting demystified (Part 2): Ridge augmentation: Guided bone regeneration and onlay bone grafting (Lecture & hands-on)**

DNTL-DENTO124-002

Presenters: Drs. Haider Al-Waeli, Eraldo Batista Jr., Zeeshan Sheikh & Sayed Mirbod

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2023

9:00 AM TO 1:45 PM | 4 CE CREDITS

**Digital pre-treatment planning for atrophic ridges restorations (Lecture & hands-on)**

DNTL-DENTO180-001&002

Presenter: Dr. Mario Beretta

## Certification Courses

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2023 | ONLINE SELF-PACED

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2023 | 9:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 | 9:00 AM TO 2:00 PM

25 CE CREDITS

**CBCT: Application and interpretation – Certification Course (Online asynchronous & live webinar)**

DNTL-DENTO013-004

Presenter: Dr. Curtis Gregoire

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2023

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2023

8:30 AM TO 4:30 PM | 14 CE CREDITS

**2024 Digital symposium: Where technology meets exceptional patient care (Lecture & hands-on)**

DNTL-DENTO185-001

Presenters to be announced

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2023

9:00 AM TO 2:00 PM | 4 CE CREDITS

**Deciphering the new classification of periodontal and peri-implant diseases and conditions (Lecture & hands-on)**

DNT-DENTO183-001

Presenters: Drs. Kevin MacDonald, Zeeshan Sheikh & Haider Al-Waeli

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 | ONLINE SELF-PACED

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2023 | 8:30 AM TO 5:00 PM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2023 | 8:30 AM TO 3:00 PM

29 CE CREDITS

**Local anesthesia for the dental hygienist (Online asynchronous, lecture and hands-on)**

DNTL-DENTO006-004

Presenters: Drs. James Brady & Jean-Charles Doucet

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2023

12:00 PM TO 1:30 PM | 1.5 CE CREDITS

**Management of endodontic complications following dental trauma**

DNTL-DENTO159-001

Presenter: Dr. Isabel Mello

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2023

12:00 PM TO 2:00 PM | 2 CE CREDITS

**Know your patient's TMJ complex baseline before dental procedures and manage common TMDs in a dental office**

DNTL-DENTO164-001

Presenter: Dr. Yang Gu

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023

12:00 PM TO 1:30 PM | 1.5 CE CREDITS

**Improved knowledge and selection of biomaterials to achieve more predictable results after periodontal surgery**

DNTL-DENTO173-001

Presenter: Dr. Zeeshan Sheikh



Visit [dal.ca/dentistry/cde](http://dal.ca/dentistry/cde) for a full listing.

## Curling for Nova Scotia



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Dr. Greg Power took a break from dentistry at the end of November to lead Team Power at the Everest Canadian Curling Club Championships at the Ice Palace in the West Edmonton Mall. His team won provincials last March, securing the right to represent Nova Scotia at the national event.

“We ended up going 1-5 in our pool,” says Greg, “(seven teams per pool, 14 teams total – all provinces and territories plus Northern Ontario), but three of the losses were very close. It’s a game of inches, they say.”

## Mo Alabdoulsalam wins CDA/Dentsply award

Mohammed Alabdoulsalam (DDS4) was a winner at the CDA Dentsply Sirona Student Clinician Program in Calgary.

He claimed second prize for his research project, “Outcomes of Condylar Fractures Using Transparotid or Submandibular Approaches.” Mo was the top research winner at this year’s Research in Oral Health (RIOH) Student Showcase.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## Visiting Brazilian PhD student wins Mitacs award

Brazilian dentist, orthodontist, and PhD candidate Cristiane Maucoski spent 11 months as a researcher in the Faculty of Dentistry at Dalhousie University conducting research on new high-powered curing lights and their ability to harden the over 800 million white composite fillings dentists place each year. She also won the 2022 Mitacs Award for Outstanding Innovation – International, which was presented to her in Ottawa in November.

She describes her work as three-pronged. “I’m helping manufacturers get products to market quicker, dentists to make stronger, longer-lasting fillings, and patients to spend less time in the dental chair with less risk to their health caused by an incompletely cured filling.”

She says the award is “an incentive to keep working and keep learning”.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## 2nd Dental Blitzen a success

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Dental Blitzen took place at the North End Community Centre (NECHC) Dental Clinic for two weeks in December with the help of 23 volunteers, many of whom are Dal Dentistry alumni.

Over the course of two weeks, \$36,295.00 worth of dental treatment (exams, fillings, extractions, dentures) was provided to 85 patients at no charge to the patients.

Other volunteers who could not come in in December scheduled shifts at other times during the winter. Clinic manager Francine Leach says, “Our goal is to do the Blitzen every December and have volunteer days scattered throughout the year.”

Dr. Eric Kriss (DDS’20) enjoyed his rotations at the NECHC Dental Clinic as a student and recently became involved with the Dental Blitzen through his classmate, Dr. Jordan Bonang (DDS’20). “I think it’s a great opportunity to give back during the holidays and to keep the clinic operational on days when students would normally be providing treatment. It’s also an important opportunity to practise empathy for people who have had extremely difficult circumstances and may be in situations where oral health hasn’t been a priority.”

Dr. Ahmad Alashi (DDS’20) says that he became a dentist to help people and the NECHC Dental Clinic gives him an opportunity to do just that. He says that he plans to volunteer for the foreseeable future. “Patients are always grateful for us being there and appreciate our time.”

Financial support from the Faculty of Dentistry, 3M, Oral Science, PDT, Chain Lake Dental Centre, Lakeside Dental Centre, and Ms Jackie Snooks helped to make the Dental Blitzen possible.

Anyone who is interested in making a donation or volunteering at the NECHC Dental Clinic can email [dental@nehc.com](mailto:dental@nehc.com).



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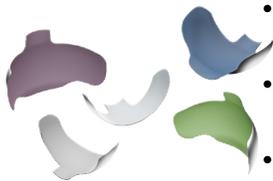


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## 2023 Impact Award winner: Sierra Lovell

Sierra Lovell (DDS'23) of Corner Brook, NL, received the Faculty of Dentistry's 2023 Impact Award winner for her academic excellence, leadership, and commitment to fellow students, the Faculty of Dentistry, and her volunteering.

From the moment she arrived at Dalhousie in 2019, Sierra began making an impact. Elected co-president of the dentistry class of 2023, she advocated for and supported her class and organized fundraising and other events for the class.

Sierra was also involved with the Dalhousie Dentistry Students Society as both treasurer and social media rep. As a member of the Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health Student Chapter, she worked to provide resources for people who care for patients with special health care needs. She was also a Special Olympics Special Smiles volunteer at the 2022 games where she performed oral screenings on Special Olympics athletes.

Asked to speak about professionalism at the 2022 White Coat Ceremony, Sierra told the incoming classes, "Professionalism means being consistent, ethical, involved, and dedicated to bettering the dental profession. It also means having morals, respect, striving to achieve excellence, and having high standards of behaviour. As a future health care provider, you must have integrity, empathy and always be honest."

## Alex Nicholson: 2023 Dr. D. S. Precious University Medal in Dentistry

It was a happy surprise for Alex Nicholson (DDS'23) to hear that she is this year's recipient of the Dr. D. S. Precious University Medal in Dentistry.

Alexa is no stranger to receiving awards as a dental student. She finished her first year with the Charles Bell Memorial Prize for second highest marks in the class and last year she and Melanie Girard both took home the Dr. J. Stanley Bagnall Memorial Prize for highest academic standing in all subjects.

Always interested in working in health care, dentistry appealed to Alexa for its creative side as well as being very science-based. She says she was happy to be part of the class of 2023 because she ended up with so many great friends. When COVID-19 struck and upended their first year halfway through, those friendships helped them get through the upheaval to their studies.

One of the highlights of Alexa's fourth year was taking the public health elective and spending a week on rotation in the dental clinic at the Eskasoni Community Health Centre, working alongside Dr. Hannah MacDonald (DDS'22), last year's winner of the Dr. D. S. Precious University Medal.

Alexa has accepted an associate position at East Point Dental in Saint John, a practice owned by Dr. Tara (Avery) Scichilone (DDS'03).



PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

## ACFD Distinguished Service Award: Dr. Blaine Cleghorn

Dr. Blaine Cleghorn is the recipient of the 2023 ACFD Distinguished Service Award. This award recognizes individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to teaching, research, or service within dental education in Canada.

The award is not presented every year, but only when the contributions of an individual or group warrant it. To be deemed worthy of this award is a tribute to Dr. Cleghorn's contributions to dental academia, research, teaching, and the broader dental profession. It also recognizes his leadership and commitment to dental academic across Canada and reflects the esteem and admiration in which he is held by his peers. Dr. Cleghorn received his award at the ACFD's annual general meeting in Vancouver in March.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



# NEW PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr./D<sup>re</sup> Joannah Campbell

Dr. Joannah Campbell, a general dentist of Hampton, was elected as the President of the New Brunswick Dental Society (NBDS) at the Annual General Meeting, which was held on Saturday, May 27, 2023, in Saint Andrews, NB.

Dr. Campbell graduated from UNB Saint John with a Bachelor of Science degree and completed her Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) at Dalhousie University in 2009. She now practices in Hampton, NB with her business partner Dr. Allison Chorley. She also has a supportive husband and two active children.

Dr. Campbell has been involved in organized dentistry for quite a few years now. She was treasurer of the Saint John Dental Society for 12 years. She was elected to the NBDS Board of Directors in 2017 as the Saint John Representative, then began serving on the Executive committee in 2021. Her tenure as president will run until the AGM in 2024 which will take place in Moncton.

La D<sup>re</sup> Joannah Campbell, dentiste généraliste à Hampton, a été élue présidente de la Société dentaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (SDNB) lors de l'assemblée générale annuelle, qui a eu lieu le samedi 27 mai 2023 à St. Andrews (N.-B.).

La D<sup>re</sup> Campbell est titulaire d'un baccalauréat ès sciences de l'UNB Saint John et a obtenu son doctorat en chirurgie dentaire (DDS) de l'Université Dalhousie en 2009. Elle exerce aujourd'hui à Hampton, au Nouveau-Brunswick, avec son associée, la D<sup>re</sup> Allison Chorley. Mère de deux enfants actifs, elle bénéficie du soutien de son conjoint.

La D<sup>re</sup> Campbell s'investit dans la dentisterie organisée depuis plusieurs années. Elle a été trésorière de la Saint John Dental Society pendant 12 ans. Aussi digne de mention, elle a été élue au conseil d'administration de la SDNB en 2017 comme représentante de Saint John, puis a commencé à siéger au comité de direction en 2021. Son mandat de présidente prendra fin à l'AGA de 2024, qui aura lieu à Moncton.

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## Two major awards for Dr. Richard Price

Dr. Richard Price received two major awards this year: the Hollenbach Memorial Prize from the Academy of Operative Dentistry in March, which is given for research that has contributed substantially to the advancement of restorative dentistry, and the 2022-23 CDA Honoured Member Award for contributions to the profession and the dental community.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## Emily Norton

Emily Norton (DDS4) received the 2023 Dr. Eric Hatfield Active Participation Award from the NSDA in June.

## 2023 W. W. Wood Winner

Prof. Kim Haslam received the 2023 W. W. Wood Award for Excellence in Dental Education. Dr. Ben Davis, dean of the Faculty of Dentistry, presented Kim with her award at the Dental Hygiene Graduation Banquet in May. This year, Kim was also promoted to associate professor and granted tenure.



PHOTO NICK PEARCE

## Faculty of Dentistry's first CRC awarded: Dr. Vahid Adibnia

Dr. Vahid Adibnia, assistant professor in the Department of Applied Oral Sciences, heard the happy news in May that he has been granted a Tier II Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Functional Polymeric Biomaterials.

Adibnia explains that his focus is to understand physical interactions at the nanoscale – one billionth of a meter – to develop drugs and devices to treat biomedical problems. He is working on three projects that are connected at the molecular level: lubricating hydrogels for treating osteoarthritis; adhesive hydrogels (inspired by marine organisms) that stop bleeding and have wound-healing properties; and biosourced polymers that create efficient antifouling coatings for biomedical implants to prevent implant-induced infection.

"A key part of my research program is a focus on biosourced materials," Adibnia explains. "Meaning that anything we design in our laboratory comes from nature."

Adibnia says he has worked hard on the CRC application for nearly a year, so he was happy and relieved to learn that he was successful. He was also pleased to see that the scientists who peer-reviewed his application were excited about the ideas put forward. The CRC is awarded for an initial five years and can be renewed for a further five years.



PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

## Federal government visits

The Faculty of Dentistry received visits from two federal government representatives in early April. They were here to announce \$13 billion over five years to implement the new Canadian Dental Care Plan. The new dental plan is good news for the up to nine million Canadians who don't have insurance and struggle to access care.

Jagmeet Singh, leader of the federal NDP party, and Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos toured our Faculty of Dentistry, chatted with students, and sat down to talk with leaders and faculty members. Minister Duclos even tried his hand with an intraoral scanner.

The government visits provided an opportunity to talk about the work the Faculty does, particularly its vital role in teaching students and providing essential care to patients.



PHOTOS BRUCE BOTTOMLEY



PHOTO NICK PEARCE

Kimberly McDonald Winsor (Advancement) (l) and Dr. Brenda Merritt, dean of the Faculty of Health (r) present Dr. Nada Haidar with a 2023 Aurum Award.

## Dr. Nada Haidar: 2023 Aurum Award winner

Dr. Nada Haidar – alum, dentist, instructor in the Faculty of Dentistry, and community volunteer in the North End Community Health Centre dental clinic – is a Dalhousie University 2023 Aurum Award winner. The Aurum Awards celebrate outstanding Dalhousie alumni who are making a difference in their communities and around the world.

# Reunited!

Congratulations to all those who celebrated graduation milestones this year. Unfortunately, several reunions were cancelled around Homecoming 2022 because of post-tropical storm Fiona, but we hope you will plan to regroup at DentDays in October! Contact Kathy at alumni.dentistry@dal.ca to find out how we can help you arrange a reunion for your class.

→ Members of the DDS'62 class toured the Dr. William Murphy Dental Clinic and simulation lab and enjoyed their 60th reunion luncheon with Dr. Tammy Wright and Audra Hayden. They were fascinated to see all the changes and fondly reminisced about their days on campus.  
L to r: Bob Murray, Alistair MacLeod, Doug Chaytor, Bill Russell, Jim Logue



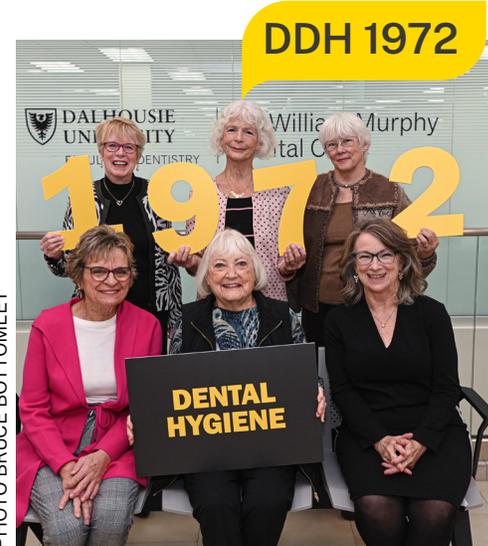
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↓ Members of the DDH'72 class toured the Dr. William Murphy Dental Clinic and enjoyed their 50th reunion luncheon with Dr. Leigha Rock. This wonderfully spirited group of ladies enjoyed reminiscing for hours about their days here and all left with smiles on their faces and pep in their step!  
Front row - L to r: Beverly Sturmy, Jackie Eisnor, Pat Grant  
Back row - L to r: Debi Richard, Debbie Fraser, Sue MacIntosh



DDH 1972

PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

After several years of not hosting any alumni events, Dr. Ben Davis and his team hit the road this year. Alumni were excited to get together to hear updates from the Faculty and simply re-connect. Watch your emails for invitations in your area. If you are not receiving invitations from Dal Dentistry, please send your updated email to [alumni.dentistry@dal.ca](mailto:alumni.dentistry@dal.ca) and then we can make sure you receive our updates.



Gahan House to hear about some of the wonderful research into oral cancer being done at Dal under the direction of Dr. Leigha Rock.

**Fredericton, NB – May 5**

A small group gathered to chat about some of the concerns in our profession and discuss the students, how they are doing, and what they need.



**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – October 1, 2022**



Drs. Ben Davis and Sachin Seth hosted an alumni reception with a spectacular view from the patio of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

**Vancouver, BC - March 9**



The Pacific Dental Conference provided the perfect time to reconnect with our west coast alumni.

**Toronto, ON - May 11**



The Ontario Dental Association Annual Spring Meeting gave alumni an opportunity to gather during the conference.



**Saint John, NB – May 4**

An enthusiastic group of alumni gathered at

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**Saturday October 28 2023**

- CE Day 8:00am-3:00pm  
Dentistry Building
- OAA Presentations 5:30pm-7:00pm  
SUB, Wayne Cross Room #303
- Kitchen Party 7:00pm-12:00midnight  
SUB, The Grawood

For more info or to register visit  
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**DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY**  
FACULTY OF DENTISTRY

# Interview with Dr. Ben Davis

## Looking back and looking ahead

By Cheryl Bell

Dr. Ben Davis was appointed dean of the Faculty of Dentistry for a five-year term in January 2018, following six months as acting dean. He has recently been appointed for a second term. Here he talks about what he's learned and achieved so far and his hopes for the next five years.

**Q: You've just been renewed for a second five-year term as dean of the Faculty of Dentistry. What sort of decision was that for you?**

**A:** It was a pretty easy decision. It isn't always an easy job, but overall I've really enjoyed it. Running the Faculty is complex and – thankfully – I have a remarkable group of co-leaders who make the day-to-day operations of the Faculty run smoothly. Having dedicated, hard-working faculty, staff, and students goes a long way as well! Interacting with the university's senior administration, government departments, such as Advanced Education and Health and Wellness, and various levels of organized dentistry are all a part of running our Faculty. I've enjoyed meeting new people and learning how our success depends on so many relationships.

**Q: Did you consult with anyone or test the prospect of a second term in any way?**

**A:** I think there was an assumption that I was going to do another term – both at home and at work. I'm still quite young – I'll be 59 this year – and I think five more years makes sense. Plus, COVID prevented us from finishing a few projects that I'd like to see completed. Apart from a few headaches, it's



PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

been a real pleasure to serve as dean of a fantastic Faculty.

**Q: You said in a previous interview that you never really sought out leadership roles at university and in the early stages of your career. What changed?**

**A:** I think sometimes people see qualities in you that you don't always see in yourself. We're often our own biggest detractors. I've had many remarkable mentors and role models in my life who have helped me develop a skillset that seems to be working for me. When I reflect on where I've come from, I now appreciate that many of the roles I've previously held have helped prepare me for this: division and department head at the university and hospital; president of the Canadian Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery; chief examiner and then examiner in chief of the Royal College of Dentists of Canada. I think these leadership positions, and the mentorship I received while in them, helped prepare me for my current role.

**Q: Could you talk about some of the Faculty's achievements during your first term?**

**A:** We launched our new five-year strategic plan and have developed our campaign

priorities, including initiatives around digital dentistry and research. We are also celebrating our first Canada Research Chair, Dr. Vahid Adibnia, as well as some other fantastic research hires, which has resulted in an increase in grant capture and research productivity. I'm confident the Biomaterials Research and Innovation Lab will be moving ahead in the near future. It's going to be remarkable not only for our researchers, but for the entire region because of the innovative health research that will happen there.

We were pleased to announce the new Tze/Chiang Paediatric and Adult Special Needs Clinic, made possible by a major gift from Dr. Theresa Chiang, which should help address the long wait times for these patients who struggle with access to care. Hopefully, the new facilities will help attract more paediatric dentists to the region. And in May we announced new funding from GreenShield, which will enable us to provide more outreach to marginalized communities.

In April we had visits from two federal members of parliament, leader of the NDP party Jagmeet Singh, and health minister Jean-Yves Duclos. They chose our Faculty for their announcements about the new Canada Dental Plan funding and what it will mean. It was great to have them here and to show them our clinic. I was able to thank

them for their work and also explain the unintended risk the new dental plan may have on faculties of dentistry – decreased patient visits – which would have an impact on our students’ experiential learning and, of course, our clinic revenues.

**Q: Can you talk about some of your current goals for the Faculty?**

**A:** We have some ambitious campaign priorities, including more research and outreach. Oral cancer is one of our research priorities and we think we can make an impact there. We want to continue to upgrade our facilities, particularly the

front lobby, to make it more accessible and welcoming. We’re planning changes to our Indigenous and Black African Nova Scotian admission pathways that will help us meet our EDIA goals, and we are also having discussions about starting a dental assisting program in the Faculty.

**Q: What are your plans for retirement?**

**A:** My wife and I plan to build a new home in a lovely area of the province, sell our Halifax house, and perhaps have a pied à terre here in the city – assuming that some of our kids are willing to move out! I’ll be happy to step away in five years and create room for the next generation, both here in the Faculty and at the hospital, but I would still love to come back and help teach the undergrads. †

## Quick five:

**1. If you had to name a hero, who would that be?**

Barack and Michelle Obama. Period.

**2. What book are you most likely to recommend?**

I find I’m reading less and listening to a lot more podcasts. My favourite is called Hidden Brain. I typically listen to episodes on my walk to work.

**3. What’s your favourite type of holiday?**

Family ski holidays have always been my favourite. Physical exercise outside with the entire family – what’s not to like!

**4. If you didn’t live in Nova Scotia, where would you live?**

St. Kitts in the West Indies. My dad’s family has lived in the West Indies for almost 400 years, and I still have many relatives there. Beautiful island, nice people, slower paced life.

**5. What is your favourite way to unwind?**

I still enjoy cycling and rowing and I’m walking a lot more these days, including to and from work. When I’m not working at night, my wife and I have a few TV series we enjoy.

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## ALERO BOYO

# Figuring out the future step by step

by Cheryl Bell

For Alero Boyo, convocation this year meant tying a bow on 17 years of university education. Her most recent degree, a combined Doctor of Medicine/Master of Science in Oral Maxillofacial Surgery from Dalhousie University, accounts for the final six years. The university accepts just one student into this program each year, so Boyo is the lone graduate for 2023 – and only the second female graduate from the program.

Back in 2006, when she was studying for her first degree at the University of Ottawa, Boyo didn't dream of becoming an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, but she felt that a health sciences profession was in her future.

"I don't think anyone knows where they're going to end up, unless your plans are really focused," says Boyo. "And sometimes you have plans and then your plans change."

She explored both medicine and dentistry during her undergrad years as a medical science student, volunteering at a children's hospital in Ottawa and a dental clinic for homeless and underprivileged people. But it was what she saw at the dental clinic – and the influence of a good mentor – that captured her interest.

Boyo's next step surprised even her. "I decided rather late that I wanted to do dentistry," she explains. "So even though I'd written the DAT exam, I had missed the deadlines to apply to the Canadian dental schools that cycle."

So, "just to see", she applied to dental schools in the UK and Ireland and was accepted at the School of Dental Science at Trinity College Dublin, a five-year program.

"It was a great decision, and it gave me a different life experience," says Boyo, who enjoyed easy and inexpensive European travel while she was in Dublin, and the opportunity to make friends from many different places. The second term of her fourth year at dental school was spent as an Erasmus scholar on exchange in Stockholm, taking over the

patient lists of a Swedish dental student who spent the term in Dublin treating Boyo's patients.

### A SERIES OF STEPPING STONES

Dr. David Psutka, Boyo's mentor from Toronto and an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, helped her think about her next step and encouraged her to consider specializing.

Although her interest in oral and maxillofacial surgery was growing, Boyo decided to spend a "stepping stone" year doing a general practice residency (GPR) at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

"In Canada, you don't typically apply for oral and maxillofacial surgery right out of dental school," Boyo explains. "A GPR gives you more hands-on exposure to complex cases, including oral surgery, so it helped me explore my options."

There are just five English-speaking oral and maxillofacial surgery programs in Canada, so it's competitive to get in. The first time she applied, Boyo was turned down. Although it was disappointing, Boyo decided to spend a second stepping stone year at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry where she pursued an oral surgery internship.

She explains that the role meant functioning as a first-year resident, helping out in the clinics, being on call, and assisting in the operating theatre. "It was great experience to get, whether you wanted to pursue oral surgery or add to your skills as a general dentist," says Boyo. It also strengthened her applications to study oral and maxillofacial surgery the second time round.

### IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

Not surprisingly, Boyo says she had doubts and concerns before embarking on her six-year program at Dalhousie. "It's hard work and a long commitment," she admits.

But she likes that oral and maxillofacial surgery is a "bridge" between medicine



PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

and dentistry. She also says that it's really rewarding professionally, particularly in terms of the kinds of difference an oral and maxillofacial surgeon can make in some patients' lives.

The work ranges from caring for patients who have been in accidents or are receiving cancer treatment, to dealing with wisdom teeth or treating temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders. Boyo says she enjoys it all, even though a typical day begins at the hospital around 6:30 am with rounds and doesn't end until around 5:30 or 6:00 pm. It's not unusual to study for exams in the evenings, plus residents are typically on call one night a week and one weekend a month. It's a real job combined with being a student.

Boyo may joke about going to law school next, but really, she is happy with the path she has taken to get where she is. Each of her stepping stones gave her an opportunity to explore her options and to learn and prepare for the next step.

And that included coming to Dalhousie. "It's a strong program and well rounded," says Boyo. Some other oral and maxillofacial surgery programs are only four years long, whereas Dal's is six years and incorporates medical school as part of the program. "Did I enjoy all of it? Probably not, but it was all good learning," Boyo admits.

This graduation is the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Boyo. Her six years in Halifax have convinced her that this is now home. She will start work at a private practice this summer and also hopes to have a role supervising and mentoring undergraduate students in the Faculty of Dentistry. ⚡

# ANGEL GILL

## “I found dental hygiene”

by Jane Doucet

Angel Gill (DDH'23) was 16 when she had braces put on her teeth in her hometown of Brantford, ON, and 18 when they came off. After visiting the orthodontist, she told her mother that she could see herself working in an office like that. “It was a fast-paced environment, but everyone was so friendly,” she says. “Before then, a career as a dental professional was an option I didn’t know I had.”

In 2020, Gill earned a BSc with honours in biology from McMaster University, then moved home with her parents and took a gap year from school during the pandemic. After a while, her parents started encouraging her to figure out her next step. “I knew I didn’t want to work in a lab or teach,” she says. “Health care was interesting, and while I was exploring different professions, I found dental hygiene.”

The focus dental hygiene places on preventive care appealed to Gill. And, as a social person, she liked that she would be building relationships with her patients over time. She applied to Dal because it was a well-respected program, and she thought it would be a good experience to live outside Ontario for a while.

### WELL SUPPORTED THROUGH HER STUDIES

Unlike many first-year dental hygiene students, Gill wasn’t overwhelmed by the intense course load. “My undergrad was pretty demanding, too, so that prepared me,” she says. “It was tough at times when I had overlapping tests and assignments, but there is lots of faculty support. Our faculty is amazing – I’ve never felt so supported in my entire life!”

To help relieve stress, Gill worked on art projects, drawing, and graphic design when she had time. She also hung out with friends from her program. “We have different personalities but similar world views and morals, and we’re very close,” she says. The classmates had picnics, went on drives to

explore Nova Scotia, and arranged fun outings like to an escape room in Halifax.

Working in the Dalhousie Dental Clinic with supervising professor Dr. Alma Wade was Gill’s favourite part of the program. Even though she knew she wouldn’t be there for long, she enjoyed getting to know the patients she saw more than once. “It’s always a new experience with each patient, and I like the bond that develops between the patient and hygienist,” she says.

### MAKING ALL PATIENTS COMFORTABLE

That bond often helps during challenging patient visits at the clinic. When Gill told a woman in her late 40s that she had to give her a needle, the patient explained that the last time she’d had one, she’d experience a panic attack. In fact, that visit was her first time in a dental office in 15 years. Instead of the needle, Gill applied a topical numbing solution.

“We don’t want to traumatize anyone,” she says. “It was nice to be able to explain to her every step along the way to make her feel more comfortable and calmer.”

At the clinic, Gill enjoyed the variety of people she treated. “I got to talk to people I wouldn’t meet otherwise,” she says. “Most of our patients were in their 60s and older, and I loved listening to them talk about their lives.”

Gill also enjoyed treating children at Harbour View Elementary School in Dartmouth. “Kids are so precious, interesting, and opinionated,” she says. “I loved building trust with them and teaching them about oral health. Some were nervous, and we had to bribe them with

stickers and toys. Others were so calm, just perfect patients”.

### LOVE WHAT YOU DO

Throughout the program, Gill learned how to care not only for patients but also for herself – in particular, when it comes to her posture. Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common injury that causes numbness, tingling, and pain in the hand and forearm. Back strain can also be an issue. “It’s taxing on your body to sit in a chair all day doing repetitive motions,” she says. “Our instructors reminded us to keep our back straight and our fingers stable, and to rotate our wrists.”

After her dental school exams and board exams, Gill will return to Brantford and move back in with her parents. This summer, she’s looking forward to enjoying some time with friends and family. Then, after she gets her licence to practise as a dental hygienist, she’ll begin looking for a job.

Although she didn’t do this herself, Gill advises anyone thinking about a career in dental hygiene to shadow a hygienist before applying to a program. “You should learn everything they do, because you have to really enjoy the work in order to have a long career in this profession,” she says.

Orthodontics still appeals to Gill, but likely in the long term. “I’m so new in the profession that I think working in a general practice for a while will help improve my instrumenting skills,” she says. “Dental hygienists are in high demand, and I’m looking forward to finding out what this profession holds for me in the future.”



PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

## BRIAN LAWRENCE

# Going for goals

by Jane Doucet

While Brian Lawrence (DDH'23) was earning a BSc in chemistry from Memorial University in St. John's, he considered applying to dental schools as the next step on his career path. While no one in his family worked in dentistry, he thought it would be an interesting and fulfilling profession. There was one major snag, however – when he graduated in 2021, he wouldn't have the required biology prerequisites.

After meeting with a Memorial academic advisor, Lawrence learned that he'd need one more undergraduate year to get those credits. Not interested in that plan, he came up with another one that would get him closer to his goal: he'd earn a diploma in dental hygiene.

Born and raised in Gander, NL, Lawrence knew he wanted to stay close to home, which meant not leaving Atlantic Canada. There were

**“There's teamwork, and it's such a positive environment.”**

only two programs offering a dental hygiene diploma in the region: Dalhousie and a private college in Moncton. “I had heard Dal's dental hygiene program was good and the faculty was experienced, so I didn't apply anywhere else,” he says.

Like many first-year dental hygiene students starting the program right after finishing an undergraduate degree, Lawrence was initially daunted by the demanding course load. At Memorial, he had taken five courses each semester; at Dal, it doubled to 10. “I wasn't prepared!” he says. “But I stayed organized, made schedules, and had a good group of classmates to help with assignments.” To relieve stress, he played hockey with other Dal students on the weekends.



PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

### WORKING AS A TEAM

Lawrence's favourite part of the program was working in the Dalhousie Dental Clinic. “You're getting all of the practice and experience you need to work in the real world with instruments, and it's where you treat your first real patients,” he says. “I enjoy talking to people and joking around with them a bit to help make them feel comfortable. The relationships you form with your patients are really meaningful.”

Some interactions could also be challenging, but the program prepared Lawrence for those, too. One patient at the clinic needed fillings. Terrified of needles, she started crying while sitting in the chair. “That was tough to watch, and we tried our best to comfort her, but she couldn't go through with it and decided to leave and go home,” he says.

The next week, the woman came back, but this time only to have a cleaning. It was just her, Lawrence, and a supervising professor. “I asked her how school was going, and when I learned she liked doing board games, we talked about that for a while,” he says.

Lawrence also walked the patient through deep-breathing exercises, which he had learned in a class on dental fear, pain, and anxiety. “She knew she wasn't going to have a needle that time, so she was more relaxed,” he says. “Hopefully at some point, she'll feel comfortable enough to have the fillings done.”

Treating patients at the Faculty of Dentistry's Harbour View Elementary School paediatric clinic in Dartmouth and at a dental clinic at Halifax's North End Community Health Centre gave Lawrence varied patient perspectives. “We saw all ages

and demographics,” he says. “I really liked the variety of people and cases the clinics offered.”

### LINING UP THE NEXT SHOT

As Lawrence was preparing to write his dental hygiene exams in mid-April, with board exams on the near horizon in May, he was thinking about whether he wanted to pursue further education. While he isn't leaning toward a bachelor of dental hygiene at the moment, he hasn't ruled out his original plan of applying to dental school. “I want to work as a dental hygienist for at least one year, to get some additional experience” he says. “After that, we'll see!”

In the short term, after exams are over, Lawrence has a couple of job interviews lined up in Nova Scotia, where he plans to stay for a while. “Halifax is the perfect size – big enough that there's lots to do but small enough that you don't get lost in it,” he says. “I'm looking forward to making some money, and to golfing all the courses around Halifax this summer.”

Lawrence is looking forward to more than just a paycheck, however. “I liked the routine of school,” he says, “and I think I'll like the routine of work even better, because there will be more free time to have work-life balance.”

With dental hygiene school soon to be in his rear-view mirror, does he have any advice for incoming students to the program? “They'll love it! It's lots of work and challenging at times, but the support is there,” he says. “The professors are great, and they're focused on making sure you'll get through the program. Everyone wants you to succeed. There's teamwork, and it's such a positive environment. I feel more than prepared to start working.”

# OLU BROWN

## A whole new world

by Cheryl Bell

Olu Brown's (DDS'23) first encounter with the Faculty of Dentistry at Dalhousie University was as a nervous patient needing several fillings.

The story could have turned out very differently, but Brown says that she and her dentistry student Wade Power (DDS'07) worked through the treatments together. "He improved my dental IQ and decreased my dental fear. And I just fell in love with this place," she says with her big smile. That was in 2006.

### THE START OF A BEAUTIFUL – AND VERY LONG – RELATIONSHIP

At the time, Brown was a psychology student at Dalhousie, trying to decide between studying nursing or psychology. But her connection with Dal goes back much farther.

As a student at Highland Park Junior High, Brown was selected to attend a week-long math camp for African Nova Scotian kids, which gave her the opportunity to live on campus and attend classes.

"It opened my eyes to university and university life," says Brown. "Nobody in my family had gone to university and I had no idea there was this world out there."

Brown returned to campus in 2001 to take the Transition Year Program for African Nova Scotian and Indigenous students. "It's to help you bridge the gap between school and university," says Brown. "It was a deep dive into our history – who we are and why, and why education is so important. It was really great for me."

Nearly four years later, Brown was reaching the end of her BSc in psychology when her trip to the Dalhousie Dental Clinic opened her eyes to the world of oral health. She began to take the prerequisites for the diploma in dental hygiene program and her application was successful.

The process may sound straightforward, but Brown was also caring for her young daughter, born when Brown was 18, and working in blood collection in the Dickson Building at the QEII Health Sciences Centre. "I'd work 6:00 to

8:00 a.m. and then run across to class in the Dentistry Building at 8:00."

Brown says she loved dental hygiene and the feeling of belonging to a profession. But after graduating in 2009 and a year of practice, she returned to take the recently introduced bachelor of dental hygiene (BDH) degree program. "I wanted the degree – the full package," she explains.

The BDH program exposed Brown to outreach clinics in schools and to Mount Hope Hospital where she cared for patients with mental diseases. Brown realized she wanted to help people who live in long-term care facilities.

The process of packing and unpacking instruments and supplies each week and travelling to the hospital gave Brown a solid foundation for her mobile dental hygiene business, which she launched in 2011, shortly after the dental hygiene profession became self-regulating.

Successful right out of the gates, she worked with United Way and travelled between clinics at schools and different special needs and youth groups. Brown operated her mobile business for nine years, until COVID-19 brought it to an end.

### EXCITING BEYOND WHAT SHE IMAGINED

By then, however, Brown was back at the Faculty of Dentistry. The initial spark she had felt when she first visited the Dalhousie Dental Clinic in 2006 had not gone away. "I loved dental hygiene, but part of me wasn't satisfied. I wanted to do more for my patients." Her mentor and role model, Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch, also encouraged her.

"I am ambitious," she admits. "I enjoy achieving the impossible and being uncomfortable doing so. Becoming the first doctor in my family and starting a legacy for them is really important to me."

With her daughter more independent, the time felt right. Brown assembled the credits needed for dentistry and continued to operate her mobile clinic until she was



PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

accepted on her second application.

In 2019 Brown was back at Dal as a dentistry student. She was already familiar with hand skills and patient care, but the science involved in dentistry was a whole new world. "I was blown away by evidence-based medicine, the intricacy of the human body, and the link between the oral cavity and overall health."

Working in the outreach clinic at the North End Community Health Centre was another highlight. "Most of the patients were people from my home community," she says, "including the friends I grew up with."

She also recalls the moment she delivered her first denture. "It's so exciting to be able to give a patient new teeth and a smile," she says. "After eight or nine appointments, you've built a relationship with them and you're nervous and happy for this moment in their life."

Brown loved the spirit and supportiveness of the class, too. "When I was in dental hygiene, the world was a different place," she explains. "I was one of two black kids in my class. I felt really isolated."

Fast forward nearly 20 years and her class is made up of students from a wide range of ethnicities and backgrounds. "I can't imagine a better group of people. I never felt I was a part of something as much as I do now," she says.

Now 43, Brown thinks her student years have come to an end. She'll begin working at the Bible Hill Dental Clinic this summer, and she and some of her classmates plan to create a website to help students from minority backgrounds find the educational information and resources they need.

And, because she loves "this place" so much, Brown would love to return to Dal – again – to teach. ♡

# Clinical trials launched with ground-breaking study on oral cancer prevention

By Alison Auld

Researchers at Dalhousie’s Faculty of Dentistry are conducting one of the Faculty’s first clinical trials to determine whether a drug commonly used to treat Type 2 diabetes could be effective in preventing oral cancer — a disease that afflicts a disproportionately higher number of people in Atlantic Canada.

Dr. Leigha Rock, director of Dal’s School of Dental Hygiene, is leading the three-year chemotherapy prevention trial at Dalhousie along with colleagues at nine other sites throughout the U.S. and Canada. They will recruit and study patients with oral leukoplakia or erythroplakia, which are pre-cancerous lesions in the mouth that can become malignant over time.

Dr. Rock and her colleagues are hoping this ground-breaking trial could ultimately help reduce the number of cases of oral cancer by detecting and treating lesions early, thereby diminishing the burden of a disease that is the eighth most common cancer in the world and has a five-year survival rate of just 50 per cent.

“The incidence is fairly high and the morbidity and the mortality with this disease are grave,” says Dr. Rock. “It’s far more common than people think, so it is exciting that Dalhousie has the expertise and state-of-the-art facilities to take on world-class health research that will have a significant impact on health on a global scale.”

## CONDUCTING THE TRIALS

The Dalhousie team, which includes oral surgeon Dr. Chad Robertson and oral pathologist Dr. Lisa Johnson, will give participants either the drug metformin or a placebo. The patients will be monitored over 24 weeks to ensure they are tolerating the treatment and to see whether the lesions disappear, remain the same or worsen.

The team is in the process of recruiting patients to participate in the study, and already have two of the six in their cohort. To be included, they will have to meet certain criteria, such as having oral lesions, being



PHOTO DANNY ABRIEL

over the age of 21 and being a current or former smoker.

Metformin is most often used by Type 2 diabetics to help control the amount of sugar in their blood, but has been shown in other studies to have positive effects in people with breast and kidney cancers. Physicians began looking at it as a potential cancer treatment after they found bladder cancer patients who were taking metformin to manage their diabetes appeared to have much better cancer outcomes than those who are not taking metformin.

Dr. Rock, who is also a scientist with the Beatrice Hunter Cancer Research Institute, conducted an initial study on the effects of metformin on oral premalignant lesions while she was at the University of British Columbia. The results were promising and helped to provide the rationale for this expanded study, which will include 86 participants in Canada and the U.S. and is being funded by the National Institutes of Health.

“When I arrived in Atlantic Canada, I realized that the incidence of oral cancer is disproportionately higher here than the rest of the country,” she says.

“I also realized that we had all of the pieces in place here at Dal to be able to conduct this kind of work. We have one of the few oral maxillofacial surgery programs in the country,

a state-of-the-art facility, oral medicine specialists and oral pathology specialists.”

## HOPE FOR PATIENTS

It’s estimated that roughly five to 15 per cent of low-grade oral premalignant lesions progress to cancer, while the vast majority remain stable or even regress. If they do become cancerous, they often have to be cut out surgically, causing the patient to lose part of their tongue or some other region in their mouth.

Despite early identification of the lesions, many patients are monitored until they progress to cancer due a lack of early treatments.

“I don’t know the right word to even describe how impactful a clinical trial such as this could have on this patient population,” says Dr. Johnson.

“Our current management of these premalignant lesions is to either monitor if they are low grade or to surgically excise if they are of more significance and the reality is that surgical excision has not proven to markedly affect the patient’s risk to progress to cancer.

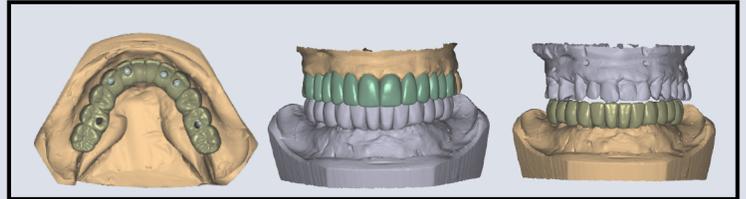
“So, to have some form of therapy that could potentially halt the deleterious molecular events that are going on is tremendously exciting for myself and brings such hope to patients living with this issue.”

# DIGITAL SMILE DESIGN

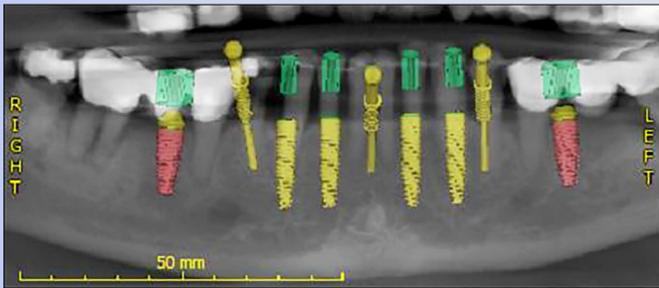
Technology and experience enable us to have a good understanding and communication between the team, to create smiles that meet satisfaction of our Doctors and Patients.



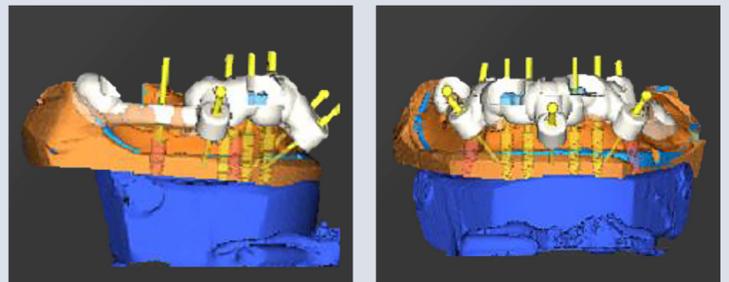
Before



Digital Prosthesis Design



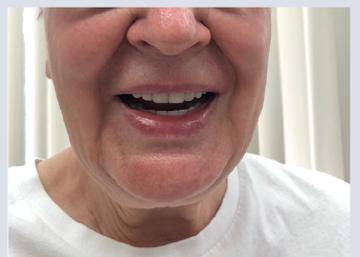
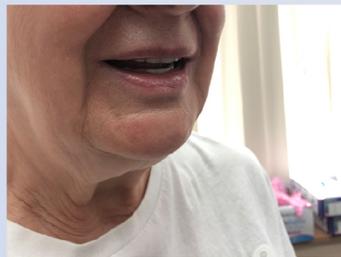
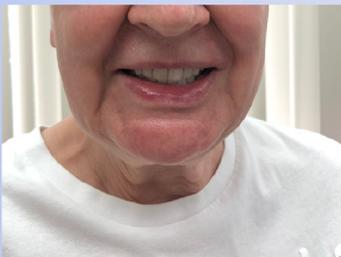
Digital Case Planning



Surgical Guide Design

Mandible restored with screw retained implants Bridge

Maxilla restored with Porcelain Crowns and Bridges (Prettau Zirconia with e.max)



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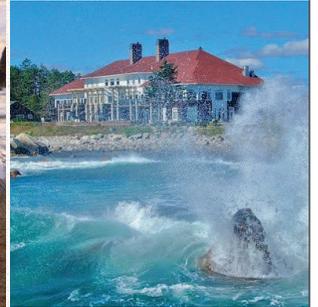


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HALIFAX · NOVA SCOTIA

**The NSDA was proud to support the  
2023 North American Indigenous  
Games, which took place July 15-23  
in Halifax, NS.**

Thank you to our members who volunteered for the games dedicating their time to keeping athletes healthy and safe while they competed.



# Faculty spotlight: Pierre-Luc Michaud

By Cheryl Bell

Dr. Pierre-Luc Michaud is a professor of prosthodontics in the Faculty of Dentistry. In 2021-22 he spent a year on a fellowship in oral oncology and maxillofacial prosthetics at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Department of Head and Neck Surgery, in Houston. Now he is one of only three maxillofacial prosthodontists in Atlantic Canada.

## WHERE IT STARTED

Growing up in Northern Quebec, he was always in the woods and had sculpted and painted his whole life up to that point. “I knew I wanted to work with my hands and to interact with people, so dentistry was a good choice for me,” he says.

After CEGEP he studied dentistry at Université de Montreal, where he discovered that he was good at, and interested in, prosthodontics. “In dental school I knew I was interested in teaching, so I wanted to pursue a specialty, and prosthodontics was a natural fit.”

After a GPR in Toronto, he returned to the Université de Montreal to study for an MSc in research with a certificate in prosthodontics.

Michaud’s working life began with a brief stint in Vancouver before he heard about a position at Dalhousie. “All I knew about Halifax at that time was that it was a military base,” he says. “But when I arrived here in 2012, I found that it was a smaller city and close to nature, which I liked. So, I stayed.”

## THE APPEAL OF PROSTHODONTICS

Over the 12 years he’s been at Dal, Michaud has found himself doing more and more removable prostheses and becoming increasingly interested in this work. A few years ago, he attended some presentations on maxillofacial prosthetics that two part-time faculty members provided and found the subject interesting.

“I also thought that they will retire one day and there will be no trained maxillofacial prosthodontist east of Montreal to care for



these patients,” says Michaud. “My next step was to apply to the MD Anderson Cancer Centre at the University of Texas.”

## WHY TEXAS?

The MD Anderson Cancer Center is one of the most renowned cancer hospitals in the world. Every patient Michaud saw there had cancer and some of the cancers were very rare.

“We were seeing patients with distant cancer who had received chemo, radiation, and other treatments to stop metastases or bone cancer, and all those treatments have implications for the mouth, such as osteonecrosis of the jaw,” he says.

He also saw head and neck cancer patients. Before surgery, Michaud would be involved in taking impressions and fabricating appliances. These were placed during surgery so that patients could still eat, swallow, and speak after surgery because often there would be a big hole from the mouth to the nasal cavity. Later, the prostheses would be made more permanent. Facial prostheses, such as noses, cheeks, eyes, ears, and lips, would also be made.

The biggest part of each day was spent seeing patients, with some time spent attending lectures and working on presentations and literature reviews. Michaud says he learned a lot about the mechanisms of action of different

cancers. He also found making the prostheses interesting, particularly the prostheses that can help patients speak again.

“I also enjoyed seeing patients who were missing large parts of their faces because a prosthesis enables them to look and function more normally again and this is very rewarding,” he says.

## BRINGING HIS NEW LEARNING HOME TO NS

It was an “interesting time” to be in Texas, says Michaud. Houston alone was experiencing 16,000 new cases of COVID-19 per day. But he says that in some places you didn’t feel safe putting on a mask for “political reasons”.

Overall, however, he feels that he learned a lot, particularly about cancer. He is sharing his new knowledge with his students and plans to treat more patients with cancer.

Michaud’s experiences in Texas made him aware of a lack of innovation in the field of facial prosthetics and the frustrations patients have when prostheses don’t work. In particular, he became aware that there is a problem with the way the bonding of prosthesis materials is currently carried out. “That’s something I will be working on with a couple of my colleagues here at Dal,” he says.✎

## DR. SHANNON DAVIS

# Putting all the pieces in place

By Jane Doucet

When Dr. Shannon Davis (DDS'05) was 11, he took a puck in the mouth while playing street hockey in his hometown of Corner Brook, NL. A front tooth fractured in half, and he was taken to see a local dentist, Dr. Robert Sexton (DDS '68), who performed a composite restoration in about 20 minutes, impressing the youngster.

Sexton himself also made an impression upon Davis. "I remember him being humble and friendly, and he was well respected in our community," he says. "In high school, I had an interest in science and the arts, and I began thinking about dentistry as a career."

It seemed like a good fit because Davis enjoyed working with people and he was also drawn to the social aspect of dentistry. He felt the profession would provide him with a purpose – caring for his patients. As a teenager, he was able to shadow Sexton and two of his colleagues, who were generous with their time and encouraged his ambitions.

The first person in his family to attend university, Davis studied science and chemistry at Memorial for two years, completed his BSc at Dalhousie, and then applied to study dentistry. Davis knew the Faculty of Dentistry had a good reputation for its facilities and instructors, and that the program was hands on quickly. "As early as the first or second week of the program, you have hands-on experience in drilling and other restorative procedures," he says. "It was the only dental school I applied to, partly because my folks would only let me move so far away," he adds, laughing. "Halifax was still the East Coast, so that was OK."

### BUILDING AN OMFS PRACTICE IN NEWFOUNDLAND

After graduating from Dal at 25, Davis began a multi-disciplinary residency program at the University of Western Ontario (now Western University) in London from 2005 to 2007. There, he gained a solid foundation in oral surgery and found his true calling. "While I enjoyed the artistry of restorative dentistry,

when I asked myself what I enjoyed the most, it was surgery – once I caught the bug, that was it for me." He was accepted into the oral and maxillofacial surgery program at McGill University in 2007.

While Davis was in London, he met his wife, Jennifer, who completed dental school at Western before they both left Ontario for Montreal. A few weeks after completing the residency program at McGill, they married and moved to St. John's to start their careers. They were drawn to Newfoundland for the natural beauty of the landscape, the ability to practise in an area where care was needed, the friendliness of the people, and the prospect of raising children in a safe community.

In 2011, Davis founded Atlantic Oral Surgery & Dental Implant Centre, the only full-time, full-scope oral surgery practice in Newfoundland and Labrador. Over the years, the clinic has grown to become a multi-disciplinary centre offering oral medicine and pathology, oral and maxillofacial radiology, and prosthetic services, as well as traditional oral and maxillofacial surgery.

### FOCUSED ON FAMILY AND PHILANTHROPY

In addition to his private practice, Davis is active staff at three hospitals, sharing the role of joint chief of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Eastern Health. There, he treats patients with serious infections and diseases and those needing reconstructive jaw surgery. "It's where I have the opportunity to make the greatest impact," he says. "These are some of the most rewarding patients I am blessed to work with."

Philanthropy is also embedded in his DNA. "I believe in giving back," he says simply. "I hold all my teachers and my family in such high regard. Giving back is a way to show my gratitude for all their kindness."

In 2018, Davis donated two undergraduate cubicles in the Faculty of Dentistry's renovated clinic in memory of his late parents. A small plaque bearing their names is visible



Dr. Davis with his wife Jennifer and their children Chloe, Kieran, and Kai

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

on each cubicle. "I truly feel that by serving my community and supporting philanthropic efforts I am honouring my parents," says Davis, who had mixed emotions when he received a letter containing photos of the cubicles and a thank-you note.

Davis is the father of an 11-year-old daughter and nine-year-old twin boys and places family values ahead of everything else. In his spare time, he enjoys travel, piano, guitar, and singing. Throughout the year, he, his wife, and their kids escape to a little spot on a lake just outside St. John's for campfires, watersports, and outdoor fun.

And as for that fractured front tooth that Dr. Robert Sexton restored in the 11-year-old hockey player more than 30 years ago? "The resin is still there!" he says.👍

## KRISTEN GAMACHE FLINN

# Coming full circle

By Cheryl Bell

When Kristen (Gamache) Flinn (DDH'18, BDH'19) was in grade 9, she shadowed a dental hygienist for a school assignment. Far from being intrigued, she thought the job looked “so boring”. She told herself there was no way she was ever going to do that. But a few years later, that is exactly what she did.

### CHANGING HER MIND

After graduating from Dartmouth High School, Flinn attended Saint Mary's University. “I was taking a general bachelor of science degree and trying to figure out what interested me,” she says.

But after two and half years with no real passion for what she was doing, Flinn decided to take her friend Lindsay MacDonald's (DDH'15) advice and apply to the diploma in dental hygiene program. She had the necessary prerequisites and credit hours and was accepted on her first try.

Flinn knew she had made the right choice right away, even though first year was intense. “It's like running a marathon, with 10-11 exams in two weeks,” she explains, “but it was rewarding at the end to say that you did it.”

The second year of the program involved more clinic-based work, including in outreach clinics around the Halifax area. “You're getting off campus and treating patients in different communities – patients you wouldn't typically see in the main clinic,” says Flinn. “I found that really fun, especially working with the kids at Harbour View Elementary School.”

What she particularly loved about the program was getting to know everyone in the program, including her instructors. “You get so close with your teachers and classmates and there are all the social activities that go along with the program,” she says. “It's really like gaining a family.”

The fun Flinn had in her first two years of dental hygiene was part of the reason she returned to study for her one-year bachelor of dental hygiene (BDH). But there were other reasons, too. “I really wanted a degree because there is a lot more you can do with dental

hygiene if you have one,” she explains.

Most important to her was the option of teaching and she wanted that door to be open for the future. Dental hygiene is a profession that is hard on your body. “If you end up with an injury and you can't practise for the rest of your life, what are you going to do?” says Flinn. “You need options.”

Flinn feels fortunate that the BDH program was changing when she was going through it. New rotations had been added, including treating adult patients at the North Preston Dental Clinic and caring for young people through the Phoenix Youth program.

### INTERESTED IN ORTHO

An afternoon rotation at Stuart & Davidson Orthodontics during her DDH program gave Flinn a brief taste of life in an orthodontics practice, but the subject was only covered briefly during her course work.

Orthodontics certainly interested her, but Flinn says she never expected to end up there. “It seems like a harder area to get into because there aren't as many offices. It felt like you were really lucky to get an ortho job.”

The idea of specializing in orthodontics didn't come as an “aha” moment for Flinn. Dr. Lee Erickson (DDS'81) was her orthodontist when she was growing up, but there was no hint of how things would come full circle in her life just a few years later, when Erickson and Flinn found themselves working together on the Faculty of Dentistry Alumni Committee (DAC).

At the end of a DAC meeting one day, Erickson asked Flinn what she was going to do when she graduated. Flinn replied, “I don't know. Do you have a job for me?” Erickson replied, “Maybe. Send me your résumé.” The résumé was passed onto a clinic manager, Flinn was invited to an interview, and she was offered a job at Bedford Orthodontics.

All of Flinn's training in orthodontics has been provided by her co-workers on the job. For the first three months she watched her colleagues at work before gradually being



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Kristen at work

asked to do increasingly complicated tasks. “It probably took me about a year to feel like I really knew what I was doing,” she admits. “The techniques are totally different from the ones we learn in our dental hygiene training.”

Flinn loves the variety and teamwork an orthodontic practice offers. Typical daily tasks include placing braces and Invisalign, making adjustments, and replacing spacers – a very different job from debriding teeth in a dentist's office.

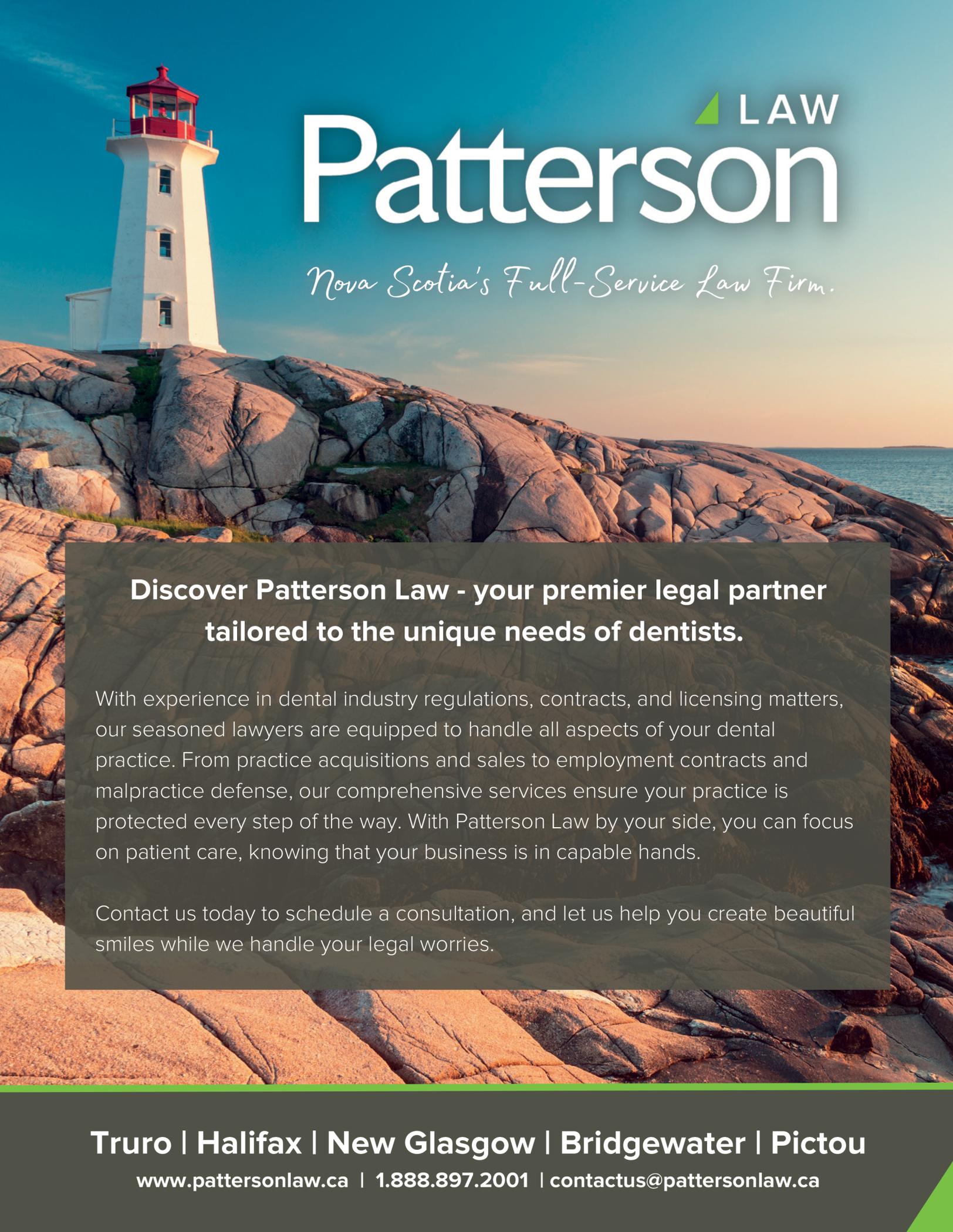
She also appreciates the relationships she has built with her co-workers and patients. “In an orthodontic practice, you see patients every six to eight weeks for up to two years, so you get to know them,” she says. “Plus, it's very satisfying to be there when the braces come off and patients see their new teeth.”

### OPPORTUNITIES AND OPTIONS

Looking to the future, Flinn says that continuing education (CE) opportunities for orthodontic dental hygienists don't really exist. It's something she'd welcome and might even be willing to provide in the future. “My colleagues and I would like to do CE that's related to what we do on a daily basis but it just doesn't seem to be formalized yet.”

Flinn's advice to dental hygiene students who are exploring different options, such as ortho, is to not be afraid to learn something new. “It's definitely scary at first, but it's worth putting yourself out there and pursuing the many different options dental hygiene offers.”

Flinn continues to be a dedicated member of the DAC and has recently taken on the role of secretary.↓



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# Dean's List

Congratulations to our alumni, faculty, and staff who continue to receive awards and recognition for their work and contribute to the fields of dentistry and dental hygiene. If you have any news items or story ideas to share, please send them to [alumni.dentistry@dal.ca](mailto:alumni.dentistry@dal.ca).

## ALUMNI



**Dr. Daniel Albert (DDS'89)** received the 2023 Dr. P. S. Christie Award for Distinguished Service from the NSDA.



**Dr. Shelley Anderson (DDS'91) and Stuart MacDonald (DDS'91)** both received the NSDA Award of Excellence.



**Dr. Heather Carr (DDS'88)** was officially installed as the 104th president of the Canadian Dental Association.



**Dr. Pember Edwards (DDS'16)** is now program director of the Special Needs Dental Clinic at Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine on Long Island, NY. She

completed a two-year special needs residency program at Stony Brook after graduating from Dalhousie and began working as a clinical associate professor in 2018. She has hospital privileges at SB Southampton Hospital and works in private practice in her hometown.



**Dr. Rob Roda (DDS'81)** was presented with an Outstanding Alumni Award on June 16.



**Dr. Juli Waterbury (DDS'07)** was installed as NSDA president for 2023-2024.

## FACULTY

BRUCE BOTTOMLEY



**Dr. Clare Champoux** was presented with the 2023 Above and Beyond Award in June.



**Dr. Haider Al-Waeli (MPerio'22)** was appointed chair of the NCOHR Knowledge Exchange and Mobilization Working Group as of July 1, 2023.

**Dr. Locke Davenport** Huyer's proposal, "Novel cell-responsive and instructive polymer coatings to improve implant-based breast reconstruction," was awarded \$250,000 in the New Frontiers in Research Fund 2022 Exploration competition.



**Shauna Hachey** was involved in the creation of Baby Smiles - Weskewikwa'sit mijua'ji'j children's book. The book was launched at the Wagmatcook Culture

and Heritage Centre in Cape Breton on April 20. The book is aimed at helping parents and caregivers. Written in both English and Mi'kmaw, it provides helpful tips for promoting healthy teeth in babies.

**Kim Haslam** was the winner of the CDHA member vote for the 2023 *Oh Canada!* Readers' Choice Award for her article, "Radiation Safety," published in Fall/Winter 2022.

Several faculty members have been promoted/ granted tenure this year: **JC Doucet**, **Kim Haslam**, and **Lisa Johnson** have been promoted to associate professor and granted tenure. **Pierre-Luc Michaud** and **Isabel Mello** have been promoted to full professor. **Greg Power** has been promoted to senior instructor and **Alma Wade** has been reappointed as instructor.

NICK PEARCE



Professor emerita **Dr. Mary McNally** was a co-applicant on a successful ADEAGies Foundation Grant submission for "Empowering women in

dental education: A project to prepare women dental students for succeeding in the workplace". She will serve as a facilitator and liaison for the program with our Faculty of Dentistry.

**Dr. Leigha Rock** has been elected vice-president of the Canadian Association for Dental Research for 2023-2025, the first time a dental hygienist has been in the role.



**Dr. Sachin Seth** received the 2023 Dalhousie Alumni Association Faculty Award of Excellence in Teaching.

**Dr. Evan Shaw**, director of the Paediatric GPR Residency Program at the IWK, has been appointed to the Health Facilities and Internships Accreditation Review Committee of Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada.

**Dr. Zeeshan Sheikh (MPerio'22)** has successfully completed all the requirements to be a Diplomate of the American Board of Periodontics after taking the oral exam in North Carolina in early May. He has also been appointed assistant professor (status-only) at the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Toronto.

## STAFF

TIM RICHARD



**Carol Coutu** received the Student Life and Community Improvement Award at the Dentistry Class of 2023 Graduation Dinner on May 29.

BRUCE BOTTOMLEY



**Jesslyn Kinney** is the 2023 recipient of the Gladys Littler Award for outstanding service to the Faculty of Dentistry.

# Annual Giving Report

The Faculty of Dentistry is extremely grateful for the generosity of our alumni, friends and organizations that support our Faculty and Dalhousie University. The following is a list acknowledging those who have made financial contributions between April 2022 and March 2023. We sincerely appreciate your support. We would also like to thank our donors who requested to remain anonymous.

## DENTISTRY CLASS GIVING

**1955**

Doug & Jackie Eisner

**1956**

Norman Layton

**1959**

Murray Dewis

**1960**

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**1961**

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Roger Paturel

**1962**

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**1963**

Melvin Brown  
Garry Condon

**1964**

Brian Weeks

**1965**

Theresa Chiang  
Robert Cooper  
George Nye

**1966**

Robert Janes  
Maurice Wong

**1967**

Doug Arnold  
John McMullen

**1968**

Donald Feeney  
Eckart Schroeter  
Robert Sexton  
William Thompson

**1970**

L. J. Hudgins  
Floyd Jackson  
Bill & Robin MacInnis

**1971**

Carl Tilley

**1972**

Barry MacLeod  
David Moore  
Eric Parsons

**1973**

Thomas Disney  
Harold Johnson  
Lex MacNeil  
Peter Manson

**1975**

Ron Beaton  
Gary MacDonald  
Ray Wenn

**1976**

James Craft  
Paul Nauss

**1977**

H. Wayne Garland

**1978**

Tom Boran  
Thomas Boyle  
Alfred Dean  
Russell Grover  
Janet Stewart  
Richard Vickerson

**1979**

Carl Canning

**1980**

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Robert Snow  
Michael Taylor

**1982**

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Larry White  
Anne Young

**1983**

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Robert Dunphy

**1984**

Eric Beaton  
John Conrad  
M. Anne MacDonald

**1985**

Simone Abbass  
Terry Ackles  
Joseph Westhaver

**1986**

Judith Flecknell  
Chris Petropolis  
Rick Raftus  
Donald Stewart  
Jeff Williams

**1987**

Maureen Bourgeois

Daniel McKenna  
Caroline Pavlin

**1988**

Tara Singh

**1989**

Daniel Albert  
Linda Blakey  
Paul Cameron  
Terry Foreman  
Hana Hasson  
K. Stacey Hughes  
Sarah Roberts  
Gordie Rudolph

**1990**

MaryAnn Wiseman

**1991**

Grant Creighton  
Allan Hynes  
Kilby Townshend

**1992**

Christopher Baker  
Jeff Clark  
David Craig  
Mary McNally

**1993**

Derrick Batten  
Marco Chiarot  
Joanne Green  
J. Scott Green  
Kelly Manning  
Alan Robinson

**1994**

Jennifer MacLellan  
Matthew Nichols

**1995**

Katrina Brouwer  
Kirk Preston

**1996**

Dan Stuart  
Charmaine Williams  
Maureen Wiseman

**1997**

Todd Dakin  
Nada Haidar  
Kelly Hatt

**1998**

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Melanie Moore  
Kent Orlando

**1999**

Krishna Mahabir

Christine McLaughlin  
Jeff Watson

**2000**

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**2001**

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**2002**

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Sherrie Wills

**2003**

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Danny Lawen

**2004**

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Amy Mihaljevich

**2005**

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Thora Hunter

**2006**

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Avi Goldberg  
Scott Schofield  
William Taylor

**2007**

Charanpal Ahluwalia  
Susan Bourque  
Terry Farquhar  
Kellyann MacDermid  
Lisa McGrath

**2008**

Holly MacPherson  
Travis McLean  
Carolyn Morin  
Mike Pettipas  
Mohammad Shafiei

**2009**

Pari Irani

**2010**

Gaurav Mahar  
Patrick Snow

**2011**

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**2012**

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**1966**

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Deborah Richard (Turner)

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**1978**

Jeannette Laba

**1981**

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**1985**

Carolyn Gorling

**1986**

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Catherine McIntyre

**1987**

Vicky Garland

**1991**

Angela Hynes  
Janice Irving  
Susan Keating-Bekkers

**1992**

Joanne Clark  
Jackie White (Hubley)

**1993**

Jennifer Bower  
Heather Sutherland

**1996**

Kelly Kyle  
Bennett Smith

**1998**  
Karen Reid

**1999**  
Andrea McAllister

**2007**  
Marianne Williams

### DENTAL HYGIENE CLASS GIVING - BACHELOR

**2010**  
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Bruce & Susan Moxley  
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Dental Crafts Ltd  
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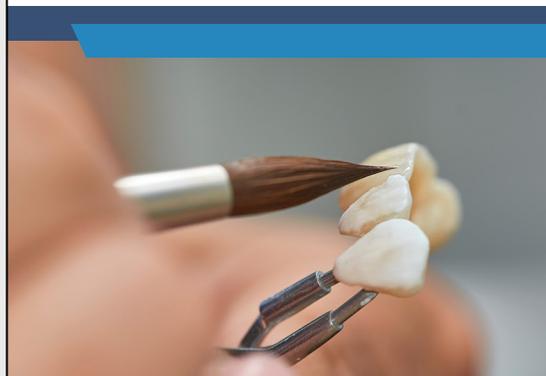
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Charitable Foundation  
GreenShield  
Halifax County Dental  
Society  
New Brunswick Dental  
Society  
Nova Scotia Dental  
Association  
Society of Dental  
Specialists of Nova  
Scotia  
Spring Loaded  
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# \$1 million gift to create paediatric and adult special needs dental clinic

By Cheryl Bell

On September 23, 2022, Dalhousie University’s Faculty of Dentistry cut the ribbon on a new surgical clinic that will treat paediatric and adult special needs patients, help to reduce wait times, and enhance training for dentistry students and residents.

The new Tze/Chiang Paediatric and Adult Special Needs Clinic was made possible through a \$1 million gift from alumna Dr. Theresa Chiang (BSc’61, DDS’65) in memory of her late husband, paediatric physician Dr. Wah Jun Tze (MD’65).

Over 1000 special needs patients across Nova Scotia, who need oral health procedures that require sedation or general anaesthesia, are waiting for treatment. Dr. Chiang’s gift will create two dental surgical suites that provide care for those waiting for these treatments.

## A VISION TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

Dr. Chiang, a paediatric dentist in Vancouver, was in the Dentistry Building to celebrate the clinic naming with her children and an upbeat audience from the Faculty of Dentistry, despite the imminent arrival of Hurricane Fiona. It was Dr. Chiang’s first visit back to the Faculty since graduating in 1965, the only female dentistry student in her class that year.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Frank Harvey, provost and VP Academic at Dalhousie University, said that Dr. Chiang and Dr. Tze’s passion for improving health outcomes for children and vulnerable populations “perfectly aligns” with Dalhousie’s mission to “reduce health disparities and drive positive change in our region”.

Dr. Chiang and Dr. Tze met at Dalhousie as students and shared a passion for helping children through their work and volunteer efforts. They co-founded the Canada China Health Foundation and the Global Child Health Society in the 1980s, which have contributed to better access to health care for many children in underserved areas of China. Dr. Chiang’s gift to Dalhousie



Drs. Theresa Chiang and Sachin Seth cut the ribbon on the new Tze/Chiang Paediatric and Adult Special Needs Clinic while Dr. Chiang’s children, Dennis and Deirdra Tze, look on.

PHOTO NICK PEARCE

Dentistry is a continuation of that work.

Following the event, Dr. Ben Davis, dean of Dentistry, noted that Dr. Chiang approached the Faculty of Dentistry with a vision for a clinic that would make it possible to care for more children and adults with special needs and to train more dentists in the treatment of these patients.

“Dr. Chiang knows how urgently clinics like these are needed everywhere,” said Dr. Davis. “We are so grateful that she approached her alma mater with this vision.”

## INCREASING CAPACITY AND ACCESS TO CARE IN NOVA SCOTIA

Dr. Evan Shaw, director of Dalhousie’s paediatric dentistry general practice residency program and a paediatric dentist at the IWK Health Centre, said that access to care for the children, adolescents, and teenagers with medical diagnoses or behavioural challenges is limited in Nova Scotia.

“These patients often come to us because they are unable to receive care elsewhere,”

he said. “This is particularly the case with advanced procedures, when sedation and general anesthesia are needed to perform treatments safely.”

Dr. Shaw said he could see great potential for the new clinic to increase capacity and reduce wait times. He also expects the new clinic to enable more dentistry students to work with paediatric and special needs patients early in their education and gain the experience and confidence to continue to provide those patients with routine and preventive care throughout their professional careers, reducing the need for more invasive care in the future.

“An optimal outcome requires the coordination of paediatric dentistry, anesthesiology, hospital interdepartmental support, adequate facilities and equipment, as well as support from government and the dental society,” said Dr. Chiang. “I can see the success of this program at Dalhousie because of the multi-level support Dean Davis was able to obtain.” Dr. Chiang hopes to expand this kind of program to other provinces in the future. ♣



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# A celebration of shared values

By Cheryl Bell

On May 17, the Dalhousie Faculty of Dentistry announced a new \$500,000 gift from GreenShield that will enable the Faculty to provide more oral health care services to those who need them most in the Halifax area. This latest gift, which was made through GreenShield’s social impact program, GreenShield Cares, brings its total giving to the Faculty to nearly \$1 million.

This announcement builds on an existing partnership between the Faculty of Dentistry and GreenShield, which began in 2017 with the first grant of \$250,000 to support oral health care for priority populations. A second grant of \$200,000 followed in 2019.

## A LONGSTANDING PARTNERSHIP

“It is an honour to be here on behalf of GreenShield as we celebrate the combined efforts of GreenShield and Dalhousie University to improve oral health outcomes for Canadians,” said GreenShield president and CEO Zahid Salman.

Both GreenShield and the Faculty share a vision and a belief that oral health is health and that everyone in our communities should access to oral health care.

“Outreach is central to Dalhousie’s role as a teaching institution and its commitment to being a civic university,” said Dr. Ben Davis, dean of the Faculty of Dentistry, as he announced the gift, adding that it was a great pleasure to work with an organization like GreenShield, which “understands how vital oral health is to overall health and is striving – like us – to fill this gap in the Canadian health-care system”.

The donation will directly benefit those who struggle to access and afford oral health care, he said, and it will enrich the education of the Faculty’s students who will gain experience in treating more complex cases, better understand the social determinants of health, and increase their cultural competence.

“Make no mistake,” said Davis, “donations



PHOTO BRUCE BOTTOMLEY

GreenShield CEO Zahid Salman and project co-lead Shauna Hachey

such as the one from GreenShield Cares positively impact the professional careers of our students. Our alumni tell us this.”

One in five Canadians currently avoids trips to the dentist because of cost and more than 30% do not have insurance coverage for dental care. These uninsured Canadians are twice as likely to have poor oral health, a strong determinant of poor overall health.

## PUTTING THE GRANT TO WORK

“Through this contribution,” said Salman, we’ve learned that over 1000 people in Nova Scotia will receive access to dental care that they would have otherwise gone without. Most importantly, this care will benefit communities that been historically underserved.”

The Faculty of Dentistry will use the new funding to work with its community-based partners, including the North End Community Health Centre, Immigrant Services of Nova Scotia, Phoenix House Youth, Nelson Whynder Elementary School in North Preston, and Camp Hill Veterans Services Long Term Care, to cover the cost of more treatments for those in priority populations and to make the treatments more accessible to those who need them most.

“Thanks to GreenShield’s previous support we know what an impact a navigator can make,” said Shauna Hachey, an associate professor in the School of Dental Hygiene and the GreenShield project co-lead. “This new gift will enable us to continue to provide

support services and break down barriers such as cost of care, transportation, and language interpretation services.”

Oral health care is vital for the overall health and functioning of individuals and the communities in which we work and live, added Hachey. It is difficult for people to fully participate in society – to receive education, to work, to volunteer, and to socialize – if they have difficulties sleeping, eating, speaking, and smiling because of oral pain and disease.

Davis expressed the Faculty’s gratitude to GreenShield for their vision and ongoing support, saying that it helped our patients, students, and communities.

## PATIENT IMPACT

Anna Quon, a writer and a filmmaker and one of the Faculty’s patient partners on the GreenShield project, spoke of the mental anxiety of neglecting her dental care for 20 years because of the cost and then having the opportunity to get dental hygiene, fillings, and extractions at no cost to her at the North End Community Health Centre, where she is now a patient.

“I know from personal experience the difference oral health care can make in a life,” she told the audience. “These critical services can help more people not only improve their mental and physical health, but in a society that judges us on appearance, also help us to feel better about ourselves, get jobs and education, and to smile more.”



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