

THE BRIDGE

SCHULICH DENTISTRY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER | 2015



Schulich
MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

Western



Congratulations to the Schulich Dentistry Class of 2014

Heba Al Tarhuni

Belal Al-Ani

Belal Alaloul

Muneeb Ali – American Association of Orthodontics Award in Oro-Facial Growth

Roberto Amato

Golnaz Basseri

Rachelle Blue – American Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) | Quintessence Award in Restorative Dentistry

Justin Bubola – UWO Gold Medal, American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology Award | Michael Brooke Award in Oral Medicine | Toronto Crown & Bridge Study Club

Laryssa Caris

Brayden (Kyle) Charlton – Ontario Dental Association Proficiency Award | Dr. Donald S. Moore Award in Occlusal Therapy

Daniel Cho-Kee

Jae Hoon Chung

Kristen Dupuis

Daniel Fortino – Senior Oral Pathology Award

David Goldberg

Samuel Goodman – American Academy of Orofacial Pain Award

Sajeed Haji – Academy of General Dentistry Senior Student Award

Shaunna Hamat – American Academy of Periodontology Award

Joanna Huang

Juhee Hur

Kareem Kadri

Joyce Kim

Amarnath Kuruganti – CDA Student Leadership Award | Dr. John C. McLister Service Award

Jesse Lackman

Rachelle Laviolette – London & District Dental Society Award | 3M Canada Clinical Award in Restorative Dentistry

Kwun (David) Lee

Dong Li – Dr. Walter R. Teteruck Award in Fixed Prosthodontics

Issam Loubani

Jeffrey Lovell – Alpha Omega Award | Dr. Igor Bolta Memorial Award in Restorative Dentistry | American Dental Society Anesthesiology Award

Sharon Majhail

Jennifer Martins

Michael MCBrearty

Anuradha Mukhopadhyay

Shannon Munsie

Igor Nazirov

Sabrina Panetta

Jubong Park

Jordan Prince

Disanth Sanmuganathan

Poonampreet Sekhon – Senior Award in Paediatric Dentistry

Jason Sidon – Professionalism Award in 4th Year/ITD2

Arvind Singh

Hyun (Peter) Song

Jovan Spinnato – Dr. Paul S. Sills Award in Prosthodontics

Hayley Starkman

Kimberly Stevens – Academy of Dentistry for the Disabled Award

Nicole Sturgeon

Dan Sullivan

Soo Von Tan

Hung Tran

Matthew Troncone – American Association of Endodontists Award | Quintessence Award in Periodontics

Amanda Turner

Laura Van Damme

Donato Viggiani

Jason Zimmerman – Quintessence Research Award

Yufeng Zuo

Internationally Trained Dentists (ITD) Program

Firas Abdulmajeed

Ziad Alazawi

Lmis Ali

Haider Aljahlawi

Nuha Baalbaki – Dr. Gerald Z. Wright Award | Dr. Kenneth F. Pownall Memorial Scholarship

Claudiu Corbea – Dr. Glenn Walker Award

Lucineide Dias

Narges Erfani

Yury Kabak

Natalia Krasnogy

Stanislav Kravtsov

Alweena Munjal

Srdjan Popovic

Fataneh Rahimi

Azhar Raouf

Ulyana Romanyuk

Gurlal Singh Sandhu

Roocha Vyas

Nada Ahmed Yousif

Alireza Zeynali – Dr. George Bedrosian Memorial Award in Restorative Dentistry

Kathleen Martin, Class of 2015



p. 8

CELEBRATING



YEARS OF DENTISTRY

p. 17

- 4** FROM THE DESK OF DR. HARINDER SANDHU
- 5** A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN, SCHULICH MEDICINE & DENTISTRY
- 6** SCHULICH DENTISTRY NEWS
- 8** STUDENT PROFILES
Kathleen Martin and Darryl San Jose are building community in the halls of Schulich Dentistry and beyond.
- 12** RESEARCH PROFILES
A closer look at the innovative work of Harvey Goldberg, PhD, and Dr. Jeff Dixon.
- 16** FUNDRAISING
- 17** CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
- 18** HISTORY TIMELINE

- 19** FIVE DECADES, FIVE ALUMNI
Drs. Peter Fendrich, Steven Bajura, Theresa Hofstede, Veronica Lee and Amar Kuruganti.
- 22** ALUMNI FAMILY PROFILES
The Lubus and Nicolucci family connections.
- 25** GRADUATE ORTHODONTICS
NEW APPOINTMENTS
- 26** FALL AWARDS
- 28** FACULTY PROFILE
A passion for teaching landed Dr. Hasan Alkumru at Schulich Dentistry.
- 30** EXAM REFLECTION
Dr. Stan Kogon writes about the exciting world of student exams.

From the Desk of Dr. Harinder Sandhu

I have spent the past 30 years at Western University, and I feel blessed to have had the honour of serving as Director of the School of Dentistry for the past 11 years.

I am very proud of the faculty, staff, students and alumni for all they have accomplished. I am especially proud of the leadership team, who have worked tirelessly to accomplish the goals set out in Schulich Dentistry's two strategic plans: 2005 - 2010 and 2011 - 2015.

During my tenure as Director, I have had the opportunity to travel across North America and meet our alumni – many have been supportive of our work, providing us with guidance for future development and generous donations. I am grateful to all of them who have been welcoming and hospitable to me, and the team from Western as we travelled to see them.

As I reflect on the past 11 years, I am struck by the transformation that has occurred within Schulich Dentistry. Financial stability has been attained, a new curriculum has been implemented, infrastructure has been built, our research capacity has been expanded, and new postgraduate programs have been launched while others are in the final stages of preparation. This past year, the School opened the General Anesthetic Suite, a world-class facility built to support a paediatric program and provide care to those patients most in need.

Schulich Dentistry is now at a point where it has the ability to jump into the highest echelon of dental education.

We have achieved this great success and can move forward to this next stage of development thanks to the faculty, staff and leadership team at Schulich Dentistry. I am grateful to all of you for your dedication – thank you.

To quote General Colin Powell: *"Organization doesn't really accomplish anything, plans don't accomplish anything either. Theories of management don't much matter. Endeavors succeed or fail because of the people involved. Only by attracting the best people, will you accomplish great deeds."*

I would like to thank the leadership at Western and Schulich Medicine & Dentistry for their support during the past number of years. I acknowledge the continued support of the former senior leadership team of Dr. Carol Herbert, Fred Longstaff, PhD, and Paul Davenport, PhD.

I have stepped down as Director with a great sense of pride and feel fortunate that Schulich Dentistry will continue to flourish on the foundations that were established throughout its 50 years.

I know the School is in good hands with Dr. Michael Strong, our Dean, at the helm. I look forward to continuing to work with our alumni, to serving as an ambassador for Schulich Dentistry and watching the School flourish in the coming years.

HARINDER SANDHU

DDS, PhD, Dip. in Perio, FACD, FICD



A Message from Dr. Michael J. Strong

As we embark on the next chapter in the history of the School of Dentistry, I want to thank Professor Harinder Sandhu for his dedication to our School, the University, and to his students. Harinder has been a tireless supporter of the School of Dentistry and in doing so has provided a solid foundation upon which to grow.

This upcoming year will see the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the School of Dentistry, culminating in Homecoming at the end of September. Working closely with you and the Dentistry Alumni representatives we will hold a special celebration of the School in early September at a time when the greatest number of alumni will be able to visit and join in the festivities. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at both events.

But the year will be more than just a celebration.

It will be a year in which I have challenged the School to develop a 10-year strategic plan that will drive the School to being one of the pre-eminent dental schools in North America.

To do so will mean a year of making difficult choices about where we see our strengths and opportunities.

As Professor Sandhu steps down from his role, I will lead a Dentistry Renewal team who will build the blueprint that will inform strategic investments in Dentistry in the next several years, and also guide the national and international search for a new Vice-Dean of Dentistry.

This team will be aided by three critical reviews in the early part of the new year, focusing on examining our Dental School from the vantage of student and graduate satisfaction, our competitiveness when measured against other leading dental schools across North America, and in the realm of our intrinsic strengths where further investment will yield significant outcomes. We will carefully evaluate our teaching capacity in the context of all of our resources while simultaneously rebuilding our simulation labs to be Canada's leading dental education facility.

As with all aspects of our School, our reputation and the quality of our teaching is inextricably linked to the quality and dedication of our staff, faculty and alumni. The unsung heroes in this are our part-time faculty who, through a sheer love for the art of dentistry, give of themselves to teach our students. We must ensure that this dedication continues to be a cornerstone of our education program, while at the same time delving into new avenues of education made available by our Schulich Distributed Education Network (DEN) across Southwestern Ontario.

I look forward to engaging our current students and our alumni as we tackle our goal of being one of the pre-eminent schools in North America. And as you will see from this issue, we are blessed with a highly skilled and dedicated faculty. Expansion of this cadre will be guided by the strategic blueprint.

We are about to enter into a tremendously exciting era for the Dental School. I, for one, am looking forward to working with each and every one of you as we begin this journey.

MICHAEL J. STRONG

MD, FRCP(C)

Dean, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

Distinguished University Professor, Western University



New positions for Schulich Dentistry leaders

Dr. Henry Lapointe was appointed as City-wide Chief, Department of Dentistry, London Health Sciences Centre on July 1, 2014. Dr. Lapointe brings a solid background of leadership in health care and excellence in clinical education to this role. He continues to serve as Division Chair, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Assistant Director, Postgraduate Programs.

Dr. Tom Mara was appointed Assistant Director, Clinics, at Schulich Dentistry at the beginning of the 2014 academic year. As Past Chair, Admissions, Dr. Mara brings a wide scope of knowledge to his new role. He also continues to serve as Chair, Oral Medicine, and Chair, Oral Radiology.

A bright new space for Graduate Orthodontics



Dr. Julia Ng (centre) with her spouse and Dr. Antonios Mamandras touring the updated Grad Ortho space.

The Division of Graduate Orthodontics opened its doors to a remodeled and updated clinic space in September. The renovation added three new chairs, expanded the space of the waiting room and reception area, and provided the clinic the capacity to handle emergency patient care. With the additional space, the Division will take one extra student with an international training background, beginning in 2015. The renovation was paid for entirely by alumni of the program, through several alumni funds.



The Honourable Deb Matthews, former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, joins leaders from Schulich Medicine & Dentistry in unveiling the state-of-the-art facility.

Introducing the General Anesthetic Suite

Schulich Dentistry celebrated the opening of its new General Anesthetic Suite in early 2014. The \$2-million Suite puts the School at the forefront of dental education, featuring two new operating rooms and six recovery bays. The School will be able to provide dental students more hands-on clinical experience, offer more specialized support for patients with complicated requirements and continue its commitment to exemplary care. The Department of Anesthesia & Perioperative Medicine will provide operations support for the Suite. In January 2014, the Honourable Deb Matthews, former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, joined leaders from Schulich Medicine & Dentistry in unveiling the state-of-the-art facility to media and key community partners of the School.

Dr. Surinder Singh Khurana is a RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant

Dr. Surinder Singh Khurana, DDS'06, received a 2014 RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award this year. Dr. Khurana is an internationally trained dentist from India. His experience at Schulich Dentistry inspired him to give back and today he helps newcomers to Canada through the dental licensing process as the Director of the Ontario Simulation Training Centre (OSTC) for Foreign-Trained Dentists. The group provides preparatory exam tips and opportunities to improve clinical skills. Given out annually since 2009 by Canadian Immigrant Magazine in partnership with RBC Royal Bank, the Award recognizes people who have come to Canada and have made a positive difference living here.

An honour for Dr. Kenneth Wright

Dr. Kenneth Wright was named to the 2014 City of London Mayor's New Year's Honour List for his humanitarian work and dedication to community service. The Schulich Dentistry professor founded the highly successful Dental Outreach Community Services (DOCS) program, which is now a mandatory component of the dentistry curriculum.



Dr. Kenneth Wright, 2014 City of London Mayor's New Year's Honour List, and founder of DOCS.

Schulich Dentistry alumni honoured

At the 2014 Homecoming celebrations, Schulich Medicine & Dentistry presented the Alumni of Distinction Awards, recognizing the tremendous contributions and achievements of our alumni.

THERESA HOFSTEDE, DDS'91 **Young Alumni of Distinction Award**

As an oral maxillofacial prosthodontist, Dr. Hofstede's practice focuses on the highly specialized field of rehabilitation for post-cancer patients. She is also committed to supporting the education of future maxillofacial surgeons, training 45 residents from across the world. Since her graduation from Schulich Dentistry, Dr. Hofstede's achievements have led her to her current role as Program Director of the Advanced Education Program in Maxillofacial Prosthodontics and Oral Oncology at the world-renowned University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.



ARTHUR WORTH, DDS'78 **Alumni of Distinction Award**



Upon graduating from Schulich Dentistry, Dr. Worth quickly established himself as a dentist, researcher and leader. In addition to maintaining his practice, Dr. Worth served on the Kent County Dental Society Executive, and in numerous roles with the Ontario Dental Association (ODA). He is credited for updating the entire governance structure during his term as ODA President. Throughout his career, he has been honoured with Fellowships in the Academy of Dentistry International, the Pierre Fauchard Academy, the International College of Dentists and the American College of Dentists.

NII OTU NARTEY, MSc'86 **Honorary Alumni of Distinction Award**

Dr. Nartey completed his postgraduate training in oral pathology at Western University. He then returned to his home country of Ghana, where he helped to establish a dentistry program at the University of Ghana Dental School. During his tenure as Dean of the School, more than 200 dental surgeons were trained, and the School received the Presidential Award of Innovation and Public Service. Dr. Nartey was then appointed as the CEO of the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Ghana's premier hospital. Under his leadership, new funds were raised, facilities updated, state-of-the-art equipment purchased and revenues improved.



Researchers receive more than \$1 million in funding

Two Schulich Dentistry researchers received Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) operating grants as part of the 2014 competition. Douglas Hamilton, PhD, and Andrew Leask, PhD, each obtained funding of more than \$700,000 over five years. Hamilton's project is titled "Development of Matricellular Protein-Containing Granulation Tissue Biomimetic Scaffolds to Enhance Skin Regeneration" and will be funded for five years at \$144,708 per year. Leask's project is titled "CCN2 Action in Fibrosis: Cellular and Molecular Mechanisms" and will be funded for five years at \$156,940 per year.



Douglas Hamilton, PhD (pictured left) and Andrew Leask, PhD (pictured right).

Recognizing outstanding students

Athena DeBrouwer and Tara Kennedy, both Class of 2015, received the University of Western Ontario Dentistry Alumni Society (UWODAS) Student Award. This award recognizes a dental student from third year who has demonstrated class spirit, participated in class activity and has been involved in extracurricular events. Candidates are nominated by their peers and final selection of the recipient is determined by the Director and Academic Affairs Officer after consideration of curriculum activities and academic standing.



Kathleen Martin, Class of 2015

Life, learning and the pursuit of community

Kathleen Martin is working hard to balance her passions for research, education and social responsibility

By Emily Leighton, MA'13

For two consecutive summers, life for Kathleen Martin, Dentistry Class of 2015, was centred around experiments.

Many sunny days were spent hunkered down in the Dental Sciences Building, faithfully working away at the bench.

"It sometimes felt like my experiments were dictating my life," she said. "But at the end of the day, if I was a few steps forward, then it motivated me to keep going."

As a life sciences undergraduate at Queen's University, Martin gained considerable research experience in a mechanical and chemical engineering lab at Kingston General Hospital.

She graduated from Queen's in 2011, Schulich Dentistry already in her sights. "What I love about dentistry is that it's science-based," she said. "I knew it was for me even as a little kid."

With her interest in research piqued, the Summer Student Research Program caught her attention in her first semester at the School and she decided to continue her work with Douglas Hamilton, PhD.

"It was a great fit," she said. "Dr. Hamilton was using many of the same tissue engineering techniques that I'd been exposed to already in my studies."

Martin's research focuses on how periodontal tissues behave. Using a variety of materials and biological signals, the goal is to enhance tissue growth and regeneration.

Her hard work and long days in the lab have paid off. A multi award-winner, Martin's dedication to both the lab and the dental chair has created a name for the fourth-year student throughout the halls of Schulich Dentistry.

At the 2014 Fall Awards reception, she received the Ontario Dental Association Student Proficiency Award, recognizing general proficiency and contributions to the School.

To complement her days spent in the lab, Martin also gives back to the London community through DOCSKids, a program she helped create.

The initiative launched in September 2013 and provides preventative oral health care for children in the London area. It's modeled after the popular Dental Outreach Community Services (DOCS) program at the School.

For Martin, DOCSKids is a hands-on opportunity to give back and expose dental students to underserved patient populations early in their learning.

"It's about getting out of your bubble and realizing that there are a lot of people out in the community who are less fortunate than you," she explained. "It's important to be able to take the time out of your school work, your home life and reach out to these pockets of the community."

The program visited seven locations this fall, reaching more than 120 children in the area with interactive activities about sugar content and proper oral health care.

Realizing a love for working with children, Martin worked in the Schulich Dentistry paediatric clinic last summer.

She will be starting the Combined MSc and Diploma in Orthodontics at the University of British Columbia in September 2015.

"Dentistry is changing at such a fast pace and it's a duty to our patients to continue learning," she said. "I'm looking forward to my next chapter."

"It's about getting out of your bubble and realizing that there are a lot of people out in the community who are less fortunate than you."

— KATHLEEN MARTIN

Family ties

If families are more than just bloodlines and inherited genes, the Dentistry Class of 2017 is certainly one

By Emily Leighton, MA'13

Now in their second year of navigating dental school together, the Class of 2017 has grown considerably closer than most other programs would allow.

"We experience very similar emotions, whether it be achievement or stress or pressure," explained Guessy Wang, a class member and VP External for the University of Western Ontario Dental Students Society (UWODSS). "Whatever it is, we share that."

Wang's fellow classmate, Darryl San Jose, is certainly an example of this shared experience. When tragedy struck his life last year, his classmates rallied to support him.

San Jose's wife, Angela, passed away in March 2014, only one week after she'd been diagnosed with leukemia. She had fought Cystic Fibrosis her whole life and had received a double lung transplant.

"It was out of the blue," he said with emotion. "Her body just wasn't up for it."

San Jose was left to raise their now five-year-old son, Ty, on his own.

His peers quickly pulled together a meal train. A group of friends in the

program also raised more than \$3,000 to help him cover the costs of caring for Ty during the difficult transition to single parenthood.

"It was amazing, I received such support from my classmates," San Jose said. "Even just the emotional support, someone to talk to because I don't have family in London."

With a strong support system, San Jose returned to school determined to continue. "I'm doing this for my son, that's why I'm here," he said. "He's kind of saved my life, he's my driving force."

"I'm taking it one day at a time," he added. "I couldn't pack it in and give this up."

His dental education is what has motivated San Jose in the months since his wife's death. He is noticeably at ease when the conversation shifts to dentistry and his pursuit of the profession.

"I really like working with my hands,"

he explained. "It's like you're a doctor, an artist and an engineer. You're putting it all together. You're creating something."

On a cold and snowy November day, San Jose is approached by a fellow student after a gruelling practise session in the simulation clinic. "That technique you showed me worked perfectly," she exclaimed. "You saved me in there."

With a big smile, San Jose says he was happy to help.

It's a good example of the camaraderie and friendship among the Class of 2017. This refreshing attitude means the group focuses on helping each other succeed.

And embraces individuality.

"Everyone loves each other, and we go through things together," explained Wang. "The diversity is the fun part, it would be dull if everyone was the same."

"We experience very similar emotions, whether it be achievement or stress or pressure. Whatever it is, we share that."

— GUESSY WANG



Guessy Wang, Class of 2017

Alex Kim, Ahferom Tesfamichael, Oies Hussein, Darryl San Jose,
David Makar and Michael Tiedemann



A life-long commitment to finding results

Uncovering bone sialoprotein's many functions

By Jessica Hurst, BA'14

Harvey Goldberg, PhD, discovered his passion for bones and the biomineralization process in the 70s when he decided to do his fourth-year undergraduate project on osteogenesis imperfecta, a brittle bone disease. He hasn't looked back since.

This interest has helped Goldberg, assistant director, Research, Schulich Dentistry, publish numerous influential papers and receive significant funding for his research.

A recent accomplishment was a Canadian Institutes of Health Research operating grant in 2013. Valued at \$750,000, it is funding a project entitled "Functional Characterization of Bone Sialoprotein". Although Goldberg is the principal investigator on this project, Schulich Medicine & Dentistry's Graeme Hunter, PhD, and Frank Beier, PhD, have brought and will continue to bring their

expertise to the project as well.

"We're interested in biomineralization — how the process of mineral formation in bones and teeth occur," Goldberg explained. Twenty years ago, Goldberg and Hunter published a significant paper in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* that showed bone sialoprotein was able to cause the nucleation, or the initial formation, of hydroxyapatite, the mineral found in bones and teeth.

"Throughout the years, we have demonstrated this protein to have multiple functions including the ability to bind collagen and mineral, promote bone cell attachment and differentiation and drive mineral formation," he added.

A few years ago, Goldberg and his team started working on a transgenic mouse line that was missing bone sialoprotein. In a collaborative study with Dr. Martha Somerman from the National Institutes of Health, they looked at the periodontal tissues and discovered major defects of these tissues including a disorganized and detached periodontal ligament, as well as loss of alveolar bone.

It became apparent from the studies that bone sialoprotein was critical for the formation of acellular cementum, a lining of the root of the tooth, which is where the collagen of the periodontal ligament inserts into the tooth.

If the acellular cementum is deficient or absent like Goldberg and his team saw in the mice, this would lead to defects similar to that seen in periodontal disease but without the inflammation. If the periodontal ligament does not attach to the tooth, ultimately the teeth

become loose and the alveolar bone that surrounds the tooth is lost because of disuse.

Goldberg and his team want to figure out the mechanism to account for bone sialoprotein's roles in bone and tooth formation. His goal is to understand what it does and how it does it, as this information could be used to develop potential therapeutics for periodontal disease and for promoting bone regeneration and repair.

In spite of significant research and recent advances, Goldberg said many procedures performed and materials used in dentistry are not always based on solid scientific evidence. This is why he believes research in the field of dentistry is important.

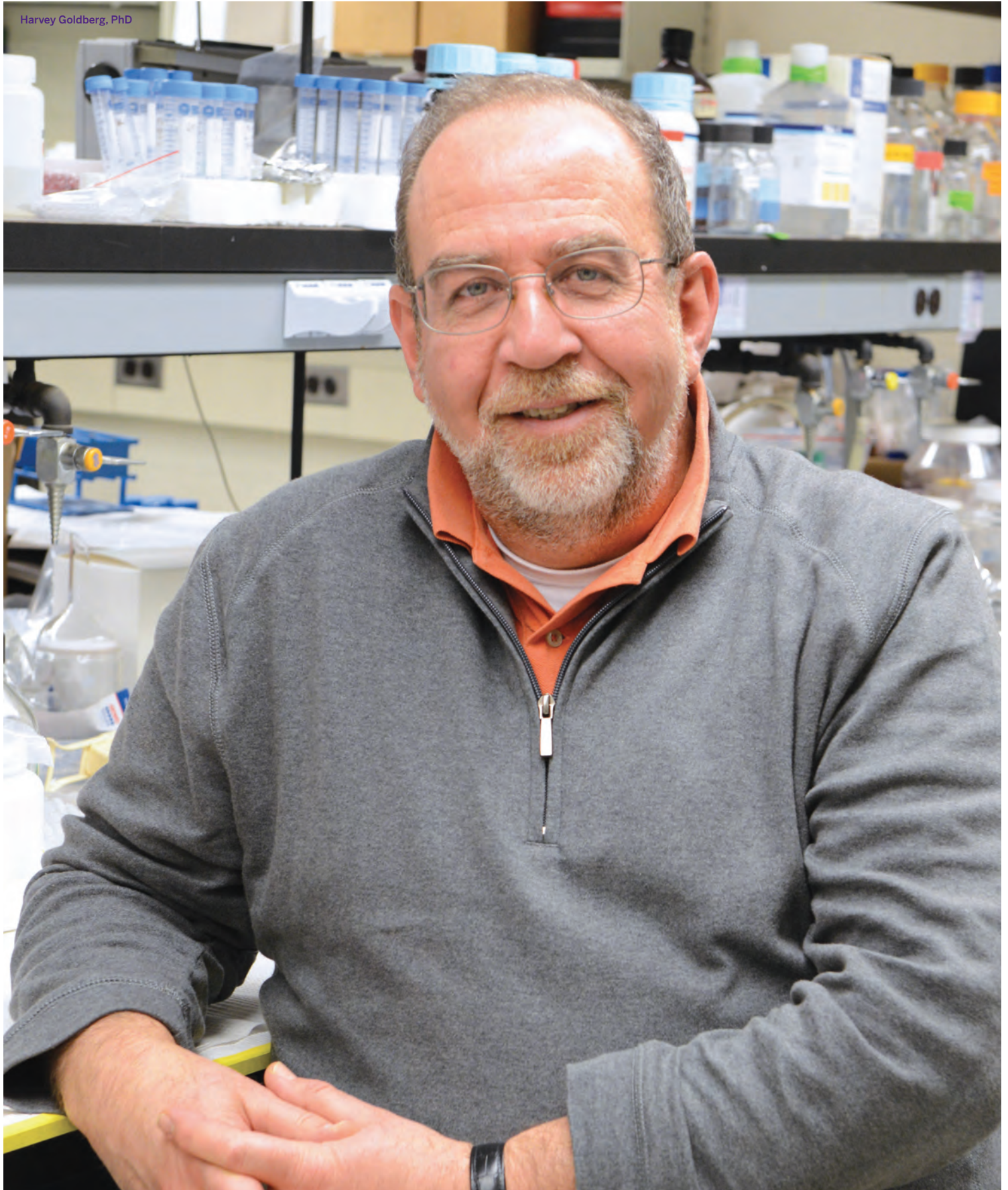
"Basic and applied research in dentistry is critical — we don't want to see oral health professionals performing procedures with products just because companies tell them it's the way to do things," he said. "Evidence-based dentistry should be the rule and not the exception."

Goldberg enjoys conducting his research, and explained providing an answer or proof that addresses a hypothesis is the rewarding part of his work.

"Science is 90 per cent boredom because of the numerous control experiments and repetitions of experiments that are required, but we become truly excited with a result that clearly addresses the scientific question," he said. "That's the absolute high."

"Science is 90 per cent boredom because of the numerous control experiments and repetitions of experiments that are required, but we become truly excited with a result that clearly addresses the scientific question. That's the absolute high."

— HARVEY GOLDBERG, PhD



Intellectually stimulated by research

Dr. Jeff Dixon started his career in a dental practice, but research eventually drew him to the lab

By Jessica Hurst, BA'14

Dr. Jeff Dixon, DDS'77, didn't begin his career in research. After graduating from Dentistry in 1977, he decided he would give dentistry a chance, and spent three years in general dental practice in Perth, Ontario.

"I was interested in research, but I wanted to give dentistry a try," Dr. Dixon said. "While practising, I kept thinking that I may go back to school at some point. I received advice from several colleagues, and they all suggested that if I was thinking about returning to school, then I shouldn't wait too long and miss the opportunity."

He decided to attend the University of Toronto and completed a program that combined a PhD in Oral Biology with specialty training in Periodontics.

Next, Dr. Dixon completed a two-year postdoctoral research fellowship at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. He then took up a full-time position in the then Faculty of Dentistry with a cross appointment in Physiology and Pharmacology, and has been with Western University ever since.

For Dr. Dixon, the collaborative environment at Schulich Medicine & Dentistry was one of the main reasons he has stayed interested in research. While Toronto has fantastic scientists and great facilities, he explained it is very spread out and difficult for people to work together.

"Here, we are smaller, and things

are close together, so it's very easy to collaborate," he said. "Many of our buildings are even attached. As a young investigator, I found that people were helpful, supportive and willing to collaborate. That makes a tremendous difference."

It was this collaborative mindset throughout the course of many years that helped develop the recently announced Western Cluster of Research Excellence in Musculoskeletal Health, which Dr. Dixon is a part of. It is expected to drive high-impact interdisciplinary research.

Western is investing \$5 million to support the team of 70 researchers that make up the Cluster, from Schulich Medicine & Dentistry, Robarts Research Institute, and the Faculties of Health Sciences, Engineering, Science and Social Science. Dr. Dixon is a member of the Cluster's leadership team.

His research involves cell biology, focusing on the mechanisms underlying the formation and destruction of bone and therapies to inhibit bone loss and stimulate bone regeneration in diseases such as osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis and periodontitis.

"In the mid-90s, Stephen Sims, PhD, and I helped organize a Network of Centres of Excellence known as the Canadian Arthritis Network," he said. "We were able to get a lot of scientists and clinicians from Western involved,

Dr. Jeff Dixon





“In research, you are always learning and discovering new things, meeting new people from around the world, and working on new collaborative projects.”

— DR. JEFF DIXON

which helped promote musculoskeletal research in London.”

Dr. Dixon explained that a Canadian Institutes of Health Research Strategic Training Initiative in Health Research — the Joint Motion Program — helped advance collaborative musculoskeletal research, as any graduate student or postdoctoral fellow in the program needed to be co-supervised by faculty from at least two different fields. The purpose of the program was for trainees to receive experience in both fields, and for supervisors to participate in interdisciplinary research projects.

“These kinds of programs got us communicating with each other, working together, and were the impetus for the Musculoskeletal Cluster,” he said. “It was the five- to 25-year process of building up these relationships that helped bring it all together.”

While Dr. Dixon said he is nearing the end of his career, the reason he has remained so passionate about his work can be summed up by one word: “new”.

“In research, you are always learning and discovering new things, meeting new people from around the world, and working on new collaborative projects,” he said. “There are many benefits to being a practising dentist, but research is what has kept me intellectually stimulated and challenged.”

Championing community ties

Memorial award encourages community-minded orthodontics students to improve more than just smiles

By Emily Leighton, MA'13

For Dr. Meena Na, Graduate Orthodontics Class of 2016, career and community are one and the same.

"Orthodontics is a profession in service to others," she explained. "Being able to treat patients and build someone's smile is a very challenging and rewarding career."

From volunteer peer support during her studies to providing oral health care to underserved populations in Nicaragua, Dr. Na lives the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry's value of social responsibility, which she feels is an integral part of her profession.

And as the inaugural recipient of the Dr. David C. Way Memorial Award, her efforts have been recognized in memory of a like-minded individual.

The award is named for Dr. David Way, a London orthodontist and a founding member of the Graduate Orthodontics program at Western. He served as the program's Clinical Director for 15 years, from 1973 until his retirement in 1988.

Dr. Way passed away in 2011 at the age of 86.

The resulting memorial gift established the Dr. David C. Way Memorial Award, a \$2,000 annual award for a student who demonstrates academic achievement and community service.

The idea for the award came from Dr. Way's wife, Mrs. Marjorie Way, who was determined to leave behind a legacy in her late husband's memory and to see it established in her lifetime.

During his career, the respected orthodontist mentored students and young professionals in acquiring business and financial skills. Many of his

former students credit his guidance and business acumen for their successful practices.

"My father believed in supporting others in the profession whenever possible," said his son, Robert Way. "He spent countless hours helping other dentists and orthodontists get established, and learn how to save and invest in their practices."

The award has created a special bond between Dr. Na and the late Dr. Way. "This award reminds me that community service is important and to continue building my contributions," said Dr. Na. "I now want to inspire and mentor others as Dr. Way did."

This is the legacy the Way family is investing in. "My mother wanted to pay tribute to my father's love of teaching and helping others," said Robert Way. "We are pleased to leave something in his memory at the dental school to benefit students for the future."

For Dr. Antonios Mamandras, chair, Division of Graduate Orthodontics, the gift celebrates both the 40-year history of the program and its future potential.

"Dr. Way was instrumental in bringing local community support to our program and recruiting the first clinical instructors," said Dr. Mamandras. "I am happy the Way family is connected to our program with this award because they have contributed so much to our success."

Dr. Na also appreciates the history she is now a part of. "Everyone who knew Dr. Way speaks highly of him, with such love and respect," she said. "I am honoured and feel very privileged to receive this memorial award."

The Way family's gift will continue to support and inspire students like Dr. Na.

"The costs of education should never be an insurmountable barrier, and providing an award helps make sure the choice of an orthodontic education remains a possibility," said Robert Way.

Dr. Meena Na is the first recipient of the Dr. David C. Way Memorial Award.



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF
SCHULICH DENTISTRY

CELEBRATING



YEARS OF DENTISTRY

SCHULICH DENTISTRY
1965-2015



Celebrating 50 years

In 2015, Schulich Dentistry is celebrating 50 years as a leader in dental education. Here are some of the highlights as we look back on our extraordinary past:

1964

The Faculty of Dentistry is approved by the Government of Ontario

1965-1982



1966

Ground-breaking ceremony is held for the Dental Sciences Building

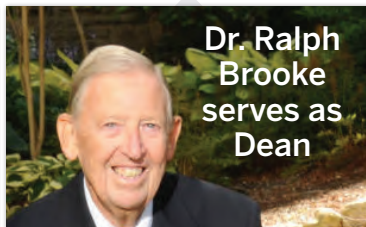
1970



1973

The Graduate Orthodontics program is established

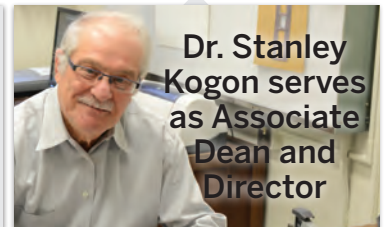
1982-1997



1997

The School of Dentistry merges with the School of Medicine

1998-2003



2004-2014



2004

The Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry is established after a donation from Seymour Schulich of more than \$26 million

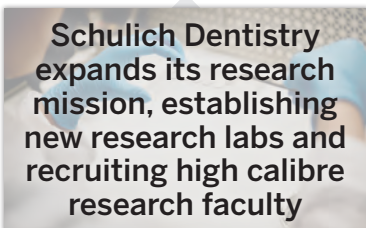
2005



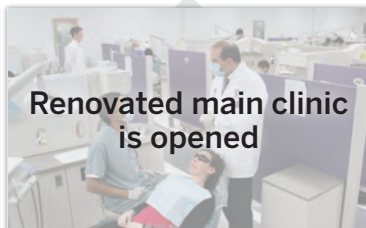
2006

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery postgraduate program is established

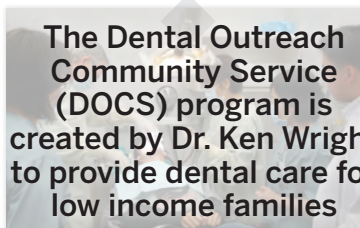
2006-2014



2008



2008



2013



Five decades, five alumni, five stories – a lifetime of great experiences

Drs. Peter Fendrich, Steven Bajura, Theresa Hofstede, Veronica Lee and Amar Kuruganti share their memories about their four years studying dentistry at Western University – the highs, the lows and everything in between

By Jennifer Parraga, BA'93

Dr. Peter Fendrich, DDS'75

It was 1972 when Dr. Peter Fendrich, DDS'75, and his classmates found themselves glued to a television at Saugeen-Maitland residence for the Canada-Russia hockey series. They were not alone – the rest of Canada joined them in spirit and collectively cheered as Paul Henderson scored the series-winning goal.

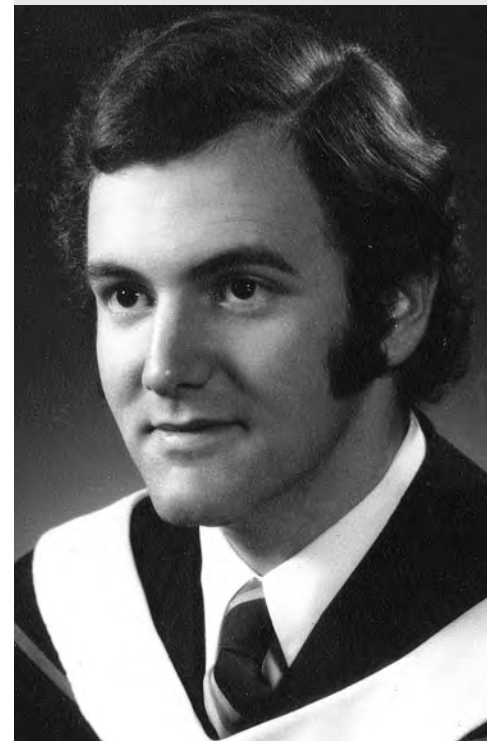
For Dr. Fendrich, the hockey game was a break from the intense learning required in dentistry, where the sheer volume of material was formidable and the achievement of precision and detail a challenge. His class was fortunate to be taught by amazing faculty. Individuals such as Dr. John Gwinett, considered a pioneer in the area of bonding, and dynamic personalities such as Drs. Stan Kogon, Hy Goldberg, Wilf Feasby,

Gerry Wright, Paul Sills and Ron Jordan. “The thing that made them special was how they imparted knowledge,” said Dr. Fendrich.

Despite the long days of studying, the 47 members of the Class of '75 will be remembered for their creative celebrations during Homecoming and Winter Weekend.

As a faculty member since 1977, Dr. Fendrich advises today's students and new dentists to maintain their knowledge base through continuing education and remember that “connecting” with patients is paramount to making the practice of dentistry a worthwhile experience.

1970s





1980s

Dr. Steven Bajura, DDS'85

Growing up, Dr. Steven Bajura, DDS'85, had always dreamed of being a dentist. And in 1981, he came to a turning point in his life – accept a job offer, pursue his PhD, or apply to dentistry? With the encouragement of his wife, he took the chance and applied to Western's then Faculty of Dentistry.

And with that, he became a member of the Class of 1985. He was joined by 55

other students, including nine women. It didn't take long for the class to become cohesive – at the University's Winter Carnival, they made a memorable snow sculpture, the "General Molars 57 Chevy Incisor."

His class was taught by outstanding faculty. "They were all engaging and totally committed to providing us the best education any dental school in North America could deliver." Unquestionably, Dr. Ronald E. Jordan was a standout. He was a prolific and sought after speaker, who still took the time to teach and mentor students.

It was the 1980s and people were listening to John Mellencamp and Soft Cell on the radio, watching Magnum PI and Cheers on television, becoming more familiar with the acronyms HIV/AIDS, and with heads of state including Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Brian Mulroney.

Dr. Theresa Maria Hofstede, DDS'91

Theresa Maria Hofstede began studying dentistry in 1987. The next four years at Western University were the most formative years of her career, with the culmination of hard work, good friends and exceptional mentors.

While Canadians were talking about the Goods and Services Tax, the new Skydome, the Gulf War and the trading of Wayne Gretzky to the L.A. Kings, Dr. Hofstede learned how to tackle 14 finals in the span of one week, and became more involved with the summer research group working on dental materials testing.

Dr. Hofstede originally came to Western to study dentistry because of

its reputation as the best program in the country. She wasn't disappointed.

"There were so many faculty members who could fall into my 'favourite' category, and many had a strong influence on my development as a dental professional," she said. For her, however, Dr. Paul Sills stands out, as he introduced her to the field of maxillofacial prosthodontics, the specialty she now practises.

Dr. Hofstede focuses on the highly specialized field of rehabilitation for post-cancer patients. She advises current students not to shy away from the challenging cases, as they will learn the most from them.

1990s





2000s

Dr. Veronica Lee, DDS'07

Studying dentistry is a family affair for the Lees, as is attending Western University. So when Veronica Lee, DDS'07, was considering dental school, it was an easy decision. Her father had graduated from Western in 1974 – a school he loved, and Veronica had heard about its reputation for great clinical skills development for most of her life.

Dr. Lee's experience mirrored that of her father's. "I loved the whole dental

school experience," said Dr. Lee. "I had a wonderful class that helped each other with notes, studying, and clinical requirements. It was a very hectic and busy time, but I made some life-long friends."

The Class of 2007 was known for their wonderful skit night performances and videos and their small but mighty slow pitch team that won almost every year.

In the classroom and clinic they benefited from the outstanding teaching of so many faculty, including the memorable Dr. Haase, as well as Dr. Daley, who Lee described as the "perfect" professor.

"We studied hard and partied hard," said Dr. Lee. They did so amidst the Black Out of 2003, the SARS outbreak, and the capture of Saddam Hussein.

Dr. Amar Kuruganti, DDS'14

"Dental school was the hardest, most stressful, most enjoyable and life-changing experience of my life," said Amar Kuruganti, DDS'14.

Dr. Kuruganti chose Schulich Dentistry based on its reputation for offering exceptional student and academic experience.

During his four years, Dr. Kuruganti was active in student government, the dentistry curriculum committee and various outreach activities.

Like his fellow alumni, he found the most challenging aspect of dental school was achieving balance. "During four years, we were expected to learn and integrate a vast amount of knowledge,

develop novel hand skills and manage multiple clinic responsibilities, while balancing extracurricular activities and a personal life," said Dr. Kuruganti.

He's very grateful to Drs. Amornsang, Bajura, Daley, Darling, Ferrier, Ibarra and Manzur for their genuine care and dedication toward providing quality clinical and didactic dental education.

His greatest memories remain with his classmates, and the many experiences they shared. He thinks of his class as a second family. "While I expected to make close friends, I never imagined we'd all become so close."

2010s



All in the family

The Lubus and Nicolucci families have two things in common: their strong family values, and their deep-rooted connection to the field of dentistry. While it was never an intentional accomplishment, both families have had two generations of dentists attend Schulich Dentistry.

By Jessica Hurst, BA'14

THE LUBUS FAMILY

On the surface, the Lubus' seem like a typical Canadian family. They stay active together, they watch sports together, and they even take part in Jeopardy game night together.

But there's one thing that sets Dr. Nazem Lubus and his sons Adam and Phil apart from other families: they have all attended Schulich Dentistry, and intend on practising dentistry together.

Nazem, DDS'82, has been working as a dentist for more than 30 years and currently runs a general dentistry practice in Sarnia, Ontario. After immigrating to Canada from the small island of Antigua in the Caribbean, he was one of the first in his family to attend Western University for his undergraduate degree. He then obtained his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree at Schulich Dentistry.

"My first love was physics, but I knew that would take over my entire life," Nazem said. "Family was always very important to me, so I knew dentistry would be an excellent career choice. It's been a wonderful profession for me."

As his sons grew older, Nazem never pushed them into becoming dentists, but rather encouraged them to consider becoming self-employed professionals.

Adam, Dentistry Class of 2015, and Phil, Dentistry Class of 2017, discovered their love of the field on their own.

"As soon as I started to seriously think about my career path, dentistry came to the forefront," Adam said. "It just made sense."

Phil agreed, but added that it took a little longer for him to make the decision.

"Growing up I had no preference between medicine and dentistry. I was just going with the flow and hadn't made my mind up until later into my undergraduate degree," he explained. "So even though I didn't make the decision in my first or second year at Western, it just happened naturally — I think I was just more inclined to take that path."

They both chose to attend Schulich Dentistry like their father did, because they knew they would receive a great education and become well prepared clinicians. After receiving their undergraduate degrees at Western, the campus also felt like a second home to them.

Adam and Phil both know they would eventually like to work with their father in Sarnia. Adam will be joining Nazem once he graduates in the new year, and Phil would also like to join them once he graduates in 2017. "Hopefully they leave me a few patients," Nazem said with a laugh.

Nazem remains passionate about his work as a dentist, because of the opportunity to help people. "It's very rewarding to help and take care of people," he said.

After 30 years, he still strives to be the best version of himself in both his personal and professional life — the most important value he hopes his sons will carry on into the next generation.

"Family was always very important to me, so I knew dentistry would be an excellent career choice."

— DR. NAZEM LUBUS



THE NICOLUCCI FAMILY

Work and play blend together easily for the Nicolucci family, as both aspects of their lives revolve around dentistry.

Drs. Blake and Sandra Nicolucci both graduated from Schulich Dentistry in 1975 and then started their general dentistry practice in the Westmount area of London, Ontario.

They always thought it was exciting to share the same career — then their sons grew up, and joined the dentistry field as well. Their oldest son, Dr. Brock Nicolucci, as well as his wife Dr. Christy Nicolucci, graduated from Schulich Dentistry in 2005 and 2007, respectively. Their younger sons, Drs. Jeff and Mark Nicolucci, who are twins, both graduated from Schulich Dentistry in 2006, and also married dentists, Drs. Krissy and Cherie Nicolucci.

"It's so funny how it's all worked out this way," Sandra laughed, admitting the family's strong connection to dentistry is impressive. "If we would have pressured or even strongly encouraged our sons to

go into dentistry, they probably wouldn't have done it. Each of them made the decision on their own."

After graduating, Brock and Christy both decided to work with Blake and Sandra in London, and have since completed the buy-out of their practice. The four of them continue to work together.

Even though Mark and Jeff work in Mississauga and Kitchener-Waterloo, they come back to London from time to time to work at the family practice.

"I think it's really nice to practise as a group, because we can all tackle different things," Christy explained. "Everyone does what they like, and we all help each other out."

"It's a very comfortable environment in our office, and I think our patients really notice the difference because they are like family too," she added.

Mark explained that seeing the flexibility and happiness his parents had because of their career in dentistry is

what stood out most to him and his twin brother, Jeff.

"When I was making the decision about whether to go into dentistry or medicine, I shadowed a bunch of doctors and a bunch of dentists, and I really admired the lifestyle of the dentists more," Mark said. "It seemed like doctors lived to work, whereas dentists worked to live. That flexibility was much more appealing to me."

Sandra explained that because dentistry is such a good profession, she and Blake were never surprised that their children followed in their footsteps.

What they were most surprised about and pleased with was the fact that all three boys, as well as Christy and Cherie, graduated from Schulich Dentistry, just like they once did.

"It was nice having them close to home while they were in school," she said. "But we also knew that they would be getting a good, well-rounded education from Western, which made us happy."



Celebrating Our

50TH

ANNIVERSARY

50 years of *exceptional* education,
innovative research and the development of socially
responsible *leaders* at Schulich Dentistry

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

BBQ & OPEN HOUSE

5:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Schulich Dentistry, Main Clinic

For more information and to register, please visit
www.westernconnect.ca/dentistryopenhouse

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

GALA DINNER

Cocktails at 6:00 p.m., Dinner at 7:00 p.m.
London Hunt and Country Club

To purchase your tickets, please visit
www.westernconnect.ca/dentistry50thgala

Welcome to the Graduate Orthodontics Class of 2017

Dr. Erin Eyers
Dr. Christos Papdopoulos
Dr. Michelle Watroba



The Program celebrated the expansion of its clinic space with an alumni reception and tour in October.



From left to right: Dr. Derek Tomson, Dr. Bin Sangha, Dr. Meena Na, Dr. Bhavana Sawhney, Dr. Carine Bourassa, Dr. David Chambers, Dr. Brian Phee, Dr. Natalie Swoboda, Dr. Andrew Emanuele.

Graduate Orthodontics celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2014 at a celebratory lunch at the London Hunt and Country Club at the end of March 2014.

Graduating were Drs. David Chambers, Bhavana Sawhney and Natalie Swoboda.

NEW FACULTY AND RESIDENCY APPOINTMENTS

Faculty

Dr. Hasan Alkumru

GPR Residents

Dr. Adam Abdo
Dr. Mehdi El Ouazzani
Dr. Jeffrey Lovell
Dr. Irina Skosireva

OMFS Resident

Dr. Lachlan McLean

Research Awards

THE RESEARCH AWARDS ARE PRESENTED ANNUALLY TO RECOGNIZE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENTS IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE SCHOOL'S INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

2014 Student Research Award

Quintessence Research Award

(Graduating Dental Student)

The Quintessence Research Award is awarded on the recommendation of the Schulich Dentistry Research Committee following nomination by faculty supervisors to a graduating DDS student who has been exemplary in research in the undergraduate dental program.

Dr. Jason Zimmerman (DDS 2014)

Schulich Dentistry Research Day Awards

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT (Senior Category)

Awarded to the top three presentations in the Senior Category at Schulich Dentistry's Annual Research Day.

Erik Holm (DCS 2014, DDS 2018)

Supervised by Harvey Goldberg, PhD

Dr. Carine Bourassa

(Graduate Orthodontics 2015)

Supervised by Dr. Ali Tassi

Shawna Kim (DCS 2018)

Supervised by Douglas Hamilton, PhD

CDA/DENTSPLY Travel Award

Awarded to the first-place winner of the Student Poster Presentations to represent Schulich Dentistry and present a research poster at the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) Annual Convention.

Gregory Luvison (DDS 2017)

Supervised by Amin Rizkalla, PhD, PEng, and Dr. Jeff Dixon

ADA Foundation Travel Award

Awarded to represent Schulich Dentistry at the ADA Dental Students' Conference on Research.

Vida Lam (DDS 2017)

Supervised by Harvey Goldberg, PhD

Hinman Student Research Travel Award

Student poster presentation award for travel in the following year to the Hinman Student Research Symposium in Memphis, Tennessee.

Kimberly Williams (DDS 2017)

Supervised by Andrew Leask, PhD

Funding Awards

DENTISTRY SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM 2014 DDS STUDENTS

Jennifer Archibald (DDS 2017)

Supervised by Graeme Hunter, PhD

Christopher Chan (DDS 2016)

Supervised by Amin Rizkalla, PhD, PEng

Joel Keshwah (DDS 2015)

Supervised by Douglas Hamilton, PhD

Vida Lam (DDS 2017)

Supervised by Harvey Goldberg, PhD

Carol Lui (DDS 2016)

Supervised by Dr. Les Kalman

Gregory Luvison (DDS 2017)

Supervised by Amin Rizkalla, PhD, PEng

Bilal Paracha (DDS 2016)

Supervised by Dr. Les Kalman

Michael Tiedemann (DDS 2017)

Supervised by Douglas Hamilton, PhD

Kimberly Williams (DDS 2017)

Supervised by Andrew Leask, PhD

Gregory Luvison, Dentistry Class of 2017, presented a poster as part of Schulich Dentistry's Annual Research Day in October.



Celebrating Schulich Dentistry

WITH GREAT CELEBRATION AND SCHOOL PRIDE, MORE THAN 25 AWARDS WERE PRESENTED TO FACULTY AND STUDENTS AT THE ANNUAL SCHULICH DENTISTRY FALL AWARDS RECEPTION IN NOVEMBER



Students celebrated academic achievements at the annual Fall Awards Reception.

Class of 2015

Michael Barbalinardo

Schulich Dentistry Prize in Professionalism and Ethics

Brandon Brillon

Elgin Dental Association Award in Oral Surgery; Sunstar/G.U.M. Clinical Proficiency Award; Western Faculty Association Scholarship

Kahyan (Alyssa) Cho

Canadian Academy of Periodontology Award

Madona Chochkeh

Academy of Operative Dentistry Award

Jeremy Goldberg

Dentistry Class of 1975 Scholarship

Tara Kennedy

International College of Dentists Award

Kathleen Martin

Ontario Dental Association Proficiency Award

Anh-Quan Nguyen

Association of Prosthodontists of Ontario Award

Alexandra Seichter

Centennial Orthodontics and Paediatric Dentistry Award

Class of 2016

Jennifer Boogaards

Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario Scholarships Second Year; Toronto Crown & Bridge Study Club Award

Daniel Mandic

Dr. Donald MacLean Award in Oral Radiology

Amirsalar Mofidi

Laura Stakiw Memorial Award

Nicole Ostro

Centennial Orthodontic and Paediatric Dentistry Award

Class of 2017

Jennifer Archibald

Toronto Crown & Bridge Study Club Award

Vida Lam

General Medicine Award; Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario Scholarship First Year

Irrtisam Murtaza

Dr. Sam Ioannidis Memorial Award

Elizabeth Wankine

Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario Dean's Award of Excellence



Dr. Lilia Marcela Ibarra received the W.W. Wood Faculty Award at the Fall Awards Reception.

Faculty Awards

Dr. Lilia Marcela Ibarra was awarded the W.W. Wood Faculty Award, recognizing excellence in dental education. This special award commemorates Dr. Bill Wood, whose academic career exemplified dedication to research, teaching and service.

Dr. Jim Jean received the C.Y. Lung Award, recognizing outstanding contributions made by a part-time faculty member to the undergraduate dental program.

Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Osman was presented with the American Academy of Periodontology Educator Award for his contributions to the undergraduate periodontology program.

A global adventure

After chasing his career aspirations around the world, Dr. Hasan Alkumru is settling down at Schulich Dentistry

*By Jihan Aziz, fourth-year student,
Faculty of Arts and Humanities*

Dr. Hasan Alkumru's passion for prosthodontics and for teaching has taken him on a journey from the other side of the world, spanning international borders and several time zones.

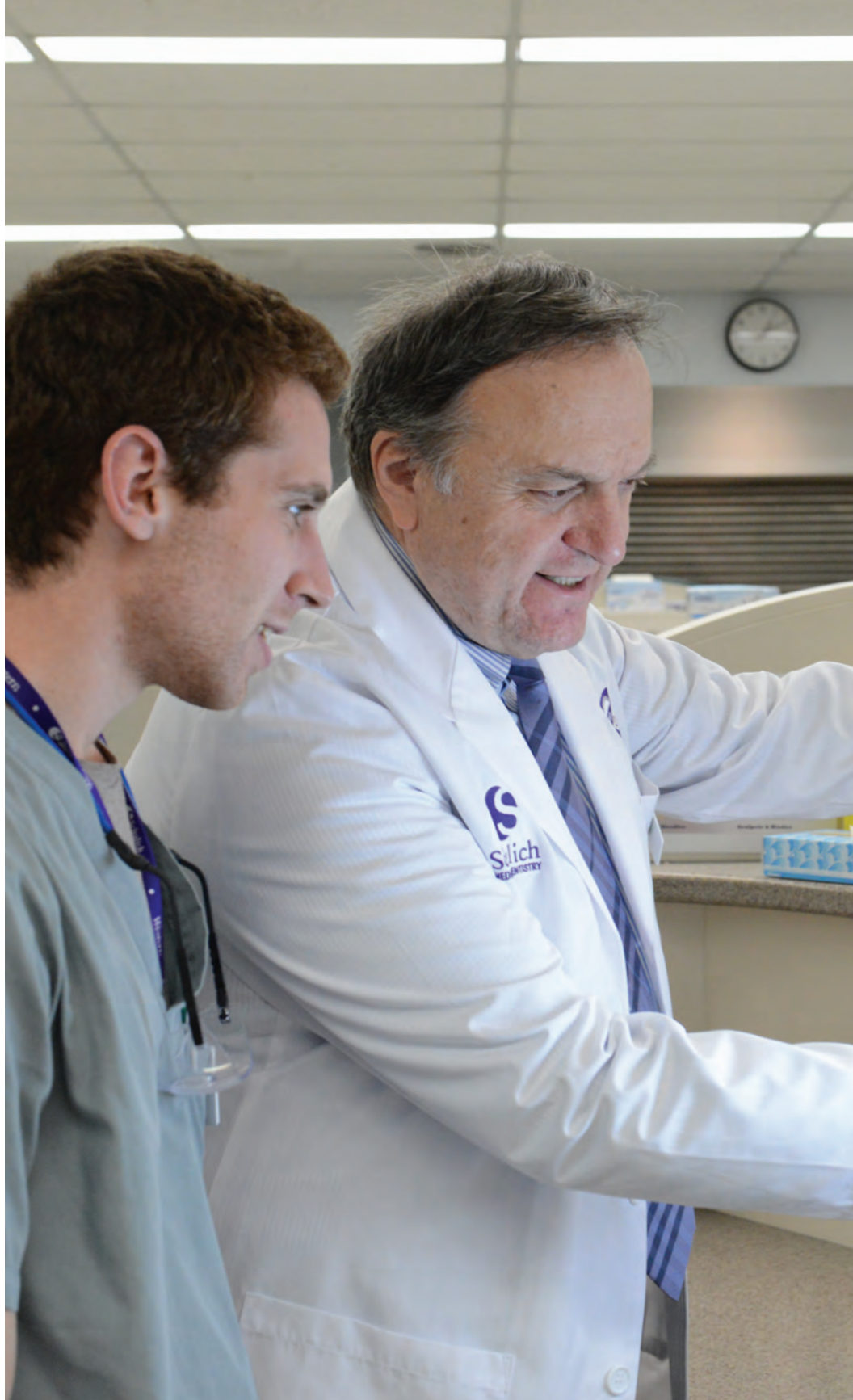
Inspiration for this global pursuit comes from the students he teaches. "When I see the light in a student's eyes that he or she has learned something new, that's my greatest moment," he said.

Originally from Istanbul, Dr. Alkumru joined Schulich Dentistry in October as an assistant professor with the Division of Restorative Dentistry.

In addition to Schulich Dentistry's teaching opportunities, Dr. Alkumru was attracted to the School's research excellence and access to high-level research facilities.

"Uncovering new research is exciting for me, and helps me improve quality of life for people through oral health care," he explained. "Western has an extensive archive that will allow me to conduct retrospective studies on implants and prosthodontics."

Dr. Hasan Alkumru





“When I see the light in a student’s eyes that he or she has learned something new, that’s my greatest moment.”

— DR. HASAN ALKUMRU

Dr. Alkumru's global journey to Schulich Dentistry started when he received his undergraduate degree at Ankara University and decided to pursue prosthodontics.

“Right from the beginning of my undergraduate program, prosthodontics seemed very attractive because I was constructing something instead of destroying it,” he said. “And in the clinical stage of my undergrad, I found that the functionality and aestheticism of teeth is important in making patients happy.”

He completed his PhD in prosthodontics at Ankara University in collaboration with the University of Birmingham. “One of the biggest highlights in my life was when I received the letter that I was accepted into the graduate program,” he said. “I thought I conquered the world!”

After spending four years in the United Kingdom, Dr. Alkumru returned to Istanbul to begin his career in teaching and research.

In 2009, he received a teaching offer from the University of Toronto. But it took him two years to move to Canada, as the decision to uproot his family and leave his private practice was a difficult one.

“Ultimately, I came to Canada for my family,” he said. “I wanted my two daughters to have endless opportunities. When you have kids, you establish your whole world around them.”

The move to Canada has been evidently positive for Dr. Alkumru, both personally and professionally. He has even conquered the cold weather. “Now I’m a cold-weather person,” he said with a laugh.

It seems nothing can put a damper on the start of Dr. Alkumru's experience here at Schulich Medicine & Dentistry, not even the Canadian winter.

The trials and tribulations of a seasoned examiner

Dr. Stanley Kogon reflects on the world of student exams

By Dr. Stanley Kogon, MSc '70, professor, Schulich Dentistry

It is difficult to find anyone who truly enjoys the examination process.

Students, particularly those who receive poor results, claim grades don't tell the whole story. Staff distribute papers, check IDs, watch exam-takers enter washrooms and dutifully attempt not to lose consciousness. Faculty engage in the tedious exercise of setting questions and grading papers.

After setting, proctoring and grading close to 300 examinations I have some degree of bemusement about the exam process.

Throughout the years, I have used a variety of formats: essays, short statements, multiple choice,

and projected case material. Although individual students seem to answer, or at least prefer answering, one question type rather than another, the class average and deviation from the mean grade doesn't vary much.

Students are resourceful and find ways of reviewing past examinations hoping their professor will reuse questions. Years ago, I set a question for first year which included a line drawing on which the students were asked to locate and name the major lymph nodes of the head and neck. That year, the class average was about 7/10. The next year, I told the class that I would ask the same question. This time, the average

remained about 7/10. The same question was repeated on every exam for the next decade with similar results.

It appears that neither the question nor the format of the question matter nearly as much as the acuity of the student providing the answer.

The physical environment of the examination room can offer challenges. I have experienced power outages, massive construction noise, indeterminate liquids leaking from the ceiling, rooms too hot and rooms too cold, and numerous planned and unplanned fire alarms. We have been assigned rooms with too few seats, projectors that didn't work, and clocks that stood still and even one that ran backwards.

I have witnessed a student who arrived two hours late and another who left after a half hour, for the same three-hour exam.

It took some time to convince students that dining on three course meals was an inappropriate activity and at one time students complained that their rights were being curtailed when a smoking ban was imposed.

During the examination, students often ask the proctor questions. Here is a selection of my favourites:

- » *Do I have to answer all the questions or just those that I know the answers?*
- » *How many minutes are there in a two-hour examination?*
- » *Is grammar/spelling/punctuation important?*
- » *Can I use my notes?*



- » *If I don't know the answer to a question can I put something else down that is correct?*
- » *Are you going to mark easy or hard?*
Students have provided these responses when we have discovered answers improperly recorded:
- » *I didn't think the instructions were important.*
- » *I was too nervous to hear anything.*
- » *I copied the person beside me.*

A student who answered all the questions on the back of the question sheet remarked that it was strange to be given blank answer booklets but no one told him he could use them.

The post exam period has also brought interesting interactions.

Students have the right to make sure all answers were graded and the marks were totalled correctly.

It is also useful to know where they had deficiencies in their knowledge base, although most students agree that the mark is an approximate reflection of their understanding of the material.

Appeals are often from students whose grade falls just below the pass-line. The emphasis is on finding a mark or two which will bring their grade close to 60, knowing that grades of 58/59 are customarily raised to a pass.

I often asked the student why they did badly. One responded that he didn't think Oral Diagnosis was that important. Another thought that attending class would not be useful since most of the slides were available online or they didn't read 'suggested' material because it was not 'required'.

On the other extreme, a student wanted their paper reassessed because the grade of 93 was less than expected.

I have wondered why experienced university students cannot manage the allotted time. Students frequently run out of time answering a heavily weighted question because they spent an inordinate amount of time answering questions of less value. Occasionally students leave an exam early, only to find on review that a question was overlooked.

One student wrote a message stating that the examination was too long. In reviewing the paper I noted that he filled two pages repeating the detailed case description provided in the question. There are students who hold the view that quantity will make up for quality and produce pages of padded answers with little to no relation to the question asked.

One cannot discuss the topic of examinations without a mention of handwriting. Most graders get proficient at decoding a wide variety of cursive communication. However, we can become disconsolate trying to decipher page after page of rather straight lines punctuated with a gentle wave, or miniature writing that requires reading under a magnifying glass.

I have considered consulting an Egyptologist when confronted with what seemed an unintelligible wall of hieroglyphics. In the days of fountain pens, it was not unusual to have papers handed in that looked like Rorschach tests and later, pages of smeared blue goo from leaking ball-point pens.

On one occasion, I asked a student who received a pass mark of 62 to see me. I noticed that he left a three-hour examination at half-time.

"Why didn't you stay and use the time allotted?" I asked. He said, "I didn't need more time, I got the mark I wanted."

On enquiring with other instructors, it seemed that this was his *modus operandi*. Just do enough to get a mark slightly better than pass.

Later I asked him, "You must spend considerable time and energy working out a strategy of what questions are likely to be asked and how much to review. Isn't there too much risk?"

"Not if you are good at it," he responded.

I realize that modern pedagogy is moving away from formal written examinations and perhaps that is a good thing. However, for a few of us, we will miss the stress and anxiety associated with the traditional examination process and perhaps the occasional smile.

"Most graders get proficient at decoding a wide variety of cursive communication. I have considered consulting an Egyptologist when confronted with what seemed an unintelligible wall of hieroglyphics."

— DR. STANLEY KOGON

A decorative border of purple balloons of various sizes surrounds the central text.

Join us for *Homecoming*

September 24 - 27, 2015

Featured Events

CONTINUING DENTAL EDUCATION

**Close to home: What expert marriage advice can teach
us about creating successful, long-lasting dentistry**

Friday, September 25

8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

London Convention Centre

For more information and to register, please visit
www.schulich.uwo.ca/continuingprofessionaldevelopment

DAYTIME ACTIVITIES

Continuing Medical Education

Dean's Distinguished Lecture

Guided Open House Tour

Complimentary Lunch

Self-guided Historic Walking Tour

Saturday, September 26

7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Medical and Dental Sciences Buildings

EVENING EVENTS

—Dean's Gala—

**Featuring the Alumni of
Distinction Awards**

Saturday, September 26

6:00 – 11:00 p.m.

London Convention Centre

For more information, please visit www.schulich.uwo.ca/homecoming