A look at our alumni aviators
FROM the DEAN

New year, new name, new vision

Exciting plans are in the works

As we come upon a new year, we tend to reflect upon the past one and count our blessings. The School of Dentistry has a long list of folks to thank for all the good things that happened in 2010, including our many friends for contributing to our new dental facility. It’s truly people – our alumni, patients, students, faculty and staff – who have made the facility “More than a Building.”

I remember six short years ago when we first introduced the idea of a $100 million-plus building, everyone pretty much said, “We love MCG, but that’s a really lofty goal and we’re not sure it’s really achievable.” But you came through and here we are, just a few months away from celebrating the official opening on Sept. 23.

Before that happens though, on Feb. 1, we will celebrate the university’s name change to Georgia Health Sciences University and our new identity as its College of Dental Medicine. It’s a designation we have deserved since the university was recognized as a health sciences institution years ago.

In fact, this is the last issue of Word of Mouth that will use the “School of Dentistry” name. By the spring issue, our new College of Dental Medicine name will be in place.

As we move forward, we haven’t forgot to honor with great pride the legacy of outstanding leadership, education, research and clinical care that Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry has provided to the state and the region for the past 40 years. Because dentistry has never been just about teeth, our new name reflects our place as a prominent college within the University System of Georgia as well as embodies the degree we confer, Doctor of Dental Medicine.

Along with our new name and building, our institution’s new president, Dr. Ricardo Azziz, has set a new vision for the university: to become a preeminent, nationally known health sciences university, with research ranking in the 50th percentile, impeccable educational and service achievements, in a patient- and family-centered environment.

Our school’s new strategic plan, adopted early this year, creates a roadmap for future work in education, research, community outreach, dental class expansion and patient care. Included in the plan is a strategy for continuing the philanthropic momentum that has been generated during the past six years by more than 900 contributors to the building fund.

If you haven’t expressed your love and gratitude for our school yet, it is never too late. Every time you show your support for the building, dental education or a scholarship program, you give us the resources essential to meet our current and future goals.

It has indeed been a very good year. Thank you again from the bottom of my heart for the generosity you have shown that allows us to continue the level of excellence that is our proud legacy in dental education.

We look forward to celebrating with you everything that’s new in the year ahead!

Connie Drisko, D.D.S.
Dean and Merritt Professor
OPENED WIDE

Sweet Air
Several of our alumni are also pilots

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There's something mystical about flying. For those who answer the call, the rewards are many. *Word of Mouth* spoke to five pilots who have something else in common – they are all practicing dentists and alumni of the Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry.
Hand in hand

While dentistry and flying may seem at first to be an odd combination, the skills and traits required for both are actually quite complementary, says Dr. Alex Bell ('82).

“There’s a correlation between dentistry and flying,” says Bell, a general dentist in Warner Robins, Ga. “Precision, accuracy, concentration, all that goes hand in hand. I think that’s why a lot of dentists fly, because it demands not only mental skills but manual dexterity. You have to be coordinated to fly, just as you do in dentistry.”

A national organization is devoted to combining the two interests – the Flying Dentists Association, of which Bell is a member. The group arranges fly-ins for family excursions and coordinates continuing education opportunities.

Bell fulfilled a dream about a year ago when he bought his Cirrus SR20 four-seater, the first production general-aviation aircraft equipped with a parachute.

He began flying at 12, and first soloed at 15 in his father’s 1959 Cessna 150. “I could legally fly an airplane by myself before I could drive alone,” he says. When he began flying for pleasure as an adult, he quickly realized the benefit it had for his practice.

“Flying has become a very valuable tool for me,” Bell says, explaining that he travels to many continuing education courses in the Southeast. “To drive that distance, I’d have to take a day off of work coming and going. With the airplane, I can work three-fourths of the day and very comfortably fly 500 miles. It’s a big time saver.”

He flies most often to Augusta to visit his sons, Jack and Miles, who are MCG dental students.

Bell considers flying an excellent stress reliever. “When you’re flying, you’re not thinking about anything else. You’re totally concentrating on what you’re doing. It’s very cathartic.”

Choppers and copters

“Everyone in my family is a dentist,” says Dr. Mark Mazzawi ('97). That includes his father, mother, aunt, brothers, sister, cousin and some in-laws. But he’s the only one who flies helicopters.

Mazzawi and Dr. Matt Phelps ('97) are both part-time clinical instructors at MCG and practice general dentistry at separate offices in the Atlanta area. They own a Robinson R44 Raven II, a small four-passenger piston helicopter that they keep in Phelps’ back yard or at Mazzawi’s parents’ farm.

“In Australia, they’re used to herd cattle,” Mazzawi says. “They don’t carry quite as much weight, but they go just as fast, if not a little faster, than the turbine Bell Jet Rangers used by police and television stations.”

Mazzawi got his private pilot’s license after dental school. He was content flying small planes,
but when Phelps got a helicopter license, a new world opened up.

“Matt told me I had to try it, that it was awesome and it blows flying airplanes away,” Mazzawi recalls. “He took me flying and I was hooked immediately. Flying helicopters is completely different.”

That was seven years ago. The pair is now on their second helicopter.

“A lot of people don’t think they’re safe, but the Robinson is a very safe helicopter,” Mazzawi says, adding that the manufacturer designed it with private citizens in mind. In recent years it has outsold any other aircraft, including fixed-wing planes such as the Cirrus.

Once or twice a month, Mazzawi and Phelps fly to Augusta for teaching duties or continuing education. They also offer helicopter rides at charity events and have even used the copter to dry off high school football fields before games.

They’ve made two cross-country trips, once from Atlanta to Bakersfield, Calif., a trip that took three and a half days of flying eight hours a day, and once to Wyoming, a four-day journey.

“It’s one heck of a way to see the country because you can fly pretty low, especially out West,” Mazzawi marvels.

**Companionable careers**

A college buddy hooked Dr. Leonard Pace (’80) on dentistry.

“He convinced me it was a good thing to try, so I did it and it’s been very successful,” Pace says.

But something else intrigued him – flying. Encouraged by his wife’s father, a private pilot, he learned to fly in a small two-seater Cessna 152 the year he finished dental school.

“I got the private pilot's license and was just having fun with it,” he says. “Then it developed into a more serious interest.”

That led to lessons in acrobatic flying. “There’s a whole realm of
For 15 years, Pace flew in air shows and finished eighth in the national aerobatic championship in 1998.

And somewhere along the way, Pace made a career-altering decision.

“When I decided to make the change to flying professionally, it took about 12 years to get all the ratings because I had to mix it in with doing dentistry full time,” Pace explains.

Now he pilots a Delta Air Lines 767 300ER wide-body airliner out of Atlanta every week. With up to 350 people aboard each flight, Pace has been ferrying passengers to locations worldwide – Paris, India, Africa, South America and Japan – since 1999.

But he didn’t let go of dentistry. When he began flying full time, Pace sold his Northlake practice and worked sporadically for friends who needed occasional help. Then, in 2002, he and a partner bought a general dentistry practice in Snellville, Ga., where he practices two days a week.

“It works out pretty well,” he says of a schedule that has him flying Saturday through Tuesday and seeing patients on Wednesdays and Thursdays. “I can be off from the airlines in the middle of the week because everyone else wants the weekends off.”

Of the similarities between his two passions, Pace says they both demand a high degree of concentration and skilled precision.

Just for fun, Pace owns a six-seat, twin-engine Piper Twin Comanche, which he uses for family vacations. He also still has an aerobatic plane, a Sequoia 26.

“I just enjoy flying so much,” he says. “I enjoy people, I love to travel. It just seemed very appealing to get paid for traveling around the world.”

**Wings of an angel**

Dr. Charles Lindsey ('84) spends his days straightening teeth, but several times a year he dons angel wings and becomes someone’s answer to a prayer.

For a dozen years, Lindsey has been a volunteer for Angel Flight, a pilot organization that coordinates free air transportation for children and adults with medical needs. Flying nearly 3,000 flights a year in the southern states, the organization provides flights for routine treatment, compassionate care and other medically related needs.

“It’s really hard for a lot of families if they have to come across several states to get medical care,” says Lindsey, an orthodontist in Griffin and Locust Grove, Ga., south of Atlanta. “We’re able to provide assistance.”

An online system lets pilots match needed flights with their schedules. Angel Flight then coordinates everything for the trips.

Drs. Richard Collins (left) and Charles Lindsey with their Cessna 182, which they use weekly to transport patients such as the two youngsters pictured above.
Lindsey has spent his whole life around planes. His father was a mechanic for Eastern Air Lines, and he learned to fly as a member of the Georgia Tech flying club in the mid-‘70s.

“Back then, an airplane was $11 an hour to rent and an instructor was $6 an hour,” he recalls.

After dental school, Lindsey acquired his instrument rating and a commercial license, which allowed him to be a flight instructor.

His latest protégé is former clinical partner Dr. Richard Collins (‘76), who received his private pilot license a year ago and is now learning instrument flying from Lindsey. The pair has owned two planes together. The latest is a Cessna 182 four-seater they use on a weekly basis.

In his 35 years of flying, Lindsey has many memories: a mountain flying course in Colorado; hours spent over open waters in the Caribbean; landing in snow in New York.

But most fulfilling are the flights in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and the Carolinas, when a need turns an orthodontist into an angel.

A humbling point of view

Dr. Jim Boyle (‘77) likes the perspective he gets from 1,000 feet in the air.

“You see how immense the world is and how little you are,” he muses. “We’re just tiny creatures that live on the face of this planet and it really makes you humble.”

At 500 feet, details on the ground are plainly visible.

“You can see what kind of car that is down there and what’s under the barn. People wave at you as you go by,” he says. “That’s pretty neat.”

Boyle, a general dentist in Cobb County, flies an antique J-3 Piper Cub crop duster that he rebuilt from scratch 15 years ago. It’s a simple two-seater plane with a top speed of around 70 miles an hour. “Pretty anemic,” he says of the plane he rarely takes out of a 50-mile radius and flies from his neighbor’s cow pasture.

Boyle started flying during the Vietnam War as a combat pilot, flying Huey and Cobra helicopters. But it was his father, an experimental test pilot with a degree in aeronautical engineering, who gave him the flying bug.

“When I was 8 years old, I’d go out to the airport with him while he was instructing,” he recalls. “And we always took an airplane on vacation. My mom and sisters would sit in back and I’d sit in front and be the navigator.”

After his military service, Boyle began buying and rebuilding old planes. These days, he flies only about 30 hours a year, mostly around the neighborhood, but sometimes to antique plane shows. He likes to fly alone.

“It’s so nice to fly solo,” he says. “I think most pilots prefer it; it’s the ultimate. I like to contemplate the universe when I fly.”

Dr. Jim Boyle and a friend from Florida with his antique crop duster
School of Dentistry students, staff and faculty held the annual Dental Derby Day in October to raise funds for the Georgia State Charitable Contributions Program. The program was started in 1982 and enables state employees to donate to hundreds of charitable organizations, including local United Way agencies, through payroll deductions and other fundraisers.

Dean Connie Drisko is in awe of the grand festivities.

Tonya Thompson, a sterile-supplies specialist, looks "grape" in her costume.

VA dental assistant Stacy Crawford (left) participates in the suitcase race against Dr. Solon Kao.

Drs. Jeremy Hixson (from left), William Klein, Hany Emam and Matthew Kikuchi simultaneously take a shot at Dr. Kao, who ultimately takes a dive in the dunking booth.
When Dr. Ronald Mosley was growing up in Vidalia, Ga., he wanted a pony. But it wasn’t until he bought his teenage daughters a horse that he finally started riding.

Now you can hardly get him out of the saddle. Mosley (’86) currently owns six horses, and his pastures have been home to as many as 25. He has cutting horses, barrel racing horses, trail-riding horses and horses for western pleasure riding. He started a local horse club and travels the Southeast participating in rodeos and shows. He even built a covered arena on his farm just outside town and hired someone to supervise it.

“Horses are just amazing animals,” says Mosley, who practices oral and maxillofacial surgery in his hometown. “They all have personalities. The ones I have are really calm and docile. You can pick their feet up, you can walk under them.”

That makes them perfect for a group of children who may need the magic of horses the most – children with disabilities such as autism, Asperger’s syndrome, Tourette syndrome and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

“These are great horses,” says Mosley’s arena manager Cindy Holton, who has worked for “Doc,” as she calls Mosley, for three years. “It’s well known that horses are really good for these kids. They help tremendously to develop patience. It’s funny, but these horses really know people.”

Holton, a riding instructor who worked with disabled children for more than 20 years, says horse therapy is particularly good for special-needs kids. “They learn to chill and not get upset. It teaches them that they can do anything anybody else can do. Just because
they have a problem doesn’t mean they can’t do this.”

Learning first how to care for the horses, the children must tote their own saddles and equipment, but the hard work is balanced with fun and friendship. “I joke with them and give them nicknames. We get to laughing, and then it’s like a load has been lifted off your shoulders,” Holton says.

One young rider, Emily, has Asperger’s syndrome and was withdrawn when she first came to Mosley’s arena. “She didn’t interact with anybody but her mom and dad,” he remembers.

Then Emily started riding and caring for Mosley’s daughter’s horse, Jack.

Jack was quite cantankerous at first, says Holton. “Everybody said he wouldn’t make a kid’s horse, but he takes care of Emily; they have a bond. You can put somebody else on him and he’s a mule, but not when Emily’s around. He loves Emily and Emily loves him.”

Emily’s mother, Jacinda Lowman, has seen her daughter blossom. “She’s much more comfortable dealing with others. Working with the horses was a big turning point for her. It’s helped her become confident in school and other situations.”

“She’s just such a good kid and so good with animals,” Holton says of Emily. “And you would not believe how that child competes.”

Once a month, a Saturday is set aside for Dr. Mosley’s Horse Show, where children age 2-19 participate in rodeo riding activities, including barrel racing, cutting horses and youth bull riding.

“It’s really interesting,” Mosley says with a chuckle, adding that everyone takes a spill eventually. “They’ll fall off, get thrown off, bucked off, some version of getting off. These kids get right back on.”

While Mosley, the only oral surgeon in a 30-mile radius, loves his full-time job, much of his spare time is devoted to the horses and children who visit his arena. Before each Saturday show, he prepares the arena dirt just so, makes sure the grass is cut and helps get the horses washed and ready. He’s on hand to do whatever needs doing, including working concessions.

Holton, who taught Mosley to barrel race, says they’ve become the best of friends. When she suffered a brain aneurysm at the arena in February, it was Mosley who found her and saved her life.

Well on the road to a full recovery, Holton is eager to get back to work full time.

While she’s been recuperating, her students have stuck close, visiting her and her husband, Doug, at home or helping in the barn. “They love to help with the horses,” she says.

Working with these children is a special joy, Holton adds, noting that they work harder than her other riding students. “They may have a little harder time understanding how to put that bridle on or how to tie a cinch up, but they’re the kids that will go home and put a saddle on a chair and sit there and work on it. They come back for the next lesson and they know how to do it.”

Holton acknowledges that it can be hard for kids with disabilities to compete against other riders, so the families formed an association enabling the kids to compete against each other. They also sell homemade items throughout the year to raise money for awards and prizes.

“These are very competitive kids. They want to win and they whoop and holler for each other,” Holton says.

Treating her special-needs kids the same as her other students is important, says Holton. “I don’t baby, pamper or discriminate. They take the same classes. They just want to be treated like other kids, and really, they’re the same. They just have a little extra something that comes along with them.”

As for her boss, Holton says, “Doc, he’s real good, very kind-hearted. He bought the bull-riding chutes for the kids. He doesn’t charge anything to rent the arena. He doesn’t make anything at all. It’s all for the kids.”
Dr. Sajitha Kalathingal, assistant professor of oral health and diagnostic sciences, received the school’s 2010 Teaching Excellence Award. The award honors knowledge, professionalism, impact on students and teaching skills.

Dr. Jan Mitchell, associate professor of oral rehabilitation, received a 2010 Mastership Award from the Academy of General Dentistry at its annual meeting in July. The Mastership Award is the academy’s highest honor and one of the profession’s most respected designations. Over the past 45 years, more than 2,700 dentists worldwide completed 1,100 hours of continuing dental education to receive mastership with the AGD, a professional association of more than 35,000 general dentists dedicated to professional excellence through continuing education.

Dr. Ulf M.E. Wikesjö, interim associate dean for research and enterprise, received the inaugural International Association for Dental Research/Straumann Award in Regenerative Periodontal Medicine. The award, presented at the association’s 88th Annual General Session and Exhibition in Barcelona, Spain July 14-17, recognizes significant research contributions in regenerative periodontal medicine.

Dr. Philip Hanes, assistant dean of academic affairs, has been appointed associate dean for academic affairs and advanced education. He succeeds Dr. James Barenie, who retired after 33 years at MCG.

Dr. Scott De Rossi, chairman of the Department of Oral Health and Diagnostic Sciences, served as an expert consultant at the Fifth Annual World Workshop on Oral Medicine in London in September. During the workshop, held for the first time in five years, 75 oral medicine experts from 24 countries reviewed literature and discussed the future of research, patient care and education in oral medicine. De Rossi focused on facial pain and international oral medicine practice.

Dr. Leon Aronson, part-time associate professor in the Department of Orthodontics, was elected vice president of the International College of Dentists-at-Large at its recent annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. The college encompasses 15 sections and 36 regions around the world.

Dr. Louis (Jack) Boucher, associate dean for biological sciences from 1966-71, died Oct. 5 in Charlton, Mass. He was 88.

Boucher was a practicing dentist, dental educator and administrator, and was active in organized dentistry. He was a fellow, charter member and the second president of the American College of Prosthodontists and a diplomate of the American Board of Prosthodontics. He published seven textbooks and more than 90 articles about research, education and prosthodontics. He lectured extensively in the United States, Canada and South America and received numerous honors and awards, including the International Association for Dental Research Science Award in Prosthodontics.

Boucher earned his dental degree and Ph.D. at Marquette University School of Dentistry. He completed a prosthetic dentistry residency at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Wood, Wis. and a maxillofacial prosthetics residency at the U.S. Naval Dental School in Bethesda, Md. He served the U.S. Army during World War II and received the Bronze Star.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Mary Lynn, four children and seven grandchildren.
“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”  - Henry Ford
Our Footprint

The School of Dentistry continues to expand its enrollment and state-of-the-art facilities to meet Georgia’s growing oral health needs.

The new dental building is on track for completion in Summer 2011.

BUILDING STATS CURRENT / NEW

Square footage .................. 166,800 / 268,788
Dental students ................. 63-66 / 80-100
Residents .......................... 50 / 57-72
Faculty (full-time equivalent) ...... 77 / 92-97

Our Students

The school’s student body is a diverse representation of the state’s best and brightest, and entry into the program remains as competitive as ever.

Class of 2014
The school recruited 30% of its first-year students from health shortage areas.

- 307 applications received
- 160 applicants interviewed
- 70 applicants accepted
- Overall GPA: 3.60
- Science GPA: 3.58
- DAT academic average: 18.7
- DAT perceptual test average: 19.9

Undergraduate background
- 43 biology
- 5 chemistry
- 4 nutrition
- 4 psychology
- 3 biochemistry
- 10 other

Diversity
- 78.4% White
- 10.2% African-American
- 8% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 3.4% Hispanic/Latino
- 0% Native American

and TAKE NOTE:

Almost half of the 2010 graduating class entered residency programs, which should increase the number of dental specialists practicing in Georgia.
Our Team

Faculty and staff at the state’s only dental school are leaders in providing a learning experience for students who will enter an increasingly diverse and technology-infused world.

- Faculty have created more than three dozen digital videos to support curricular material. Students and faculty can access the material through the university’s online course sites and through iTunes podcast subscriptions.
- To accommodate senior dental student offsite rotations, all senior lectures are recorded and offered on the Internet.
- Mobile content detailing six clinical procedures have been created for students to review on their iPhone or iPad devices before or during clinical contact with a patient.
- The school’s Faculty Senate, created in 2009, represents the faculty in matters of promotion, tenure, junior faculty mentoring, development and grievances.
- The SOD Patient- and Family-Centered Care Advisory Council continues to incorporate the perspectives of patients and families in health care planning and delivery.
- The FENDER program (Fostering and Enabling New DEntal Research) was continued to assist faculty in acquiring the skills needed to conduct clinical research.

and TAKE NOTE:

The Class of 2010 achieved a 100% first-time pass rate on the Central Regional Dental Testing Service Licensure Examination.
Our Service

Our faculty practice what they teach using the best evidence-based protocols available while providing special attention to patients’ individual needs.

- More than 65,000 patient visits per year
- More than 111,000 procedures completed annually on campus
- Approximately 15,000 procedures completed at extramural sites

Clinical Revenue

- FY 07: $6.38 million
- FY 08: $8.28 million
- FY 09: $9.27 million
- FY 10: $10.24 million

The school met its goal of increasing clinic income by an average of 10% per year for 2006-2010.

Our Research

The school continues improving the oral, and overall, health and wellness of the population it serves through the expansion of scientific research in areas such as cancer, bone biology, diabetes and dentin biology. Translational science efforts led to the filing of two patent applications.

The school received nearly $4 million in external funding, including $896,116 from the National Institutes of Health, a 130% increase from FY 09.

Research Proposals

- 69 submitted ($28.05 million)
- 50 funded ($3.83 million)

Dr. Kalu Ogbureke, an oral and maxillofacial pathologist who researches the underlying causes of oral cancer, was selected for the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program to study the presence of a form of human papillomavirus in oral cancers in Nigeria.

The school’s funded research has averaged $3.41 million per year since FY 06.
Dr. Franklin Tay, associate professor of endodontics, is trying to prevent the aging and degradation of resin-dentin bonding by using a nanotechnology process that mineralizes the gaps between collagen fibers.

Ryan Bloomquist, the school’s first dual D.M.D./Ph.D. student, aspires to be at the forefront of regenerative dentistry, an emerging field seeking to use stem cells to grow natural teeth.

and TAKE NOTE:

The new DentaCusco International Dental Program in Cusco, Peru, will enable students to sharpen their cultural competency skills in a unique patient environment.

Our Stakeholders

The school’s alumni, friends and other stakeholders generously supported our mission and continue to remain engaged in school affairs.

- Membership in the School of Dentistry Alumni Association increased 6.3% during FY 10 to 269 members.
- The Class of 2010 pledged $28,500 to the school, becoming the first graduating class to do so.
- Participation in continuing education courses increased 25% from FY 09 to FY 10.

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

-Henry Ford

*Includes $3 million gift from The Robert W. Woodruff Foundation
The first day of dental school can be intimidating. New peers. New professors. New challenges. But when sophomores Brittany Waters and Jimmy Cassidy walked into orientation in August 2009, they saw each other as a friendly, familiar face.

Very familiar.

They’ve gone to the same schools since kindergarten.

Parallel Paths

Brittany and Jimmy don’t recall many details about each other from those early days at St. Joseph’s Catholic School in Macon. “We were both short,” Brittany jokes about her vague recollection of Jimmy and herself in kindergarten.

The Catholic community in Macon was tight-knit, much like the schools they both chose to attend and the dental community as a whole, Jimmy says. Their families went to St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, and while they’ve always known each other, they were never good friends until years later.

“When you’re at schools that are so small, everybody knows everybody else,” Jimmy

Jimmy Cassidy and Brittany Waters participate in the groundbreaking for the new School of Dentistry building.
Their senior class at Mount de Sales Academy had only 88 students. They have fond memories of the advanced-placement biology class they shared as high school students. Together they dissected pigs, dressed up for “Tacky Day” and began to notice their similar career aspirations.

“I think Jimmy knew he wanted to be a dentist when he was born, but I didn’t decide until high school,” Brittany says. When pediatric dentist Dr. Marilyn Murphy spoke at their high school career day, Jimmy, who will be a third-generation dentist, first realized that Brittany wanted to join the field as well.

Their biology teacher was very supportive of her students’ career ambitions, and invited different professionals to speak to the class, including Jimmy’s dad, Dr. James L. Cassidy Jr., a 1983 MCG alumnus.

After graduating from Mount de Sales in 2005, Jimmy and Brittany individually sought out the small school atmosphere of Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville. They say the small class sizes and individualized attention reinforced their tight-knit community upbringing while fostering their success. As in high school, they shared friends and classes, and even had the same major – biology.

They never planned such similar educational paths, it just happened that way.

Brittany graduated in 2008, a year before Jimmy, and immediately applied to the School of Dentistry. It wasn’t in the cards for her to get in that year, but she says it worked out better to wait. She spent the year planning her wedding to husband, Jonathan, and working with Murphy, the same pediatric dentist who spoke at career day years earlier.

The summer before entering dental school, Jimmy and Brittany found themselves together again, working in his dad’s practice. “He taught us things to get us ahead of the game,” Brittany says of the experience.

“My dad is very passionate about dentistry, and that rubs off,” says Jimmy.

Now Brittany and Jimmy are a year and a half into dental school, and say they’re better friends now than ever.

“We don’t have to hang out after school, but having that familiar face is comforting and we know the other is always there if we have a problem or need to talk.”

—BRITTANY WATERS

“We’re back in the same class with the same people in every class — kind of like kindergarten.”

—JIMMY CASSIDY
MILITARY CONNECTION
Call to service varied among faculty

BY PAULA HINELY

Dr. Gary Holmes aboard a hovercraft at Camp Pendleton

PART 2 of 2
Series on MCG’s affiliation with military dentistry
Many dental schools across the United States are full of retired military, and MCG is no exception. Dozens of School of Dentistry faculty members have served in uniform, either for a few years after high school or college, or as dental officers until military retirement.

Some say the similarities between the military and academia are numerous. There’s the collegial atmosphere, the constant education and the regimentation, to name a few. Several members of our faculty shared stories about their military service, past and present.

DR. MITCHELL

A dventure.
That’s what Dr. Jan Mitchell, associate professor of oral rehabilitation, sought as a dental student at Emory University in the mid-1970s. Her mother, father and stepfather were dentists and professors at the school, and she knew that when she graduated, she needed more adventure than a private practice in Decatur, Ga., could offer.

So, Mitchell joined the U.S. Navy as a student in 1976. She jokes that she selected the Navy over other branches on the basis of uniform color and base locations.

It proved to be a wise decision. She spent the next 27 years in the Navy Dental Corps and found an abundance of adventure, calling her military career the “time of her life.”

Mitchell served as a reservist for two years during dental school. She experienced the tall ships in Newport, Va., during the country’s bicentennial summer celebration, a month at San Francisco’s Treasure Island and a month at a Bethesda research institute learning root canals.

“Interest rates were very high at the time, and that sent lots of students scurrying to the military. It was hard to get on active duty, and it was hard to stay on active duty,” Mitchell recalls.

She was part of the select group chosen for a regular commission after the first two years of active duty, and morale was high. “Those of us who were there wanted to be there,” she says.

Dr. Jan Mitchell joined the Navy as a student and spent 27 years in the Dental Corps.
Mitchell was stationed in San Diego for two years before setting sail aboard the USS Dixie, the oldest active-duty ship at the time, for its final Western Pacific cruise. They sailed to Diego Garcia, a coral atoll in the Indian Ocean that served as the forward staging area for a fleet of supply ships.

For an old tender ship, the Dixie was on relatively new ground. Women were only allowed aboard naval ships beginning in 1978, and out of about 1,000 sailors aboard the Dixie, Mitchell was one of only six women, all officers.

“There was a lot of unveiled hostility toward women in the Navy. We had to beg, plead and behave ourselves to get on board,” she recalls.

The female officers also fought to join their ship as it sailed to Somalia and Pakistan through the hostile waters of the Gulf of Oman. Initially the women were to stay behind in Diego Garcia, but they lobbied for permission to remain with their crew.

In Mogadishu, Mitchell and her dental team treated children with Third-World protein deficiency diseases such as kwashiorkor and marasmus. “It was heart-wrenching work, but we were able to do some amazing field dentistry, literally on a picnic table in the sunshine,” she says.

After a year aboard the Dixie, it returned to San Diego for decommissioning on June 15, 1982, and Mitchell cross-decked to the USS Dixon, a submarine tender ship.

Aboard the Dixon, Mitchell found a need for a new adventure. She wanted to learn to navigate the ship. “The more you’re willing to learn aboard these ships, the more effective everyone is,” she says.

She made a deal with the ship’s commanding officer – during the day, she would do dentistry across the Pacific Ocean, but at night, she would get the qualifications necessary to become a certified officer of the deck.

Once she’d obtained her certification, she was asked to drive the ship into Hong Kong’s busy Victoria Harbor. “It was very demanding, and it was an honor to be asked,” she says.

Mitchell says being at sea was her favorite part of the Navy, but maybe not the most monumental. During a three-year station in Naples, Italy, she met a young naval surgeon two weeks into his month-long post. They had dinner a few times, and then he returned to the States.

They corresponded for a year, and then Dr. David Snyder, now MCGHealth vice president for patient care quality and safety, returned to Naples to marry Mitchell. After honeymooning on the Amalfi Coast, Snyder resumed his post in California, and the couple lived apart for their first year of marriage.

After several years of living in Bethesda, San Francisco and San Diego, the couple and their two children, Robert and Elizabeth, returned to Bethesda. Mitchell taught in the residency program she’d completed years earlier at the Naval Dental School, where she and a colleague were the designated dentists for the White House.

She treated the Clinton and Gore families four times a year in a small dental clinic in the White House basement near the kitchens. “When you first treat the president or vice president, you really just hope you don’t mess up, don’t you?” Mitchell jokes, adding that they were all very nice people.

“\n
There was a lot of unveiled hostility toward women in the Navy. We had to beg, plead and behave ourselves to get on board.\n
–DR. JAN MITCHELL\n
“
Mitchell retired from the Navy as a captain in 2002 and spent several years in Anchorage, Alaska before moving to Augusta and joining MCG’s faculty in 2007.

“It was a natural fit for me,” she says, adding that her husband calls the military the country’s largest educational institute.

Mitchell encourages interested students to consider military dentistry careers, but she is blunt that the lifestyle is not for everyone.

She sums it up simply: “When you sign that dotted line and raise your right hand, you’re going to do what they tell you to do, go where they tell you to go and cut your hair the way they tell you to cut it. If you can live with that, then they will send you to a bunch of really cool places and take really good care of you, and you will learn things you’ve never learned before.”

**DR. CHESLA**

Joining the military was a familiar environment for Dr. Robert Chesla, assistant professor of oral rehabilitation, who grew up as a self-proclaimed “military brat.” His father was in the U.S. Marine Corps, and the family lived at six different posts as he was growing up. They settled in North Carolina when his father retired.

In 1983, after graduating from college and dental school at the University of North Carolina, Chesla joined the U.S. Army to further his dental training. He completed a one-year general practice residency at Fort Riley, Kan.

“After the first residency, I owed the Army some time. But as time went by, I really enjoyed the life and stayed in for 27 years,” Chesla says.

He spent many of those years doing general dentistry and prosthodontics on soldiers at posts in Korea, Chicago, Germany and Washington, D.C.

“When you’re taking care of soldiers, you have a certain pride for what you’re doing that is pretty unique to anywhere else,” he says. He equates the sentiment to that of a civilian who thanks a soldier in uniform at the grocery store or picks up his tab at a restaurant. “The same feeling translates into taking care of soldiers. Providing health care is our way of doing the same thing for the guys who are really putting their lives on the line.”

For the first 10 years of his military service, Chesla worked at smaller posts that still treated soldiers’ families and Army retirees. He says that environment, which no longer exists today, was the closest
experience he’s had to private practice.

In 1993, he followed his passion of pursuing a prosthodontics residency at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and then stayed in the D.C. area to practice. Many of his patients included generals and the top brass from the Pentagon. “It was stressful in a way, but exciting,” he recalls.

Chesla’s military career took a different route in 2000 when he took an assignment at Fort Gordon’s U.S. Army Dental Laboratory. The lab, which manufactures crowns, bridges, dentures and orthodontic appliances for Army dentists worldwide, is the only one of its kind in the Army.

“It was a totally different kind of job for a few years,” he says. Chesla assumed command of the lab in 2006, and recalls nights when his Blackberry would ring at 10 p.m. An Army dentist in Korea or Germany was starting his work day and needed information on a crown or bridge. “It was interesting being part of a global organization, but it was nice to give up the Blackberry when I retired.”

Chesla retired in early 2010 at the rank of colonel and joined the MCG faculty in March. He’s the most recent recruit from what he calls a “pipeline” between the School of Dentistry and the Fort Gordon dental lab. Drs. Kevin Plummer, associate professor of oral rehabilitation, Jay Guinn, associate professor of general dentistry, and the late John Ivanhoe, emeritus professor of oral rehabilitation, each served as the lab’s commander.

Although MCG is the first formal teaching position he’s held, Chesla says the transition from the military to academia has been smooth. In the military, much time was spent mentoring younger colleagues through formal continuing education or through casual questions in the clinics.

“The environment at MCG is akin to the military in that everyone here is working for a cause, to impart knowledge on students in the best way we can do it,” he says. Chesla has enjoyed watching students’ first experiences in the clinic and says he’s enjoying his new career.

He adds, “I’m learning, I’m figuring it out, and I’m going to be a success.”

DR. HOLMES

While Chesla is finding his feet in academia, Dr. Gary Holmes, associate professor of oral rehabilitation, is doing the same in the U.S. Naval Reserves.

“Growing up in the Navy town of Pascagoula, Miss., Holmes saw Navy ships built at Ingalls Shipbuilding and attended several ship commissioning ceremonies. He knew if he were ever to join the military, the Navy would be his branch.

Before marrying his wife, Catherine, a senior training specialist in MCG Human Resources, he told her he wanted to join the Navy after graduating from MCG School of Dentistry in 1992. “She was excited about it until the first Gulf War broke out, and then we changed our plans,” he says. He went into private practice and worked as a civilian dentist at Fort Benning until he joined the faculty of his alma mater full time in 2002.

Several years later, Holmes got a wake-up call at age 40. His father, 20 years his senior, had a heart attack. “We were both heavy, and I realized I needed to lose some weight too. Dad’s health was a real motivating factor,” he says of his 100-pound weight loss.

Dr. Gary Holmes and wife Catherine
Around the same time, Holmes received recruitment material from the Navy Reserve Dental Corps and it made him think. “When I was losing weight, I was getting close to the military standards. I thought, maybe this is a good opportunity to do something crazy like join the military at my age,” Holmes recalls.

He remembered Jared Fogle, “The Subway Guy,” saying, “You’ve got to have a plan to keep weight off the same way you have a plan to lose it.” Naval reservists have to run and weigh in every six months, and Holmes thought this might be a good fit.

“I definitely looked at it as more than maintaining my weight loss. It was taking a 17-year detour to do something I’d always wanted to do,” he says.

He started to talk to his wife about it, and she was on board. “I couldn’t have done it without her support. At this point in our lives, there were essentially two of us joining, not just me,” Holmes adds.

Catherine and Holmes’ parents were on hand for the March 2009 commissioning ceremony in the third floor conference room of the School of Dentistry. He now serves one weekend a month and two weeks a year and feels good about contributing to his country.

He does his weekend service at the Navy Reserve Center in Augusta, where he ensures the deployability of the 150 marines and sailors assigned there. It’s the only dental exam some of the reservists have access to, so Holmes tries to get them involved in the student or resident clinics at the School of Dentistry.

For two weeks this summer, Holmes treated active duty Marines at Camp Pendleton near San Diego. “This really gave me a feeling of being part of a bigger purpose,” he says. “You’re not the guy with the rifle, but you’re helping the guy with the rifle.”

Holmes treated scheduled patients and covered emergency and sick call. The three dentists at his clinic, called Area 41, quickly learned to pump the professor for information about the latest operative dentistry techniques.

“It was a two-way street. I got to learn more about the Navy and Marine Corps, and they got to learn what I know about the latest research on materials,” Holmes says. They had impromptu quizzes on the daily 10-minute walks from the clinic to the beach for lunch.

His naval training has brought new leadership and interpersonal skills to his teaching, and he can help mentor students who are interested in military service.

Like Mitchell and Chesla, Holmes sees the similarities between the School of Dentistry and military dentistry and had a smooth transition. He adds, “We’re all dentists and we’re all doing the same thing, but now I might wear slightly different clothes.”

Many School of Dentistry faculty have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, including:

- Dr. Patrick Basquill, U.S. Army, 22 years
- Dr. Robert Chesla, U.S. Army, 27 years
- Dr. Charlene Czuszak, U.S. Army, 25 years
- Dr. Eladio DeLeon Jr., U.S. Army, 21 years
- Dr. Butch Ferguson, U.S. Army, 24 years
- Dr. Alan R. Furness, U.S. Navy, 3 years
- Dr. Jay Guinn, U.S. Army, 28 years
- Dr. Steve Hackman, U.S. Army, 23 years
- Dr. Wayne Herman, U.S. Army, 26 years
- Dr. Gary Holmes, U.S. Navy, 2 years
- Dr. Andrew Kious, U.S. Air Force, 24 years
- Dr. Robert Loushine, U.S. Army, 20 years
- Dr. Glenn I. Maze, U.S. Air Force, 2 years
- Dr. Jan Mitchell, U.S. Navy, 27 years
- Dr. Kevin Plummer, U.S. Army, 21 years
- Dr. J. Nicholas Powell, U.S. Navy, 3 years
- Dr. Robert Reichl, U.S. Army, 27 years
- Dr. Steve Roberts, U.S. Army, 21 years
- Dr. Michael Shrout, U.S. Air Force, 26 years
- Dr. Norman Weller, U.S. Army, 20 years
- Dr. Gary Whitford, U.S. Army, 2 years
Bleach Instead of Brush?
Tooth whitening technique may benefit elderly, special-needs patients

“What we’ve noticed through whitening patients’ teeth over the years is that as they bleached, their teeth got squeaky clean and their gingival health improved,” said Dr. Van Haywood, professor in the Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry and co-author of a report recently featured on the cover of June’s Journal of the American Dental Association.

The report says that the tooth whitener, carbamide peroxide, shows promise as a therapy for patients whose mental challenges or impaired manual dexterity make standard oral hygiene, such as brushing and flossing, difficult or impossible.

Additionally, when health problems or medications cause xerostomia, or dry mouth, the lack of saliva reduces the mouth’s natural protective mechanisms. These problems lead to plaque accumulation, cavities, periodontal disease and other health problems.

Haywood’s report, co-authored with Dr. David Lazarchik, associate professor in the Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine, noted that applying the whitener through a custom-fit mouth tray might combat those problems. The report was based on a literature review and the authors’ clinical experiences with special-needs patients and tooth bleaching.

Dentists have used carbamide peroxide, or urea peroxide, for decades to whiten teeth, but its original use was as an oral antiseptic. It removes plaque, kills bacteria and elevates the mouth’s pH above the point at which enamel and dentin begin to dissolve, which results in fewer cavities.

“All these benefits lead us to believe that tray bleaching can be a very effective supplemental method of oral hygiene for patients facing greater challenges keeping their mouths clean,” Lazarchik said.

The trick is in the tray, Haywood said. After a complete dental exam, the dentist can make the custom-fit tray that the patient can wear comfortably at night or for several hours during the day. The carbamide peroxide gel can be prescribed or purchased over-the-counter.

Lazarchik said further research is needed to determine a specific protocol for using tray-applied carbamide peroxide specifically to improve oral health.

Haywood recently lectured on the topic at the American Dental Association’s 151st Annual Session and World Marketplace Exhibition in Orlando, Fla.
Too Much Tea
Excess consumption of Southern staple can damage bones

Black tea, a Southern staple and the world’s most-consumed beverage, may contain higher concentrations of fluoride than previously thought, which could pose problems for the heaviest tea drinkers.

Fluoride is known to help prevent dental cavities, but long-term ingestion of excessive amounts could cause bone problems.

“The additional fluoride from drinking two to four cups of tea a day won’t harm anyone; it’s the very heavy tea drinkers who could get in trouble,” said Dr. Gary Whitford, Regents Professor of oral biology in the Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry. He presented his findings at the 2010 International Association of Dental Research Conference in Barcelona, Spain.

Most published reports show 1 to 5 milligrams of fluoride per liter of black tea, but Whitford’s study shows that number could be as high as 9 milligrams.

The average person ingests a very safe amount, 2 to 3 milligrams, daily through fluoridated drinking water, toothpaste and food. It would take ingesting about 20 milligrams a day over 10 or more years before posing a significant risk to bone health.

Whitford discovered that the fluoride concentration in black tea had long been underestimated when he began analyzing data from four patients with advanced skeletal fluorosis, a disease caused by excessive fluoride consumption and characterized by joint and bone pain and damage. While it is extremely rare in the United States, the common link between these four patients was their tea consumption – each person drank 1 to 2 gallons of tea daily for the past 10 to 30 years.

“When we tested the patients’ tea brands using a traditional method, we found the fluoride concentrations to be very low, so we wondered if that method was detecting all of the fluoride,” Whitford said, noting that the tea plant, Camellia sinensis, creates a quandary when measuring fluoride. Unique among other plants, it accumulates huge concentrations of fluoride and aluminum in its leaves – each mineral ranges from 600 to more than 1,000 milligrams per kilogram of leaves. When the leaves are brewed for tea, some of the minerals leach into the beverage.

Most published studies about black tea traditionally have used a method of measuring fluoride that doesn’t account for the amount that combines with aluminum to form insoluble aluminum fluoride, which is not detected by the fluoride electrode. Whitford compared that method with a diffusion method, which breaks the aluminum-fluoride bond so that all fluoride in the tea samples can be extracted and measured.

He tested seven brands of store-bought black tea, steeping each for five minutes in deionized water, which contains no fluoride. The amount of fluoride in each sample was 1.4 to 3.3 times higher using the diffusion method than the traditional method.

The new information shouldn’t deter tea drinkers, as the beverage is safe and some teas even have health benefits, Whitford said. “The bottom line is to enjoy your favorite tea, but like everything else, drink it in moderation.”

Dr. Gary Whitford
Building Campaign Contributions by Graduation Year

TOTAL $2,128,859

TOP 3 CLASSES:
- 1981 $361,159
- 1983 $230,020
- 1975 $229,650

There was no graduating class in 1979 because of the change from a three-year to a four-year program.
Building naming opportunities still available

BY DAMON CLINE

Your name somewhere on the new dental school – can you think of a more meaningful or lasting way to show your support? A number of organizations and individuals have already demonstrated their commitment to the school and its largest-ever capital campaign by naming a space within the new building.

For example, the generosity of the Thomas P. Hinman Dental Society and Dr. Ron Goldstein will result in naming the building’s Simulation Laboratory and Center for Esthetic and Implant Dentistry, respectively, in their honor. Gifts from other donors will create the expansive Faculty Practice facility and the inviting gathering place that will become the Dr. Emile Fisher Atrium.

Those are just a few of the gifts that have resulted in naming assignments.

Friends and classmates of the late Dr. Dolly Hearn (’91) have pledged to name one of the building’s two student lounges in her memory, and contributions from the Georgia Dental Association will see its name on the Dean’s Conference Room.

“Donors and supporters create a meaningful legacy and a continuing relationship with the School of Dentistry through named giving opportunities,” said Dale Crail, School of Dentistry director of development. “A gift for the building allows us to put more resources toward recruiting gifted faculty, providing scholarships to deserving students and delivering the quality education for which the school is known.”

The new 269,000-square-foot building will be complete in summer 2011, with a grand-opening celebration scheduled for Sept. 23, 2011.

However, there is still plenty of time to contact a school development officer to learn more about named giving opportunities, which start at $25,000 for a lab to $20 million for the naming of the school.

Though the financial requirements for naming opportunities differ, the following is a basic overview of some available opportunities:

- **Naming of the School**: $20,000,000
- **Naming of the Building**: $12,000,000
- **Floors**: $2,000,000
- **Oral Surgery Operating Suite**: $1,500,000
- **Clinical Research Suite**: $1,000,000
- **Dean’s Suite**: $500,000
- **Practice/Wet Laboratory**: $500,000
- **Departments**: $500,000
- **Residency Programs**: $500,000
- **Patient Services/Admissions**: $250,000
- **Conference Rooms**: $50,000
- **Principal Administration Offices**: $50,000
- **Resident Study Rooms**: $25,000
- **Large Operatories**: $25,000
- **Operatories**: $25,000
- **Departmental Waiting Rooms**: $25,000
- **Patient Support Laboratory**: $25,000

If you would like to invest in the future of the School of Dentistry, please call the Development Office at (706) 721-3073 or learn more at the Georgia Health Sciences Foundation website at www.gahsf.org.

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2011 and 2013 information unavailable; 2012 and 2014 amounts are pledges only.
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$1,000 Dr. Robert M. Gray ('81)*
$1,000 Dr. Walter K. Hudson ('90)*
$1,000 Dr. Carroll Hughes*
$1,000 Dr. Mildred M. “Mill” Hunt ('81)*
$1,000 Dr. Mark Ingram ('81)*
$1,000 Dr. Sheridan Jacobs ('97)*
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$1,000 Dr. Kevin and Lisa Kirkland ('07)*
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$1,000 Dr. Thomas Lee ('81)
$1,000 Dr. Robert N. Lowe ('78)*
$1,000 Dr. Carl Lockwood ('77)*
$1,000 Dr. Felix Maher ('91)
$1,000 Dr. Lawrence E. Marable ('85)
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$1,000 American Association of Endodontists Foundation
$1,000 American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
$1,000 American College of Dentists
$1,000 American Dental Political Action Committee
$1,000 Greater Columbia Dental Association
$1,000 MCG School of Dentistry Class of 1990*
$1,000 MCG School of Dentistry Class of 2007*
$1,000 Pierre Fauchard Academy
$1,000 Procter & Gamble
$1,000 The Dental A.R.T.S. Center
$1,000 West Georgia Dental Study Club
$1,000 Wilmer Eames Dental Study Club

*Class Challenges
alumniBites

Awards? Professional Honors? Special Activities? We would like to recognize you.

Contact Publications Editor Damon Cline at 706-721-4706 or e-mail dcline@mcg.edu.

'73

Dr. Andrew Allgood
recently donated $5,200 to The Hope House through his Smiles for Hope charitable tooth-whitening program. From March to June, Allgood donated a portion of the proceeds from patients who whitened their teeth at his office in Martinez, Ga. The Hope House is a substance-abuse residential treatment facility for women in Augusta.

'74

Dr. Marilyn A. Russell
has been chosen by Cambridge Who’s Who for dedication, leadership and excellence in periodontics. Russell practices in Fayetteville, Ga., at Progressive Periodontics, and is a member of the American Dental Association, American Academy of Periodontology and Academy of General Dentistry.

'75

Dr. William B. Williams
was chosen by Top3Dentists as one of the Top Dentists in Suwanee, Ga. Williams received his recognition as a Top Cosmetic Dentist after passing a rigorous process of credentialing verification created by Top3Dentists as a means of distinguishing outstanding dentists. Williams is also the team dentist for the Gwinnett Gladiators, the minor league ice hockey team that serves as the East Coast Hockey League affiliate of the Atlanta Thrashers. He is the past president of the Georgia Academy of General Dentistry and in July 2006 was awarded a Mastership in the Academy of General Dentistry.

'08

Dr. Cara DeLeon
joined Coastal Kids Dental pediatric dental practice in July. DeLeon is a native of Augusta. At MCG, DeLeon was involved in the Student Dental Association and served as president in her junior year. She was awarded the International College of Dentists Leadership Award, Georgia Dental Association Outstanding Leader Award and the Public Health Award and was inducted into the service-based honor society, Alpha Upsilon Phi. DeLeon is a member of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the American Dental Association and several state and local dental societies.

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HOMECOMING 2011

DATES HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED!

Details coming soon.
What’s in a name?

BY ANNA K. SCHULTZ

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” muses an enchanting Juliet in perhaps one of the greatest lyrical tales in English literature.

From the very origins of language, words have been ascribed to particular objects in order to “name” them. But even as poet and playwright William Shakespeare suggests, the names we ascribe to these objects tend to be somewhat arbitrary – more a matter of mere convention than an action that would necessarily define them. According to Juliet, a name (in her case, Montague) does not define a person, nor have any tangible connection to a person’s intrinsic qualities – it is merely a customary norm.

So does Shakespeare’s theory still hold some validity? Let’s take a closer look.

The Medical College of Georgia dates back to 1828, when it opened as the Medical Academy of Georgia. The name was changed to the Medical Institute of Georgia a year later, and to the Medical College of Georgia in 1833.

The name changed several other times before reverting to the Medical College of Georgia in 1950, with each name better reflecting the fluctuating needs and demands of an advancing health care community.

But the university’s identity remains unchanged. The Medical College of Georgia represents an institution of humble roots: seven students and three faculty members. It represents a superior education, despite great monetary hardships at various junctures that caused many medical schools to struggle or sacrifice the quality of their training. It represents a rising number of graduates annually – from 39 graduates in 1844, to 100 graduates in 1953, to approximately 2,500 currently enrolled students in five schools from most of Georgia’s 159 counties – trained to meet the needs of their communities in their respective specialties.

Our dental school specifically represents an institution with outstanding faculty internationally renowned for their academic and research achievements. It represents a place where predoctoral students treat thousands of medically underserved patients annually. It represents 100 percent membership in the American Student Dental Association, an organization dedicated to lifelong involvement in organized dentistry, education, representation and advocacy. It represents an administration and student body dedicated to service – a group of outstanding students and faculty who are willing and able to be the difference.

So on Feb. 1, 2011, when the Medical College of Georgia becomes the Georgia Health Sciences University, I encourage you to embrace our past and anticipate our future as one of the nation’s premier health sciences universities. The character of our institution and our mission to improve health remains unwavering. So what’s in a name? Very little ... it’s the legacy that remains. Shakespeare may have been right, after all.
The mission of the Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry is to educate dentists in order to improve overall health and to reduce the burden of illness on society through the discovery and application of knowledge that embraces craniofacial health and disease prevention. Its vision is to be a premier school of dentistry. MCG is an affirmative action/equal opportunity educational institution that prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation or status as a Vietnam War veteran. The MCG School of Dentistry believes a diverse student body enhances the educational opportunities for all students and is beneficial to the dental profession, the School of Dentistry and the state of Georgia.
Dentists for Della Grant

Dentists for Della, the School of Dentistry project serving elderly war veterans, has received a $14,800 grant from the Community Foundation for the Central Savannah River Area. Every month, about 20 dental students clean dentures, brush teeth and provide oral, head and neck examinations for residents of Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home.

The grant will be used to purchase two portable dental units with water delivery systems and two high-speed dental hand pieces. Previously, students performed oral health care procedures in the residents’ rooms using only cups of water and electric toothbrushes.

Dentists for Della, created by graduates William Bennett and Ryan Fulchi and students Chris DeLeon and Ross Levine, began last January. The project was named in honor of School of Dentistry founding faculty member and Georgia War resident Dr. Victor Della-Guistina, a retired community dentist committed to improving access to dental care.