

What the Centennial Means to Our Alumni

By Erika E. Durham
DB Communication Specialist

The last century has held much to boast about for The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston; from its top-notch students and fully engaged faculty to its specialty-trained residents.

But perhaps the most telling elements of its time-honored success are the thousands of alumni who went on to improve society's oral health.

It is these men and women who've made the last 100 years what it is today and who will make the 2005 Centennial celebration all it can be.

"...The success of all educational institutions is measured by the accomplishments of their graduates," said Jerry Long, D.D.S., president-elect of the Dental Branch Alumni Association.

And with an abundance of accomplishments from the Dental Branch, founded as the Texas Dental College in 1905, and its School of Dental Hygiene, founded in 1955, there will be more than enough reasons to celebrate this year.

Long, a 1966 graduate who practices dentistry in the Texas Medical Center, stresses that the Centennial is not about a building or a curriculum, but instead is about how alumni used what they learned to advance the profession and the mission - better oral health.

And those stories must be shared, Dental Branch leaders urge.

This year's celebration will hold a variety of opportunities for alumni to reconnect, interact and share memories about the past.

We're 100!

Some of Long's most vivid memories of dental school revolved around the unfavorable financial situation of the day.

He recalls that educational loans were not as available in the 1960s as they are now, leaving many dental students to rely on family and other creative ways to pay their tuition.

"Students usually worked on the weekends, during the holidays and certainly in the summers to make ends meet," Long said. "The Texas Medical Center hospitals employed dental students as medication nurses, orderlies, and phlebotomists."

"One of my classmates even delivered milk door to door in early morning runs before school started. My mother baked pies and cakes at our home and sold them at the local grocery on the weekends to help finance my dental education."

"Stories were always circulating about parents who were worried about meeting the next tuition deadline."

Long also enjoys sharing the changes that are evident in the demographics of the school. He remembers that there was only one female in his class of 100. However, the entire group shared a special camaraderie as they "studied, worried, dreamed and even partied through the most important four years" of their lives.

Long said he is most proud to call himself an alumnus of a school that has graduated and continues to graduate "superbly trained" clinical dentists, and for that reason he will be celebrating his school's Centennial all year long. He hopes others will join him.

"The complete history of UTDB can only be told in 2005 if a large number of its graduates participate in at least one Centennial activity," Long said. "I encourage all alums of our school to be part of this 100-year anniversary by affirming our respect for dentistry and the school that gave us the knowledge to provide for our families and serve our communities."



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS
DENTAL BRANCH AT HOUSTON

A part of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Inside:

- leaders
- new society!
- awards

Student News

Third-year dental student **Ashley Farrar** represented the Dental Branch well at the Dentsply Student Clinician American Dental Association Table Clinic Competition with her presentation "Effects of Tobacco Smoke on Children's Dental Health."

The Dental Branch was honored during the awards ceremony for being one of the few schools in the country that has sent a representative every year the competition has been held.

Julia Javarone, a second-year student in the D.D.S./Ph.D. program at the Dental Branch, was named 2005-06 president of the National Student Research Group, which operates under the umbrella of the American Association of Dental Research.

Colin Lathrop, a first-year student in the D.D.S./Ph.D. program at the Dental Branch, won the award for the most outstanding basic science presentation at the 10th Annual Hinman Student Research Symposium, with his report on salivary glands and ways to potentially regrow them. Lathrop presented information he spent a year researching during a fellowship at the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research.

The Dental Branch had the **largest number of students** in attendance at the event, sponsored by the Thomas P. Hinman Dental Society and the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry. We also are proud of the other students who presented their summer research projects – **Clay Ainley, Darryl Baum, Anh Bui, Lan Doan, Valerie Santiago-Doyle, Claudia Guzman, Jeffrey James and Jimmy Miller.**

Amanda Tamm, Class of 2007, was one of 13 students selected to spend the summer alongside space life scientists and space medicine researchers as part of the National Space Biomedical Research Institute's Summer Internship Program.

Megan Nicole Weiskircher was named the 2004 Pierre Fauchard Academy Foundation Dental Student Scholarship winner. The \$1,500 award has a long-standing tradition of recognizing dental students with a high potential for developing into outstanding leaders in dentistry. Weiskircher serves as president of the Dental Branch Student Association.

Leaders in Dentistry and the Texas Medical Center

By Erika E. Durham
DB Communication Specialist

Frederick C. Elliott, D.D.S., was undergoing treatment at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center prior to his death in 1986, when one day he was visited by the man who had just been named to his old job.



Dr. Frederick C. Elliott

In walked Richard Wainerdi, Ph.D., the president, then and now, of the Texas Medical Center. It was the TMC's founder, meeting the TMC's future.

The two talked briefly about the health care empire that surrounded them — all it had been, had become and would be.

"He charged me with making sure the story of the Texas Medical Center — his story — stayed alive and was told," Wainerdi said.

But Wainerdi and others would soon learn that the story of Elliott's life and the history of the TMC would not be complete without significant mention of dentistry and The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston, founded in 1905 as the Texas Dental College.

The long-standing history of dental leaders who also helped to advance overall health through the Texas Medical Center began more than 70 years ago, when Elliott was named dean of the Texas Dental College in 1932.

Elliott's vision for a medical mecca, where health specialists could pool their resources for the improvement of overall health, fueled

the birth of what is now the largest medical center in the world.

Elliott was one of the nine signers of the charter that established the Texas Medical Center in 1945. Biographical data noted in Elliott's manuscript papers state that he campaigned "tirelessly on behalf of the Dental Branch and the Texas Medical Center. Under his leadership ... over \$120 million of capital improvements were planned and completed," while he served as executive director from 1952-63.

And although he was a strong believer in synergy between the health care disciplines, Elliott forever stayed true to his roots, remaining actively involved in the dental profession. He was a member of the American Dental Association, Texas Dental Association and the International Association for Dental Research, among others.

After years spent in leadership roles with the TMC and the Dental Branch, Elliott's health began to fail. Dental Branch alumni often speak with sadness, yet pride, about the role the Dental Branch Alumni Association played in Elliott's last days.

"Because The University of Texas took over the former Texas Dental College in the midst of Elliott's (deanship), he "slipped through the cracks" when it came to being eligible for the teacher retirement system," said Clyde Hooper, D.D.S., a UTDB alumnus and professor emeritus. "See, you had to be vested in the university for 10 years to qualify for the retirement program," Hooper said. "Therefore he was not eligible."

Elliott refused assistance from anyone for many years until his medical bills exceeded his ability to pay them. He then accepted \$600 from the alumni association.

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developing the DB with ... the Frederick C. Elliott Society

The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston has recently received estate gifts from a number of thoughtful benefactors. These gifts range from trusts to gift annuities to bequests in wills. Some of these generous donors made their intentions known to us during their lifetime. It was thrilling for us to have the opportunity to tell these friends just how grateful we are for being remembered in their estate plans. When we are not aware of such intentions, however, we are unable to personally extend our thanks or to honor our friends while they are still living.

When something as meaningful as a planned gift is made known to us during the donor's lifetime, we have the opportunity to

express our gratitude and to share how the gift will positively impact the institution and the people who are a part of it. In order to recognize these very special friends, a donor recognition group – the Frederick C. Elliott Society – is being created.

The society, named for a late dental professor, dean of the Dental Branch, and founder and president of the Texas Medical Center, begins as the Dental Branch stands poised to celebrate 100 years of excellence in dental education.

For more information about the Frederick C. Elliott Society, or planned giving, contact the Dental Branch Director of Development Suann Lloyd at (713) 500-4106.

Dental Branch Faculty Recognized

Dean receives highest honor for teaching

Faculty of The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston were recognized for a variety of scholastic accomplishments at the 2004 Faculty Honors Convocation, with Dental Branch Dean Catherine Flaitz, D.D.S., taking one of the top honors.

Flaitz received the President's Scholar Award for Excellence in Teaching, one of the highest honors given to

a health science center faculty member.

UT Health Science Center President James T. Willerson, M.D., described Flaitz and Barry R. Davis, who won the Excellence in Research Award, as "two dedicated, committed scientist-educators who have persevered and who have committed their lives to doing something special. It is my hope that, too, will be characteristic of the students, staff and faculty of the health science center."

Flaitz said she considered the award to be a high point in what was already a great year.

"Recently, someone said to me that this

is your year – I acknowledged that by all accounts. And this award takes the prize!" Flaitz told the convocation audience. "It is



Catherine M. Flaitz, D.D.S., is surrounded by her colleagues after winning the President's Award

especially gratifying when one is recognized for what they enjoy most – when there is this blending of vocation and avocation that eventually

becomes a harmonious blur. It is a distinct privilege to be the recipient of this highest teaching award and to help mold the minds, hearts and hands of future dentists, dental specialists and dental hygienists."

The Dental Branch was well-represented, with several faculty members being recognized for awards received in the areas of research, community service and teaching.

Visit http://www.db.utb.tmc.edu/Dean_speech.htm for a complete transcript of Flaitz' remarks.

Rewarded For Our Research

Dental Branch faculty members are not only participating in cutting-edge research, but also are being rewarded for it on a national level. The following faculty members have recently received sizeable grants from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research.

Chunlin Qin, D.D.S., Ph.D., research assistant professor in the Department of Endodontics and Periodontics at the Dental Branch, is the principal investigator on an R01 grant. The project, "Studies of Proteins Involved in Dentinogenesis," hypothesizes that extracellular matrix proteins play vital roles in the formation of dentin, and also can play a role in the formation and breakdown of the tooth. **William Butler, Ph.D.**, professor emeritus, is a co-investigator.

Sudarat Kiat-Amnuay, D.D.S., is the co-investigator on a U01 grant, "Multicenter Trial of CPE for Maxillofacial Prosthetics," funded by a subcontract from the University of Louisville School of Dentistry. The study was designed to address the need for alternative materials for extraoral maxillofacial prosthesis to be used for facial rehabilitation in patients who have lost parts of their face due to cancer, birth defects or trauma.

Mark Wong, D.D.S., chair of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, is a co-investigator on a R01 grant awarded to Tony Mikos, Ph.D., at Rice University.

The research, "Promotion of Alveolar Socket Healing with Biopolymers," studies the promotion of bone formation in large tooth socket defects by implanting a biologically active, biodegradable polymer scaffold. The project will provide clinically valuable information about new tissue-inducing dental biomaterials for restoring oral function in individuals with large tooth socket defects.

Student News, cont.

Texas A&M International University students considering a career in dentistry now can benefit from an early acceptance program launched between The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston and TAMU. The collaboration was made official earlier this year.

For the second year in a row the **Hispanic Student Dental Association** came away from the National Hispanic Dental Meeting as winners. This year's HSDA team won the third place Orgullo award at the 12th annual meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The award is presented to a national student chapter that exhibits an exemplary commitment to community service and career recruitment. Participants from the Dental Branch were **Nedith Casquete, Zoe Delany, Sylvester Gonzales, Claudia Hernandez, Angelica Lozano** and **Tatiana Ramirez**.

The faculty in the department of Prosthodontics at the Dental Branch recently established student awards for outstanding performance in the prosthodontics preclinical and clinical courses. The recipients of these awards are:

Freshman Occlusion Award: **Charles Spurlock**

Outstanding Award for Sophomore Preclinical Prosthodontics: **Ashley Farrar**

Outstanding Award for Junior Clinical Achievements: **Neda Obredovic-Dodig, Ai Mitome, Thai Vuu** and **Natalya Bejar**.

Five additional sophomores were awarded certificates of excellence. They are **Ryan Leonhart, Troy Gor, Angela Incrapera, John McGroary** and **Ginger Rome**.

Yousef Jefferson received the inaugural award from the Judith and Moritz Craven Scholarship Endowment, which was created to highlight an outstanding African-American male student in dentistry. UT System Regent, Judith Craven, M.D., was on hand to present the scholarship award.

Alumni News

Larry W. Spradley, D.D.S., a 1972 graduate of The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston and father of **Jim Spradley**, a fourth-year Dental Branch student, was named the 2004 Texas Dentist of the Year by the Texas Academy of General Dentistry.

During the TAGD's annual meeting in Austin, Friday, Sept. 17, Spradley was presented with the honor, considered to be the most prestigious award a Texas dentist can earn.

Leaders

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Hooper and other alumni who remember their contributions to Elliott say they were proud that they, people who had benefited from his leadership and teachings, could help.

A fellow dentist of Elliott's and his successor in 1952, John Victor Olson, D.D.S., also held a leading role in the growth of the Texas Medical Center as the first president of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Olson led the Dental Branch for 20 years before leaving in 1972 to preside over the health science center, only to return "home" two years later. He served as dean of the Dental Branch again from 1974-82.

Olson's leadership was the beginning of a flourishing medical institution. Today the health science center, of which the Dental Branch is a part, occupies 30 buildings in the Texas Medical Center and continues to lead a trend of collaboration among the various institutions in the area.

Beyond the bounds of the TMC Olson was instrumental in establishing the UT Dental School at San Antonio, serving as the dean of both dental schools at one time.

Ken Jones, D.D.S., a UTDB alumnus, agreed with several others that Olson's role as the first president of the UT Health Science Center and his acting role as dean of the UT Dental School at San Antonio, in addition to being dean at the Houston Dental Branch, spoke volumes about his leadership capabilities.

In addition, Olson often was credited for his "outside the box" approach to dentistry. According to publications of the time he introduced the novel idea of

placing students in clinical settings early in their education. Previously dental students would spend the first two years of their schooling learning a variety of dental procedures and theories without any practical application.

Jones remembers that Olson spoke softly but strongly. "He was a man of few words, but when he did speak, you knew he meant what he said. He was well thought of and liked by almost everyone."

Through their life's work, Elliott and Olsen emphasized the importance of oral health as an integral part of overall health.

There is no doubt Elliott made an impression on Wainerdi that day as they sat talking. Wainerdi, who has been TMC president for 20 years, holds an adjunct faculty position in the department of Restorative Dentistry and Biomaterials. He also is a member of the Committee on Oral Biomaterials Research Center and an honorary member of the Dental Honor Society Omnicron Kappa Upsilon.

Though Elliott did not live long after they met that day, "The Birth of the Texas Medical Center: A Personal Account," (Elliott's autobiography) was compiled and edited by William Henry Kellar, Ph.D., of the University of Houston.

The book was published in 2004 by the Texas A&M University Press, a board on which Wainerdi sits. He also wrote the book's foreword, keeping his promise that the story of the Texas Medical Center and dentistry would forever be linked in history.

To find out more about The Birth of the Texas Medical Center log on to <http://www.tamu.edu/upress/BOOKS/2004/elliott.htm>.

2005 Centennial Events

Jan. 3: Centennial Kick-Off Celebration. Enjoy cake, punch and presentations. Dental Branch Lobby, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

The history of the Dental Branch presented by Bryant Boutwell, Dr.PH., associate dean for Community Affairs at the UT Medical School, Dental Branch, Room 207, 1:15 p.m.

Nasser Barghi, D.D.S., head of Esthetic Dentistry at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio Dental School, will present "Esthetic Dentistry for the 21st Century: Revisiting the Concept of Porcelain Veneers." 3 hours of CE credit is available. Dental Branch, Room 207, 2-5 p.m.

Jan. 20: Centennial Speaker Series, Judith Buchanan, D.M.D., Ph.D., Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. Dental Branch

Feb. 17-19: The Greater Houston Dental Society's 2005 Star of the South Dental Meeting.

Feb. 18: UTDB Alumni Lecture: "FISH! Philosophy" by Stephen C. Lundin, Ph.D., 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Feb. 18: "UTDB Centennial Bash: The Reunion of the Century!" 6-8 p.m.

Feb. 19: "UTDB Alumni Association Luncheon," 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

April 9: Centennial Smiles II charity dental day. Dental Branch

May 21: Commencement ceremony for the Centennial Class. Verizon Wireless Theatre, downtown Houston

See the next edition of UTDB EXchange for summer and fall Centennial events.



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