

# UMMC DENTISTRY

## A Lifetime of Smiles

By Matt Westerfield  
Kristin Irving liked the berry-flavored dental floss. She liked it even better than the cherry-flavored toothpaste that matched her red Nikes.

As third-year dental student David Abide flossed the 6-year-old Johnson Elementary student, he warned her to be careful of "sugar bugs."

"Whenever you eat candy and you don't brush your teeth, the sugar bugs come," he explained. "They make your teeth start to go bad, and we don't want that. We want them to be nice and pretty."

Kristin was among hundreds of students from Johnson and Galloway Elementary schools to get a free check up at UMMC's School of Nursing as part of the national Give Kids a Smile Day on Feb 13. The event

**"The kids get dental care, and the dental students get to learn."**

— Dr. Neva Penton Eklund

was founded by the American Dental Association. More than 800 kids were examined, with more at clinics in the Delta and on the coast.

The school children came in by the bus load; they lined up single-file and were marched into various clinics at the Dental School under the watchful eye of coordinator Marla Martin, director of clinical operations at the Dental School. Martin said the School of Dentistry has held the event every year since 2002.

For taking some time away from the classroom, the kids were given free preventative treatment, including a dental exam, sealants on permanent molars in some cases, fluoride applications and a take-home kit filled with toothpaste, dental floss and other items.

Dentists, faculty, dental students, dental hygiene and nursing students and others volunteered their time to participate in what Dr. Neva Penton Eklund described as a "win-win situation." "The kids get dental care, and the dental students get to learn," said Eklund, associate professor and department chair for Pediatric and Public Health Dentistry at the School of Dentistry.

The event, which is held every February nationwide as part of National Children's Dental Health Month, aims to provide oral health education as well as preventative care to low-income children with little access to care.

Dr. Butch Gilbert, interim dean of the School of Dentistry, said Johnson and Galloway Elementary schools are great partners for this event. "It's so important to bring attention and raise awareness to the need for oral health care, especially in underserved areas," he said. Gilbert added that the day is also about improving access and said they encourage the students and their parents

LEFT: Senator Hillman Frazier (standing, left) and Dr. Butch Gilbert watch dental students examine a Johnson Elementary student during Give Kids a Smile Day.



Third-year dental student David Abide bightens the teeth of Kristin Irving, 6, a first-grade student at Johnson Elementary School in Jackson, during Give Kids a Smile Day Feb. 13 in the School of Dentistry.

to follow up and make UMMC their dental home.

Mississippi Sen. Hillman Frazier of Jackson, a strong supporter of the program, was on hand for the event and even got hands on with one patient, suiting up and assisting a third-year dental student. "The dental health of these children is very important," Frazier said, "because if they're suffering then they miss school, and if they miss school then they fall behind."

Eklund said that even though it's a great day, committing to regular visits to the dentist is vital to overall oral health. "It's a great day," she said, referring to Give Kids a Smile Day. "An awesome day. But we want to make sure we explain to these kids it's not just one day. ... One day isn't going to do it."



Fourth-year dental student K.B. Parks (front) and dental assistant Emily Reedy demonstrate one of the upgraded dental chairs for Agnes Triplett. The chairs feature a monitor that can display electronic patient records and other materials in the student clinic at the School of Dentistry.

## Advancing Care

By Matt Westerfield

### Dentistry school sees technology improvements

Keeping patients more informed and involved in their dental care, as well as keeping up with their records, is getting a little easier for students and residents in the University of Mississippi Medical Center's School of Dentistry. With the recent addition of new hardware and a growing database of information, a patient's electronic dental records now are only a glance away.

The latest changes began last December when new dental chairs were installed in the clinics on the fourth floor. Each updated chair comes with its own flat-screen monitor attached to an adjustable arm at the patient's viewing level. Students can simultaneously connect to the patient-records server with their laptops and display X-rays or educational videos on the monitor in front of the patient.

Fourth-year dental student Jennifer Bain says just having access to the system already makes things easier. "It's very convenient," she said. "I don't have to

try to read someone else's writing; I can just pull up the electronic record instead."

Without the monitors, students must rely on their laptops, which sit on nearby shelves, to share information with patients. "I can't move my computer so I'm having my patients lean over to see what I'm doing," Bain said. "The monitors will make it much easier."

These changes will mean increased efficiency for the IT department by freeing up time spent on the front end, explained Dr. Denise Krause, associate professor and director of information technology in the School of Dentistry.

"We're dealing with limited IT resources and we have over 150 laptops, but this is simplifying everything because we can make all administrative updates on the server side," said Krause.

Unlike students, the residents aren't required to use laptops. Instead, they will have add-ons installed on their chairs referred to as thin clients - small computers that don't perform much processing but provide access to the server.

Conveniently, the thin clients don't require maintenance or support, and the students' laptops will upgrade "naturally" as new students cycle through the school with their new laptops. The thin clients are

still in the process of being installed.

This innovation is referred to as virtual desktop sessions, and Krause said it's part of an effort to move away from localized support of laptops. "If there's a change to the software, we can make that change on the virtual desktop image, basically flip a switch and it'll appear on everyone's laptop," Krause said. She added that it will make possible the centralized management of operating systems and software updates. Any administrative changes made at the server are accessible from anywhere on the Medical Center campus.

"For both IT staff and students, it's going to be a huge time-saver," said Krause.

As far as the patients are concerned, the new technology will allow them to be more involved with their treatment. In addition to digital X-rays and patient records, students will be able to use the monitors to show the patient videos to illustrate treatment options. Even more impressively, the patient can get a real-time look at what his or her teeth look like with the aid of intra-oral cameras.

Bain agreed that the new system saves time and effort. "I think it helps me manage my patients better because I can find their information so easily," she said. "I think the pros outweigh the cons."

**What do you think of our new look?**

E-mail us at [mwesterfield@pubaffairs.ummsmed.edu](mailto:mwesterfield@pubaffairs.ummsmed.edu) with your comments or suggestions.



Krause

## School of Dentistry remembers Dr. John Hembree

By Janis Quinn  
Dr. John Hembree, dean of the School of Dentistry at the University of Mississippi Medical Center from 1987 until 1992, died of cancer on Jan. 5. He was 72.

Born in Jerico Springs, Missouri, Hembree attended high school in Memphis, went to Memphis University and completed dental school at the University of Tennessee in Memphis.

Hembree came to Jackson in 1985 as chairman of the Department of Restorative Dentistry. He had held faculty appointments at the University of Tennessee, the University of Detroit where he was associate dean,

and the Medical University of South Carolina where he as chairman of operative dentistry.

He served 29 years of active and reserve duty in the United States Army and retired at the rank of colonel.

He was a prolific scholar and had published many scientific papers in dental and dental materials journals. In 1993, he was named a Frederick A. P. Barnard Distinguished Professor, the highest award given to individual faculty by the University of Mississippi.

Hembree accepted the promotion to dean at a time when the school was struggling with its relationship to the greater community of dentists in Mississippi. Dr. Buford Gilbert, interim dean of the school and chairman of endodontics when Hembree was dean, said Hembree's greatest achievements were the bridges he built between school and community. "He just had a gift of bringing people together without rancor or criticism. The faculty, the students and the practicing dentists all had great respect for him."

Gilbert also said that the one year Hembree devoted to strategic planning served as the blueprint for



the development of the school for the next 10 years.

"To honor John's commitment to continuous improvement and excellence, the school created the John Hembree Society to recognize excellence in teaching and to recognize student for academic excellence," Gilbert said.

Dr. Travis Taylor, a member of the part-time faculty at the school, taught with Hembree at Tennessee, South Carolina and Mississippi.

Taylor said Hembree gained the respect of the faculty by being in the clinic alongside them once a week. "They knew he was not afraid to get in there and do work himself."

Hembree is survived by his father, John Harold Hembree of Brandon, his wife, Nancy Love Hembree, a son, J. Gregory Hembree of Little River, S.C., two daughters, Dianna Dawn of Charleston, S.C., and Cynthia Lynn of Jefferson, Ga., and seven grandchildren; two step sons, Michael Love of Austin, Texas, and Jonathan Love of Pinehurst, N.C.

Hembree married Mary Ellen Hardwick in 1959. She died in 2006.

## Research Day



Dental students present the results of their research projects and compete for a scholarship on the School of Dentistry Research Day earlier this spring. Reid Lester (from left), John Woolfolk, Dr. Roger Johnson, Jennifer Bain and Jason Brown.

## Upcoming Events

- **June 13:** Dental alumni chapter Lunch with the Dean at MDA — noon, Magnolia D.
- **June 14:** Hospitality Suite, University of Mississippi Dental Alumni and Friends — 4:30-6:00 p.m., room 3100 Lasata, Grand Sandestin, Destin, Fla.
- **June 15:** Hospitality Suite, University of Mississippi Dental Alumni and Friends — 4:30-6:00 p.m., room 3100 Lasata, Grand Sandestin, Destin, Fla.
- **July 30:** Meet and Greet event to be held at the Jackson home of Dr. and Mrs. Carey Johnston.
- **August 5:** Welcome Supper for D1s.
- **August 10:** ASDA Golf Tournament.

# the Dean's Corner

Congratulations to this year's graduating class! Not only do we celebrate this year's class as the Class of 2009 but also as our school's 30th graduating class. The Class of 2009 is an outstanding example of the reputation our school

has earned for academic achievements, leadership and service to others. This group of young professionals will not only provide excellent dental care for their patients, but will also provide service and leadership to communities throughout Mississippi, and very importantly, leadership to our profession of dentistry.

As our school continues to educate and graduate the very best, so many outstanding aspects of our school come to mind. We have a faculty that not only has a tremendous amount of experience and expertise, but a faculty that is extremely dedicated to teaching. Equally so, you will also hear faculty, students and our graduates continue to praise our staff at our school for both their dedication and expertise.

Along with an excellent faculty and staff, our school has been able to maintain a facility with modern technology for our education program. Our recently completed installation of new class-

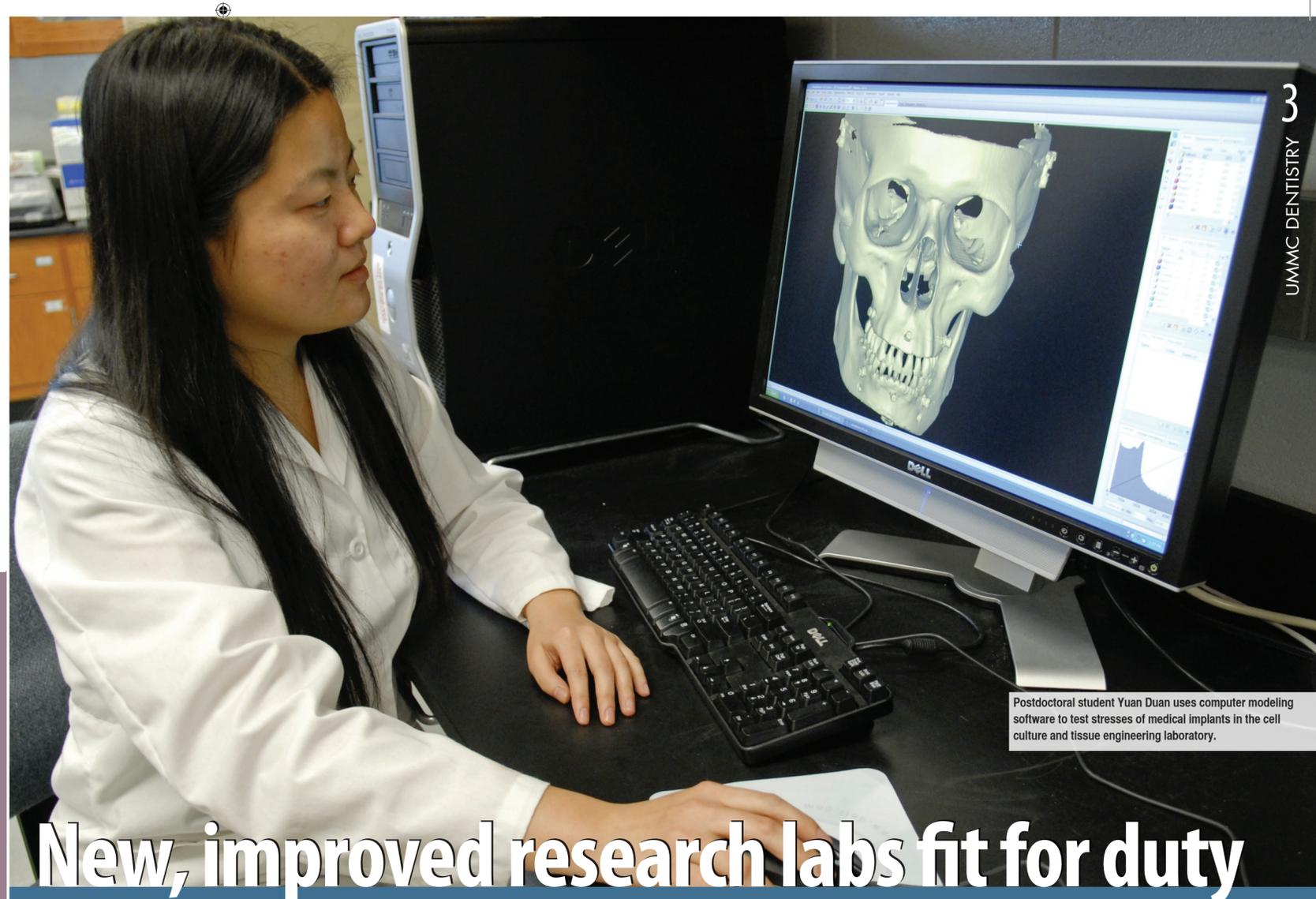
room technology, forty new dental units and chairs in our fourth floor restorative clinics, our new digital dental record system with digital radiography and our new clinical simulation lab are examples of our school's commitment to provide our students with a state-of-the-art facility.

Our research program continues to excel with our extramural funding increasing yearly and our student involvement in research at an all time high.

Our service programs continue to be a resource for our state's communities. These activities include not only our curriculum-organized activities such as the community health projects, rotations through public health clinics, and the annual Give Kids a Smile Day event, but so many additional projects and programs aimed at helping others that can be solely credited to our students and student leaders.

And finally, our school continues to enjoy strong support from our alumni and friends. Participation and support has been tremendous this year at our school and alumni events. As always, thanks to so many for their time, efforts and gifts that continue to make our school the very best!

— Dr. Butch Gilbert, interim dean



Postdoctoral student Yuan Duan uses computer modeling software to test stresses of medical implants in the cell culture and tissue engineering laboratory.

## New, improved research labs fit for duty

Dr. Jason Griggs was still new to the University of Mississippi Medical Center when disaster struck the Department of Biomedical Materials Science. In October of 2007, just two months after Griggs joined UMMC to take over as chair of the department, a fire broke out on the fifth floor of the School of Dentistry and consumed the metallurgy lab. It was an unannounced start for the Texas researcher.

A year and a half later, the department has bounced back and by the end of May, the fifth floor will be home not only to a more advanced metallurgy lab space but a new cell culture and tissue engineering lab as well.

Repairs to the building were estimated around \$500,000, and reconstruction has opened the door to make improvements on the floor plan and maximize space in each room in the laboratory.

The new metallurgy lab will come equipped with more capabilities than it had before the fire thanks to what Griggs calls "ad-

vances in research equipment and phasing-out of the old models." Capabilities that will include adding mass-spectrometry (ICP-MS) to the lab's chemical analysis system. "This is the technology for identification of trace evidence that you see on criminal investigation TV shows," Griggs explained.

For the moment, metallurgy lab equipment is housed on the ground floor where it's used for a range of tasks including quality testing and analyzing the properties of metals and implant alloys. Much of the failure-analysis work is the result of a multi-year contract the metallurgy lab has with Synthes, a global medical-implant manufacturer. "Our contract is to certify the consistent quality of incoming materials that will

be used to manufacture those implants," Griggs said. In fact, work is already more than halfway completed on this year's contract work.

Also temporarily located on the ground floor is the new cell

culture and tissue engineering laboratory that features periodontal research, a Micro CT scanner and computer modeling software. One research project currently under way in the laboratory involves creating an artificial liver to be used in studies on how fats affect the liver.

Dr. Butch Gilbert, interim dean of the School of Dentistry, says faculty research is thriving despite the prolonged displacement caused by the fire. "Faculty involvement is up, and our extramural funding continues to increase," said Gilbert. "So much of this is to be credited to Dr. Griggs with his ability to organize and coordinate our faculty and students to enable all of us to work together to continuously improve our research program."

Griggs came to the Medical Center from Texas A&M's Baylor College of Dentistry where he served as graduate program director and vice-chair of the department of Biomaterials Sciences. He said he chose to relocate to Jackson partly because he was looking for the right balance between an urban and rural environment. He replaced Dr. Lyle "Zach" Zardiackas who has remained with the faculty to continue his research.

**"...faculty research is thriving despite the prolonged displacement caused by the fire."**

— Dr. Butch Gilbert

## 2009 Dental Alumnus of the Year



Dr. Eleanor Gill (seated) with Dr. Neva Penton Eklund and Dr. Butch Gilbert

For Dr. Eleanor Gill, the 2009 Dental Alumnus of the Year, dentistry has been a passion that began as early as high school when she worked as an assistant in a dentist's office while still a teenager.

Once she was ready to start her formal training after earning a bachelor's in chemistry, UMMC was her only choice.

"I'm a fifth-generation Mississippian, so I wanted to stay in the state," she said. "The school was still very new then. It was a really good facility with great instructors."

She added that relatively small class sizes allowed for more one-on-one interaction with her instructors.

Gill earned her D.M.D. from the School of Dentistry and spent years lecturing for the school while starting up her private practice in Olive Branch.

Working with students and answering their questions about her practice helped her to develop professionally, she said.

"It helped me learn from my mistakes," she explained. "I benefitted as much from the students' questions as they did from my answers."

Gill said she has remained close friends with her former classmates, many of whom are faculty members now.

"I love dentistry, and I'm so fortunate the School of Dentistry gave me the skills I need to practice this profession. It's a wonderful faculty."

Gill is very active in the dentistry community and belongs to many state and national organizations. A member of the Mississippi Dental Association for ten years, she served as president of the organization from 2005-06. She has also served as a School of Dentistry student mentor.

"Eleanor has done and continues to do so much, not only for our school, but for our profession of dentistry," said Dr. Butch Gilbert, interim dean of the School of Dentistry. "She is the perfect example of the professional we want our students to become: providing excellent health care for her patients, sharing her leadership skills to advance our profession and so importantly a strong supporter of dental education."

## Meet & Greets

To showcase the School of Dentistry and get a chance to visit with our interim dean, Dr. Butch Gilbert, the Development and Alumni offices teamed up to continue the statewide "Meet and Greet" receptions for alumni and friends of the school.

Recent Meet and Greet events were held in Gulfport at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Chris Spraberry on March 3, and in Columbus at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Walt Starr on March 10. Upcoming dates for other Meet and Greets are May 7 at the Southaven home of Dr. and Mrs. Jason Coleman, and July 30 at the Jackson home of Dr. and Mrs. Carey Johnston.



Dr. and Mrs. Chris Spraberry (right) with guests at the Meet and Greet in Gulfport. LEFT: Helen Compassi and Walt Starr at the Meet and Greet in Gulfport.



## White Coat Ceremony

The School of Dentistry Class of 2011 marked its transition from preclinical education to the actual practice of dentistry at the school's annual American College of Dentists (ACD) White Coat Ceremony Feb. 20 in the Norman C. Nelson Student Union.

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