

The History of the VCU Department of Periodontics and Postdoctoral Graduate Periodontics Program

The department

The Department of Periodontics began as a distinct department in the School of Dentistry in 1972 after two years of development directed by the new incoming dean of the school, Dr. John DiBiaggio. Dr. DiBiaggio succeeded Dr. Harry Lyons, who served from 1950 until 1970. Dr. Lyons was a renowned dental leader, leading a highly recognized and strong dental school. Dr. DiBiaggio continued that reputation and began an energetic and inspiring new progressive approach for both predoctoral and, particularly, postdoctoral education. In 1970, there was not a distinct Department of Periodontics but, rather, a three person periodontics faculty within the Department of Oral Therapeutics, which included oral medicine, endodontics and other disciplines. From this consortium, Dr. DiBiaggio initiated an effort to create distinct departments, among them periodontics. He was a friend of Dr. Gary Maynard from their shared University of Kentucky days, and so enlisted Dr. Maynard to lead a recruiting effort for a chairman, a postdoctoral director, and four other faculty to join Dr. Walter Ormes to structure a seven full-time faculty member department. Dr. Richard D. Wilson served with that committee and influenced the selection of the new leaders of the department.

Dr. Maynard and his committee first searched across the country for the chair, and identified an outstanding individual who was also an acquaintance of his from their time in the U.S. Army Dental Corp, Dr. James E. Kennedy. Dr. Kennedy at the time was a faculty member at the University of Rochester. As Dr. Kennedy considered the position, he collaborated with his good friend and fellow graduate periodontics student, Dr. Richard R. Ranney, then at University of Oregon, who also was an interviewee for the position at the MCV-VCU Department of Periodontics. The two of them considered the possibilities at VCU, contacted another graduate program friend, Dr. James H. Butler, then at University of Minnesota, and developed a plan to establish the department. They developed a new structure for the department and the postdoctoral program, and identified courses and their content within the curriculum. Dr. Butler established a separate Division of Occlusion, and began a faculty search for that group.

Drs. Kennedy and Ranney successfully recruited especially capable young faculty members that they had noted during their academic careers, and by July 1972 began first classes and clinics. The additional faculty members included, in alphabetical order Edward P. (Pat) Allen, Ph.D. (1972), Scott Ziegler (1972), Kent G. Palcanis (1973), and Howard S. Dorfman (1973), all of those joining Dr. Walter J. Ormes to complete the seven person department. Dr. Maynard, Dr. Wilson, and other adjunct part-time faculty members attended both the postgraduate program and the predoctoral clinics and lectures,

to provide a robust and energetic learning experience for all graduate students and dental students.

Dr. Ranney developed the Periodontics Postgraduate Program in 1972 with the inaugural class entering in 1973. Dr. Byron Brill (VCU/MCV) and Dr. Jerry Humenick (University of Pennsylvania) were the initial students, and survived their first year experience. The second year class, 1974, included Dr. John Burmeister (Ohio State University), Dr. Robert Loving (University of Kentucky), and Dr. Jeffrey Klein (Columbia University). With the graduation of Dr. Brill and Dr. Humenick in 1975, the program was fully implemented and had its first alumni. Over the years, 95 alumni have completed training and the current group of nine will produce more than 100 persons who shared in the VCU Periodontics learning experience

Over the history of the Department of Periodontics, more than 50 part-time faculty have served the predoctoral and postgraduate student needs, as well as have contributed to the professional growth of the entire faculty. Their service, contributions and expertise are among the best in all of dental education. All students since 1972 have benefited from the interactions of the part-time faculty members.

Over the years additional new faculty joined the department and contributed to our mission of teaching and research in all areas of periodontology. Those that were appointed to full-time faculty appointments in chronological order and their years of service are as follows:

- Dr. James E. Kennedy – 1972-1983
- Dr. Richard R. Ranney – 1972-1986
- Dr. Walter Ormes – 1972-1980
- Dr. Pat. Allen – 1972-1976
- Dr. Scott C. Ziegler – 1972-1978
- Dr. Dr. Kent G. Palcanis – 1973-1987
- Dr. Howard S. Dorfman – 1973-1982
- Dr. Gary S. Key – 1975-1978
- Dr. William L. Ries – 1976-1986
- Dr. John A. Burmeister – 1977-2003, part-time faculty–present
- Dr. Harvey A. Schenkein – 1978-present
- Dr. Theodore Frantzis – 1978-1980
- Dr. Kevin C. Sweeney – 1978-1981, part-time faculty–present
- Dr. Robert W. Mandell – 1979-1982
- Dr. Lloyd W. Lariscy – 1980-1981
- Dr. Carl J. Cavallaro – 1982-1988
- Dr. Alan G. Sarbin – 1982-1999
- Dr. Thomas E. Koertge – 1982-present
- Dr. David L. Cochran – 1985-1992
- Dr. Christine Niekrash – 1985-1987
- Dr. John C. Gunsolley – 1986-1997; 2006–present

- Dr. Claire C. Kaugers – 1986-1987; part-time faculty–present
- Dr. James H. Butler – 1988-2004; part-time faculty–present
- Dr. David M. Abbott – 1988-2004; part-time faculty–present
- Dr. Randy W. Rowland – 1988-1993
- Dr. Joseph V. Califano – 1991-2004
- Dr. Mary P. Keiter – 1993-1994
- Dr. Thomas C. Waldrop – 1994-present
- Dr. Sharon K. Lanning – 1999-2002; 2004-present
- Dr. Jeffrey D. Rogers – 1999-2004
- Dr. Robert Sabatini – 2005-present
- Dr. E. Sinem Sahingur – 2006-present

Those who served as chairmen of the Department of Periodontics are as follows:

- Dr. James E. Kennedy, 1972-1974
- Dr. Richard R. Ranney, 1974-1977
- Dr. Kent G. Palcanis, 1977-1987
- Dr. Thomas E. Koertge, interim, 1987-1988
- Dr. John A. Burmeister, 1988-2003
- Dr. Harvey A. Schenkein, 2003-present

Those who served as postgraduate directors are as follows:

- Dr. Richard R. Ranney 1972-1976
- Dr. Kent G. Palcanis, 1976-1980, 1982-1984
- Dr. Howard S. Dorfman, 1980-1982
- Dr. Harvey A. Schenkein, 1984-1986
- Dr. John A. Burmeister, 1986-1989
- Dr. David L. Cochran, 1989-1992
- Dr. Thomas C. Waldrop, 1994-present

And those who have served as clinical directors of Postgraduate Periodontics are as follows:

- Dr. Kent G. Palcanis, 1973-1980
- Dr. Howard S. Dorfman, 1980-1982
- Dr. Alan G. Sarbin, 1983-1994
- Dr. Thomas C. Waldrop, 1994-present

The entire faculty and all of the alumni will recall the friendly and committed support of the departmental and clinical staff members of the Department of Periodontics. Each of them has contributed as much, or more, to the mission and values of the department as anyone, and each of us would testify to that critical contribution to the Department of Periodontics accomplishments.

The mission of the department at its beginning, and to this day, has been to offer an experience of critical thinking and thoughtful reflection by both the dental and the graduate students about the topics of Periodontology. It had been Drs. Kennedy and Ranney's aim, and the entire faculty since, to provide learning opportunities for each student so they may become empowered to pursue their professions with the capability to understand the sciences, the basis of clinical skills, and the methods in the pursuit of knowledge. As a result of their learning efforts our graduates, alumni, have achieved success and distinguished themselves in the periodontal community both at the local, national, and international level. The accomplishments of the alumni are a hallmark of the program and the department, and a legacy of the department faculty and staff.

Over time, Dr. Kennedy moved to Assistant Dean for Academics, 1974-1976, then Dean, 1976-1983, before assuming the dean position at the University of Connecticut, from which he retired in 2001, and continues as dean and professor emeritus. Dr. Ranney became Assistant Dean for Research at VCU, 1997-1986, before assuming the dean position at University of Alabama-Birmingham, 1986-1991, and then dean, University of Maryland-Baltimore, 1991-2003. Dr. Palcanis joined Dr. Ranney at University of Alabama-Birmingham as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in 1987, and retired from there in 2000 continuing at the school as emeritus professor.

Even today, and over all of these years, Dr. Maynard continues to serve as professor, adjunct faculty, and continues to instruct in the graduate clinic, and lecture in the predoctoral surgical course. Each of the alumni deeply appreciated the contribution to their lives and the energy he has added to an interest in periodontics he has given us. He, of course, has left his mark on the graduate program and on all of us who have learned from him; a legacy of the program. Dr. Wilson also continues in the Department of General Practice as adjunct professor. They have devoted a long and fruitful commitment to the School of Dentistry, both personally and professionally.

A number of former faculty who practice in the Richmond area continue as part-time faculty and the retired faculty, Drs. Abbott, Burmeister, Butler continue with part-time clinical instruction in the postgraduate and predoctoral clinics. In addition Dr. Sarbin has had ongoing contribution with clinical instruction and influenced many postgraduate and predoctoral students and their careers.

All of the part-time faculty have contributed value to all the students and to their faculty colleagues. Those who contributed more than 25 years of service to the department include:

- Dr. J. Gary Maynard
- Dr. Scott Ziegler
- Dr. Barry Green
- Dr. Kevin Sweeney
- Dr. John Doswell, II
- Dr. Claire Kaugers
- Dr. Barry Griffin

Ten other faculty have taught for more than 10 years. All part-time faculty, whether they have served one or 25 years, have made significant contributions.

Post-Graduate Program

Under Dr. Waldrop, the Postgraduate Program was transformed in 1994 into a three-year training program that extended courses, clinical experience and subsequently formal research efforts. This development has led to additional research contribution, as noted below, and enhanced the clinical skill in various contemporary periodontal services. Over the history of the Graduate Program the students have been in the Lyons Building Clinic (1973-2000) starting in the formative years and later in a six-chair Graduate Periodontics Clinic within the Lyons Building. The graduate clinic was subsequently moved into the Wood Clinic (2001-2009) with the Predoctoral Periodontics clinic. Finally, in 2009 the program moved into a fully contemporary state-of-the-art clinic in the W. Baxter Perkinson Jr. Building, which many of the alumni helped make possible.

Research

All faculties in dentistry are encouraged to pursue new knowledge, and as such our faculty have followed an array of interesting subjects over the years. In 1976, Dr. Ranney and Dr. John G. Tew of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, along with Dr. Palcanis, submitted a grant to the National Institute of Dental Research (NIDR) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on the medical and immunological measures of patients with Juvenile Periodontitis (later termed Localized Early Onset Periodontitis, and now Aggressive Periodontitis). From that grant effort began the VCU Clinical Research Center for Periodontal Diseases. The Center for Periodontal Diseases, one of only five in the United States, added microbiology and cellular biology studies, and continued to evolve with genetic studies and molecular biology studies over the decades and continues to this day. Drs. Edward Moore and Dr. Lillian (Peg) Holdeman Moore led the microbiology studies, and Dr. Richard Carchman the pharmacologic and Dr. Walter Nance the genetics studies. Dr. Ranney, when he advanced on to the University of Alabama, Birmingham was replaced in 1987 by Dr. Harvey A. Schenkein who successfully continued to direct that Center to the present time. Joining Dr. Palcanis for patient-based research projects, Dr. Burmeister, who later served as Clinical Director, and Dr. Sarbin, Dr. Koertge, Dr. Gunsolley, Dr. Claire Kaugers, Dr. Califano, Dr. Carol Brooks, Dr. Charles Goss, and Dr. Robert Sabatini were clinical periodontal staff members as well. Dr. Tew continues to this day to serve as Director of Immunological Studies for the CRCPD and will retire from VCU at the end of 2010.

The CRCPD has evolved over the years with respect to its funding base and research interests. A continuing theme has been the biology and clinical management of aggressive periodontitis. However, as new research areas have opened in periodontology, the research results have led CRCPD investigators into new areas. Studies of antibodies commonly found in periodontitis patients, a long-standing interest of the CRCPD researchers led to examination of how these immune responses might affect the overall health of patients with periodontal infections. The current topics under investigation

include examination of how these antibodies can influence systemic conditions such as inflammation in the vasculature, fetal development, and cardiovascular diseases. These topics have led to new collaborations with investigators and clinicians in the VCU School of Medicine, including faculty in the Departments of Cardiology, Surgery and Ob-Gyn. These studies are funded by research grants from the National Institutes of Dental and Craniofacial Research and the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities.

The clinical aspects of research were most successfully developed by the research investigation effort of Dr. John Gunsolley, both for he and for a number of the other faculty, looking at the effects of therapy on the most severe periodontitis patients, and also on analyzing the progress of periodontitis. Dr. Gunsolley and his colleagues received three Periodontal Clinical Research Awards by the Academy of Periodontology, in 1995, 2001, 2009; again, all of these with NIH funded efforts.

In addition to biological and clinical studies of periodontitis, the training of new scientists in these fields was accomplished with supported programs of combined basic science degrees and Periodontics training, by Dr. Ranney and then later by Dr. Schenkein. Under a NIH Training Grant Program Dr. Burmeister completed a M.S degree in Microbiology and Immunology; Dr. Bernard Debski a Ph.D. degree in Pharmacology, and Dr. Lloyd Lariscy pursued a M.S. degree in Microbiology/Immunology. Dr. Debski served as Chairman, and Dr. Lariscy as faculty at the Department of Periodontics, University Detroit – Mercy. After that period of training grants in our history, a new Physician Scientist Award Training Program was obtained, in which Dr. Gunsolley completed a M.S. program in Biostatistics. He now serves on the faculty at VCU, and served also as Chairman, Periodontics at the University of Maryland at Baltimore. Then, in 1985, a newly created Dentist Scientist Award (DSA) training program was authored and obtained from NIH. In the DSA program, Dr. Califano received a PhD in Microbiology/ Immunology, Dr. Thomas Hart a Ph.D. in Human Genetics, and Dr. Leo I. Kupp a Ph.D. in Microbiology/ Immunology. Drs. Burmeister, Califano and Kupp all pursued their graduate degree programs under the direction of Dr. Tew in his laboratory. Those graduate students went on to academic appointments and some then to clinical practice. Dr. Califano is serving as Postgraduate Director at the University of Illinois – Chicago, Dr. Hart now serves as Chairman, Department of Periodontics, University of Illinois – Chicago, and Dr. Kupp served on the periodontics faculty at University of Kentucky, Ohio State University, and Mayo Clinic. Dr. Angelo Mariotti, D.D.S., Ph.D. also pursued basic laboratory studies exploring regeneration under the mentorship of Dr. Cochran during his training, and is currently Chairman, Department of Periodontology, at Ohio State University.

Finally, since initiation of the three-year certificate-training program in 1994, postgraduate residents have generated research information as part of the expanded experience. Since that time residents have been enrolled in the Graduate School of Virginia Commonwealth University, and have, under the direction of Dr. Waldrop and faculty advisers, designed studies and gathered clinical and laboratory data to successfully complete a Master of Science in Dentistry, M.S.D., degree in accordance

with university regulations. A number of residents' research has been published during that time, greatly adding to the contribution of new knowledge over the history of the Department.

Leadership

Our history includes a number of significant and influential voices in clinical, education, and research endeavors in the national and international arenas.

Dr. Kennedy served as President of the American Dental Education Association, and Dr. Ranney as President of both the American Association of Dental Research and the International Association of Dental Research. Dr. Palcanis, following service as a Director of the American Board of Periodontics, currently serves as Executive Secretary of the American Board of Periodontology. He has also held numerous posts in the American Dental Education Association and leadership roles on the AAP Education Committee, Postgraduate Directors Committee, and many of the planning committees.

Dr. Schenkein, currently Assistant Dean for Research and Chairman, Department of Periodontics has accomplished an outstanding scientific career. His career in immunological and genetic pathogenic mechanisms of periodontitis has produced a depth of understanding in these areas. He has succeeded in being awarded NIH funding for the VCU Clinical Research Center for Periodontal Diseases (CRCPD), designated by the Virginia Commonwealth University as a University Center. Thus, the CRCPD has continued from 1978 through the present, a quite rare accomplishment in the funded dental research in the U.S.A, and in the international dental research community. Dr. Schenkein received the Basic Research in Periodontal Disease Award from the International Association for Dental Research and the Virginia's Outstanding Scientist Award in 2004.

Dr. Maynard and Dr. Schenkein were honored with the VCU School of Dentistry Medallion Society Award for their years of commitment to the excellence to the School of Dentistry.

Dr. Maynard has served as the President of the American Academy of Periodontology. He was one of the founding members of the Southern Academy of Periodontics, as well the founder and President of the Virginia Society of Periodontists. He also served as a Director of the American Board of Periodontology, and has received a number of the highest honors from the American Academy of Periodontology including the Master Clinician Award.

Dr. Maynard, Dr. Waldrop and Dr. Palcanis each served as Chairman of the American Board of Periodontology in addition to their years of service as Directors. Currently Dr. Sabatini, who joined our faculty in 2005 after a career in the U.S. Air Force, is a Board Director.

Dr. Cochran also held many of the AAP Committee leadership roles, and served the President of the American Academy of Periodontology, while continuing his faculty position as Chair, Department of Periodontology at the University of Texas, San Antonio.

A number of other faculty members of the Department of Periodontics were active leaders in the American Dental Education Association (ADEA). Dr. Alan Sarbin, who also was active in the Postgraduate Education Committee offices of the AAP, was an active member of the Periodontics Section of ADEA, serving as secretary, vice-chairman, and then chairman of the section. The same successful role has been achieved by both Dr. Thomas Koertge and by Dr. Sharon Lanning. Dr. Palcanis has long served the ADEA and the AAP Periodontics education Committees, as well as, numerous planning and advisory boards, and has been honored with numerous recognition awards. Dr. Koertge as well was for many years a member and then served as President of the Education Committee of the AAP.

In addition to this review of the faculty members over the years in the Department of Periodontics, many of our 94 plus alumni have held leadership roles in local, national and international professional dental organizations. In addition, many of our alumni have pursued academic careers. Our alumni have, and continue to contribute to the literature making a major impact on the practice of periodontics.

The history of the Department of Periodontics will continue to evolve as past, current, and future faculty, residents and alumni leave their foot print on the department.