Steel Beams and Big Dreams
Alumni, Community Support Shapes Future of Dental School
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On the Cover

A group of dental students had a sneak peek of the new School of Dentistry building in January. Pictured are, front: Tyler Ushio, BSChm’16, Autumn Brown and Karina Bethea; and back: Kieran Caberto, BS’16, Matthew-Joseph Kirk, BS’17, and Grant Tesmer.

Photo by Dave Weaver
Message from the Dean

Our new facility is fast approaching occupancy, slated for July. While technologically advanced and an attractive site to behold, its real value is the environment it will create for the stakeholders who will use it: our students, faculty, staff and patients. For this issue’s cover, we pulled together a small group of students and gave them a sneak peek inside our new, soon-to-be-completed School of Dentistry building. Their reactions?

“I was in awe,” said Karina Bethea, a first-year dental student from Springfield, Virginia. “The new school looks very spacious, with a modern vibe, high ceilings, a great color scheme and full, natural light. This building will definitely be conducive to student learning, and provides a great patient-friendly atmosphere.”

“It was evident the new building will not just serve as a place to provide quality dental care, but it will be a second home for the patients, students and administrators who walk through those doors every day,” said Grant Tesmer, a third-year dental student from Omaha.

Construction of the more than 200,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility is progressing well and we’re very busy planning our transition to this amazing space. Mark your calendars for dedication events the weekend of Sept. 15. The new building is part of a bold vision for our future — with larger class sizes, the latest dental technology and expanded community outreach.

Alumni, friends and community and professional partners have expressed their excitement about the new facility and have generously stepped forward to offer their support. We profile a few alumni donors in this issue, who, while they come from different class years, all share similar stories about how Creighton prepared them exceptionally well for their careers and lives.

Giving back to future generations of students is a Creighton tradition. I encourage you to join us as we move forward during this momentous time in our history. There are many opportunities to lend your support.

Thank you for your continued commitment. I look forward to welcoming you to our new home soon.

Mark A. Latta, DMD, MS
Dean

Call for Faculty Recruitment

As we transition into the new dental school building and expand our enrollment, we will need additional full- and part-time faculty to support the delivery of our curriculum.

We see our alumni as a rich pool of potential faculty candidates who are willing to support their alma mater by applying their skills, talents and abilities to the teaching mission.

Current open positions are posted on the Creighton Human Resources website, creighton.edu/hr. Click on the “Search Careers” tab.

If you have an interest in teaching — or know someone who would be a good fit for Creighton — and want to learn more about our hiring plan, please contact:

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Increasing the class size

Neil Norton, PhD, has a multifaceted presence in the School of Dentistry. In addition to overseeing the recruitment and admissions processes, he’s also a professor of oral biology.

“Being a faculty member teaching the anatomical sciences to freshman dental students gives me a unique perspective,” Norton says. “I can tell a prospective student exactly what a first-year student goes through because I work with them.”

Norton has worked in various roles at the School of Dentistry for 22 years. His current position as associate dean for admissions means he, and his staff, direct the interview and administrative process in which more than 2,000 applicants become 85 engaged students.

He previously also oversaw student affairs for the school before the role was split earlier this year; Colette O’Meara-McKinney is now the assistant dean for student affairs.

Dividing the position put Creighton’s structuring more in line with the nation’s other top dental schools. It also allows the staff to better serve students, particularly with class size increasing by 30 students beginning in 2018.

“In terms of expansion, that’s 120 more students over the course of four years,” Norton says. “Having one person completely dedicated to student affairs and another to admissions allows us to be more efficient. The new ideas that Colette has been able to implement are amazing.”

This academic year, Norton embarked on several recruitment trips. One involved traveling to several BIG EAST schools to connect with potential future dental school applicants. Recruitment trips are always fruitful, Norton says, and he anticipates applications will spike once the new dental building is completed and word of mouth that Creighton has a new, state-of-the-art facility is more widely known.

Laying the groundwork for the BIG EAST trip was facilitated by Norton’s role as Creighton’s NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR). These representatives

Student Focused

Neil Norton, PhD, and Colette O’Meara-McKinney lead the School of Dentistry’s efforts to recruit and retain outstanding students
serve as liaisons among student-athletes, the athletic department, faculty and administration. The goal is to help enhance the experience of student-athletes. Additionally, this year, Norton is the chair of the BIG EAST’s FAR committee.

“Since I already know all my colleagues in the BIG EAST, it was very easy to set up that East Coast trip, and lay that groundwork,” Norton says.

**Enhancing the Creighton experience**

Colette O’Meara-McKinney’s first year as assistant dean in the Office of Student Affairs has been full of learning experiences, which she says have been very rewarding due in large part to the caliber of students in the School of Dentistry.

“These students are so impressive. They are really bright, hardworking and very focused on quality patient care,” O’Meara-McKinney says.

While she’s navigating how to best execute this newly created role, O’Meara-McKinney is no stranger to Creighton University and its Jesuit, Catholic mission.

She’s worked at the University for more than 25 years in a variety of roles, including several positions within the Division of Information Technology and the Office of the President, where she focused on academic technologies, communication and Board relations.

Now, she’s using her varied experiences to provide direct support to dental students.

“Our students lead very full lives,” she says. “My challenge is figuring out what I can do to enhance their experience in a way that’s meaningful, and just not add one more thing to do.”

She oversees the peer-tutoring program and has developed some stress-relief activities around final exams. O’Meara-McKinney is excited to see how the position can grow, with initiatives aimed at easing the transition to dental school and educating students on how to take care of themselves while performing physically demanding work.

“I am honored to be a part of this University and play a small role in furthering its mission,” O’Meara-McKinney says. “This position in the School of Dentistry allows me to share what I’ve learned and focus more intensely on our core purpose in educating students for and with others.”

— BY AMANDA BRANDT, BA’14

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**Fr. Doll’s Photographs to Grace New Dental Building**

As with any new home, artwork on the walls adds that finishing touch. The new School of Dentistry building will be hanging photographs by award-winning Creighton photographer the Rev. Don Doll, SJ, when it opens this summer.

Mark Latta, DMD, dean of the School of Dentistry, explained that during discussions about art for the new building, the question arose: Instead of buying more art, why not take advantage of Fr. Doll’s deep archive of work?

“Fr. Doll is an internationally known, award-winning photographer,” Latta says. “I saw the new dental school as a kind of gallery highlighting his many decades of work. His many years of service to both Creighton and the Society of Jesus warranted this kind of opportunity.”

Fr. Doll’s work will be on display throughout the new dental building. The main student socialization and clinic areas will have photos of landscapes from the Lewis and Clark Trail, taken by Fr. Doll for the 200th anniversary of the famous exploration. The dean’s suite and the pediatric area will feature some of Fr. Doll’s spectacular Native American photos. Displayed on the fourth floor will be photos from a series inspired by a historical exhibit called the Family of Man, which includes Fr. Doll’s portraits of individuals from various cultures and countries.

Fr. Doll is emeritus professor of journalism at Creighton and the Charles and Mary Heider Endowed Jesuit Chair. — BY CINDY WORKMAN

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**Award-Winning Magazine**

Creighton Dentist was recently honored with the top award for “annual magazines” by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), District VI. CASE awards acknowledge the superior accomplishments of educational institutions that have lasting impact, demonstrate the highest level of professionalism and deliver exceptional results.
Say goodbye to the whine of the drill. The new Creighton University School of Dentistry building will be equipped with the latest dental technology: electric hand pieces, by Swiss company Bien-Air Medical Technologies. Bien-Air was the first company to introduce electric hand pieces to the U.S. in 1995. It has since become the world’s largest manufacturer of electric motors for dental use.

“Dental students know this is a new technology for the future,” says Marla Mattinson, director of academic affairs for Bien-Air. “It creates that excitement for everyone knowing that Creighton is going to have a beautiful new school with state-of-the-art technology.”

According to Bien-Air general manager Arthur Mateen, 30 dental schools now have electric hand pieces and 60 percent of U.S. dentists use them.

“It’s important to note that this doesn’t change the way dentistry is done. It is a better, more current technology for dentists to cut teeth, prep teeth with much more ease and efficiency,” Mattinson says.

In fact, the hand pieces will improve dentistry for both dentists and patients. That annoying drill noise? It is significantly reduced with electric hand pieces. The pieces now cut smoother and faster, and are more ergonomic for dentists.

Over time, materials used to restore teeth have changed. Before, metal was the primary material, but it can become toxic after years of use. The U.S. market has now switched over to newer materials: zirconia and ceramic.

Creighton’s new dental building will have $2.8 million worth of equipment for a reduced cost of $880,000, thanks to the David Mosimann Foundation, named for the founder of Bien-Air.

“The foundation has given a donation to Creighton to install these systems in the school to make sure students have access to technology,” Mateen says.

Quieter drilling sounds and faster dental appointments? The new equipment will be a win for both patients and dentists. — **BY EMILY RUST**
Top: The Midmark Elevance dental chair was chosen for its optimal patient access, patient comfort and innovative features.

Left: The rear-cabinet will maximize storage space and patient privacy and is equipped with two monitors, a computer, keyboard and mouse to manage electronic records.

Right: The over-the-patient delivery system will be equipped with Bien-Air electronic controls and handheld pieces.

New Building Operatory Spaces

Top: The Midmark Elevance dental chair was chosen for its optimal patient access, patient comfort and innovative features.

Left: The rear-cabinet will maximize storage space and patient privacy and is equipped with two monitors, a computer, keyboard and mouse to manage electronic records.

Right: The over-the-patient delivery system will be equipped with Bien-Air electronic controls and handheld pieces.
Steel Beams and Big

Alumni, Community Support Shapes Future of Dental School

“...I am in complete awe of the new facility.”
Kieran Caberto, Class of 2020
The new School of Dentistry building will open its doors this summer to students, faculty, staff and patients.

The more than 200,000-square-foot educational and clinical facility on the north edge of campus will carry on a 113-year tradition as it meets the growing demands of Creighton’s dental program and patient base, as well as the local and national need for oral health care.

Excitement is mounting for the larger, modern, technologically advanced facility that will sustain Creighton’s national legacy of excellence in dental education. The project represents the first major modernization of the school’s clinical and teaching infrastructure since the Boyne Dental Science Building opened in 1973.

Alumni, community foundations and other benefactors are seizing this opportunity to support the state-of-the-art facility and thereby shape premier dentists in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition both now and for decades to come. Community partners are especially supportive of advancing Creighton’s local impact as the primary provider of oral health care to the underserved.

“The Creighton University School of Dentistry provides care for many of our underserved in Omaha,” says John Scott, vice president of the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation. “Knowing that our financial support would help the school expand its community outreach was instrumental in the decision to invest in this project.”

The larger building and increased learning areas will allow the school to grow its class from 85 to 115 students and full-time faculty from 70 to 90, provide more than $90 million in discounted and unreimbursed dental services to patients in need over the first 10 years, and ensure that Creighton remains competitive in dental education and research.

Features of the new building include small-group learning spaces and active-learning large classrooms, 152 simulation stations with mannequins and other technology, a special-needs treatment room, a faculty practice area, research space, and 184 operatories, which is 42 more than in the current facility.

Philanthropic support for the new building is personal for alumni donors, a handful of whom are profiled here. These alumni, from classes across the decades, attribute their desire to give to the fact that Creighton enabled them to lead lives of personal and professional distinction.
"What stands out for me is how well-prepared we were to hit the ground running when we graduated," says Arne Ness, DDS’77. “The level of clinical training we received and the breadth of procedures and processes we were encouraged to master at Creighton is unparalleled.”

Ness, who is retired from practice in Sammamish, Washington, says the University feels like a second home. “The Jesuit community, the instructors and staff all feel like friends,” he says. “My classmates came from various backgrounds but we were all in it together, and the friends I made at Creighton I count as some of my best.” He notes that his older son, Shane Ness, DDS’06, is a Creighton dental grad as well, and some of his son's closest friends are the children of his own classmates.

Ness says the new building’s “beautiful and functional structure” is impressive. “It makes me proud that Creighton will be educating talented, smart and socially conscious young men and women in such a structure.”

He and Anne Christensen were motivated to support the atrium and grand staircase because Creighton “... has earned a place in our hearts that is dear to us. The commitment the University family has shown me in personal growth and development as well as the superb education I received are remarkable.”

He says he likes to borrow the expression, “It is the gift that keeps on giving,” when he thinks of the importance of educating skilled dentists for the future and nurturing students who will be concerned and giving individuals and professionals.

“And then you realize this is all while providing quality affordable dental care to the Omaha community, which is proud to be home to such an outstanding University,” Ness says. “It’s a winning proposition for sure.”
Ruthann O’Neill Maschka, BS’48, and Philip Maschka, DDS’53

Gift: 120-seat lecture hall

Ruthann O’Neill Maschka, BS’48, and Philip Maschka, DDS’53, like to say that, for them, “There’s no place else but Creighton.” She is a 1948 graduate of the College of Arts and Sciences and he is a 1953 dental grad. He also taught in the dental school for more than a decade and had an orthodontics practice in Omaha for more than 23 years.

Maschka was a Navy pilot in WWII, and in fact, that is where he became interested in dentistry. “When I was a naval aviator, a test pilot flying fighter planes, the people I met in the Navy who were very congenial and pleasant were dentists.” When he returned home to Omaha, he applied to the School of Dentistry.

For Maschka, the excellent dental education he received was a direct result of the quality of the faculty. “We had a great faculty. We were trained exceptionally well. Creighton dentists were highly sought after because they were prepared to do anything.”

But what meant the most to Maschka was the ethical training he received. “People who trained elsewhere weren’t as lucky as we were to absorb the ethical environment at Creighton. I feel we ought to do anything we can to preserve and enhance the ethical training at Creighton.”

The Maschkas established the Dr. Philip Maschka Chair for Ethics in Dentistry in 2011 to ensure that Creighton dental students are taught ethical behavior that puts the needs and rights of their patients at the forefront of practice. Today, with their gift to support the new dental building, the Maschkas say they are reaffirming the ethical education Creighton provides.

Linda and Jim Bongers, DDS’80

Gift: Alumni socialization lounge

“I am very glad that the trustees decided the need for a new dental school was of paramount importance to Creighton University, to Omaha, to Nebraska, and to all the far-flung places Creighton dental graduates will land,” says Jim Bongers, DDS’80, of Manhattan, Kansas. “The present and future students deserve the best educational experience possible, not only for themselves, but for their future patients.”

Bongers is semiretired since the sale of his practice in 2010, but he still works at Junction City Family Dentistry, which he started in 1980, on a part-time basis. “I have the best of all worlds because I can be away at any time and still be productive when I want,” he says.

He says dental education at Creighton was, and still is, designed to prepare a dentist to be “The Dentist” for a community or region. “We were exposed to all facets of dentistry and were prepared to practice at a high level in all areas of dentistry. We were prepared to absorb new modalities in care as they were developed and then to employ them in the care of our patients. Many other dental schools did not give their students these experiences.”

His ties to the school run deep, as his father, Leo Bongers, BSD’46, DDS’48, was a member of the Class

While touring the new building, the group of dental students took a moment to view the Creighton campus to the west out of the second-floor windows.
of 1948. “My dad never forgot a person’s name or life story. He had that gift with his patients and those he met professionally. He thrived on the social ways of getting things done in dental leadership roles and local and state politics.”

The Bongerses’ gift is supporting the alumni socialization lounge, which Bongers believes would please his parents (his mother, Margaret Stanosheck Bongers, BSC’43, graduated from Creighton in business in 1943). “Both Mom and Dad were very proud of their Creighton backgrounds and would be very happy to promote the social engagement of our dental school alumni.”

He paraphrases Scripture concerning his motivation: To whom much has been given, much is expected. “The Creighton School of Dentistry has helped all of us have exceptional lives. What a great chance as dentists to help affect many peoples’ lives for generations to come.”

Lara Baus, DDS’10
Gift: Operatory

“My years at Creighton dental helped shape me into the person I wanted to be,” says Lara Baus, a graduate of the Class of 2010. “I received the values, knowledge and experience that opened me up to a profession I truly love and enjoy.”

She says she gained a sense of pride “that stays with me even after graduation,” as well as great mentors and friendships.

Baus works with her father, Michael Baus, DDS, and her sister, Mariah Murphy, DDS, at the family’s dental practice in Chilton, Wisconsin. “We love working together and make every day fun,” says Baus. “We are unique in that we are three dentists who work together and learn from each other, which enables us to be able to provide great dental care to our smaller community.”

“As soon as Creighton talked about the new school building, I knew that donating was something I wanted to do. My father instilled a spirit of giving back to what is important to me. Dentistry is very important to me. I love it and want others to be able to be passionate about their careers as well.”

Baus has funded one of the operatories in the school’s clinics. “I’m excited to see where the next generation of Creighton dentists gets to learn from the memories I have of the old school. I love how Creighton will use technology as well as what worked in the old building, like the large open operatory concept, and combine it.”

She says she believes it is important to “be a part of something bigger. Without the Creighton community, I would not have my profession and be able to help the community I live in.”

Mary Susan Orr Low and Eugene Low, DDS’67
Gift: Dean’s conference room

Eugene Low, DDS’67, credits Creighton with preparing him for two years as a Navy dentist and 35 years as a successful private general practitioner in Stockton, California.

Alumnus Jose Fidel, DDS’59, initially recommended Creighton to Low in Stockton. “He spoke so highly of it,” Low says. “He told me, ‘You’ll like it. It’s a Jesuit, Catholic school with good professors.’” Low says Fidel was right, and he found Creighton to be excellent but not easy. “I found the military and private practice both to be easier than dental school,” he jokes.

Following graduation in 1967, Low served in the Navy in San Diego and Vietnam. “I was the only dentist on a 1,000-person combat ship in the Mekong Delta for one whole year, and the preparation I received at Creighton was excellent.”

Low retired in 2004, and shortly thereafter his life took another twist that involved Creighton. He and Mary Susan Orr, who had been a dental assistant in the dental school and then worked in the medical school, got reacquainted and then married in 2006. They live in Omaha.

She had three sons all graduate from Creighton — one in pharmacy, one in arts and sciences who is now a police officer, and one in business. Low also has a son who graduated in dentistry from Creighton, Kevin Low, DDS’09, who is practicing in Vancouver, Washington.

“My wife and I have really strong feelings for Creighton. We are Creighton people,” he says.

He says advice his late mother gave him motivated the Lows to fund the dean’s conference room. “I believe in giving back. I was accepted by other schools, but I wanted to come to Creighton because of Dr. Fidel. As my mother used to say, ‘If it wasn’t for Creighton accepting you and you applying yourself, you wouldn’t be in the position you are.’”

Dee and Martin Halbur, DDS’76
Gift: St. Ignatius of Loyola Chapel, in honor of the Rev. Timothy R. Lannon, SJ, BS ’73

For Martin Halbur, DDS’76, who received the Alumni Merit Award from the School of Dentistry in 2014, and his wife Dee, giving to the School of Dentistry is second nature.

“Those were the hardest but the best years of my life,” Halbur says of his time in dental school. “I obtained an excellent education both in dentistry and in life.”
The Halburs live in Carroll, Iowa, where he has been in general private practice for 41 years. The practice includes four other Creighton graduates: Karl Eischeid, BA’75, DDS’79; Nick Fangman, BS’83, DDS’87; Michelle Sturm, DDS’11; and the Halburs’ daughter Marie G’Sell, BS’02, DDS’06. The Halburs also are dedicated to soil conservation and farming, raising cattle and hogs and growing corn and soybeans.

Halbur has made time in his life to mentor Creighton dental students and provide internships for high school students interested in the profession. “The opportunities to mentor new young dentists pale in comparison to the opportunities they provide, and challenge me to keep my skill set current.”

The Halburs have given funds for the St. Ignatius of Loyola Chapel in the new building, in honor of their friend the Rev. Timothy Lannon, SJ, BS’73, former president of Creighton. “Fr. Lannon was an undergraduate classmate of mine, fraternity brother, resident advisor and all-around positive influence in my Creighton experience. As the 24th president of Creighton, he shared the vision of Dr. Latta and others, helping facilitate making this project a reality.”

The Jesuit presence at Creighton is critical, Halbur notes. “It takes not only brick and mortar but the Jesuit philosophy and an excellent faculty.”

He adds, “As a healing profession, we must have one overriding vision. All people, whatever their status, whatever their age, wherever they live, should have the right to good oral health.”

Gifts of all sizes are appreciated and a variety of naming opportunities are available. For more information or to make a gift to the School of Dentistry building, contact Paul Findley.

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Patients walking through the doors of the dental clinic where Crystal Willie Sekaquaptewa, DDS’14, practices in Monument Valley, Utah, have often traveled at least two hours to see her.

They’ve crossed barren plains and desert or wound down mountain roads, more than likely not encountering an urban area or a shopping center to speak of, and maybe not even another traveler. And there’s a good chance that their only language is one of the several Navajo dialects spoken across the 27,000-square mile expanse of the Navajo reservation spanning Utah, Arizona and New Mexico.

“It’s very rural,” said Sekaquaptewa, the first Native American woman dentist in the Utah Navajo Health System. “Even when they get to Monument Valley, all we have is the clinic, a grocery store, a gas station, two hotels — and all that is pretty spread out. It’s not for everyone, but I love it. I feel like I’m in a great place to serve this community, to serve my people.”

So when patients walk through the door and say they have a toothache (“Shi woo nesgah” in Navajo), Sekaquaptewa can answer in Navajo.

“A lot of dental words don’t directly translate very easily,” she said. “We haven’t quite figured out the best way to say ‘gums.’ But I learn a little more every day, learn a little more from different dialects. For a patient to walk in and see that I can speak their language and for them to say, ‘Oh, you’re Navajo!’ puts a lot of patients at ease. It goes a long way toward trust.”

Trust is foundational to what Sekaquaptewa is doing in her practice, a foundation anchored in her youth on the southeastern end of the Navajo Reservation in Toadlena, New Mexico, and among the generations in her family.

When she was in preschool, Sekaquaptewa drew a picture of herself as a dentist. In third grade, she drew another picture of herself engaged in the same occupation and wrote “Dr. Crystal” in bold letters.

“And I remember my grandmother, she didn’t understand why someone would want to be a dentist,” Sekaquaptewa recalled. “My grandmother spoke no
I knew Creighton made dentists who could do everything and I knew if I practiced where I wanted to practice, I’d need to be the kind of dentist who, when someone comes to me and I’m all they’ve got, I can help them. Creighton helped me to be that dentist.

Crystal Willie Sekaquaptewa, DDS’14

“English, only Navajo. She’d never been to a doctor of any kind who looked like she looked, spoke how she spoke. I remember thinking how cool it would be if my grandmother had a Navajo doctor, someone who understood her language and her culture. I had never seen a Navajo dentist. I started thinking that I wanted to be that dentist. And that became my goal. My grandmother was my drive.”

Choosing Creighton, Sekaquaptewa said, meant she knew she was going to get the kind of education that would best serve her in a return to the wide-open spaces of the rural Navajo Reservation. Practice-ready dentists who can deal with an array of situations, from regular checkups to specialty dentistry, are in wide demand in rural areas.

“If people are going to drive two, three, four hours to come to you, you have to be ready to help in any situation,” Sekaquaptewa said. “Sending them to a specialist is more time traveling and we’re not just in the business of pulling teeth. That’s what I think I love most about this job: being able to help across the spectrum, to find solutions for people who have put their trust in you.”

Even before coming to Creighton, Sekaquaptewa took part in the dental school’s Native American Summer Enrichment Program, which introduces students interested in dentistry to the basics of dental school.

Kelly Gould, director of extramural programs for the School of Dentistry, said Sekaquaptewa’s enthusiasm and desire were on display from her first interactions with dental faculty and staff.

“It was very clear to all of us that she wanted to be a dentist, and she had very compelling reasons for wanting to be a dentist,” Gould said. “Her personality is geared toward a spirit of service. She wanted to do her very best to learn all she could and to work as hard as she could because she knew where she wanted to take her skills and leadership.”

Upon graduation from dental school, Sekaquaptewa returned to Utah and took up another lifelong passion, competitive Native American dancing. She was leading a summer instructional session in the art for some youth when a father of one of the dancers said he was looking for a dentist at the Utah Navajo Health System clinic in Monument Valley.

With no hesitation, both Sekaquaptewa and her husband, Kevin, a teacher and a member of the Hopi Tribe, packed up and made their way to the little town on the Utah-Arizona border, where a pair of sandstone buttes resembling mittens and shooting several hundred feet above the desert floor are the definition of a high-rise.

“It’s not for everyone, living out here,” Sekaquaptewa said. “My husband says I’m one of those rare people who knows what they want to do from the time they’re very young and then sees it all the way through. I feel lucky that way. I’m doing what I’ve always wanted to do.”

And though she died before seeing Sekaquaptewa live out the dream that began in her, Sekaquaptewa’s grandmother remains the inspiration in the young dentist’s career.

“I see my grandmother in the many other grandmothers who come through the clinic’s door every day,” Sekaquaptewa said. “In being able to learn from them and hear the stories, I feel like I’m carrying forward a legacy from my grandmother. I’m daily learning the importance of what I do for my people. In me achieving my dream, I hope that there will be others who see what they can do. I’m so grateful for that.”
Imagine an academic learning environment in which small pods of students are plugged in — technologically tethered, if you will — to their instructor, to their tablemates and to other classmates spread across a large, thoroughly wired, state-of-the-art space. And connected even beyond, across cyberspace, to classmates sitting many miles away.

Imagine an intricately designed environment outfitted with large video screens, table-mounted monitors, smart cameras and ambient microphones — and equipped with the requisite networking and accompanying software — to project the face and voice of the professor delivering instruction, or a student presenting or posing a question.

Imagine a classroom in which content can be pushed digitally to students via their laptops or tablets, in a nanosecond. Where facial recognition and tracking technology built into classroom cameras allows instructors wide freedom of movement, while staying in full view on students’ screens.

It all evokes a sense of futurism. Science fiction, even.

But it’s a future that is due to arrive at Creighton very soon — with the opening of the new School of Dentistry building and, concurrently, the christening of what has been dubbed the “active-learning classroom,” one of the cutting-edge marvels that will greet dentistry students this fall.

This two-story, technologically loaded learning space in the facility taking shape on the south side of Omaha’s Cuming Street, on the northern edge of Creighton’s campus, is undoubtedly a lecture hall for the 21st century.

The active-learning classroom “blends architecture, technology and pedagogy,” says Matthew LeFeber of the Sextant Group, the lead technology consultant on the project and a specialist in higher education technology design.

The aim? To transform the traditional lecture environment to an interactive — and extraordinarily engaging — learning space that stimulates collaboration, LeFeber explains.

Brian Halsey of RDG Planning & Design’s Omaha office serves as the lead architect for the new building, overseeing all architectural, engineering and audiovisual aspects of the facility.

Halsey characterizes the active-learning classroom, simply, as a way of teaching and learning more effectively.

“It’s an entirely new way of communicating with students,” Halsey says, “rather than sitting in a lecture hall, listening and taking notes.”

Instructors — once they get accustomed to the gadgetry — “tend to really like it,” he says.

Creighton’s Laura Barritt, PhD, says the design of the room will help facilitate small-group discussions and collaboration among students. Barritt teaches a histology course, and she is hoping the active-learning space will enable her to make the laboratory portion of the course digital and use virtual microscopy, rather than light microscopes and glass slides.

And how are students expected to like the new classroom?

“You don’t have the option not to be involved in a class in this space,” LeFeber says. “We’re taking what feels natural to them — a connection to their mobile devices — and making that a part of the classroom experience.”
By doing that, you’re really ensuring students stay engaged.”

The classroom is designed to accommodate up to 120 students onsite. And the technology can widen that number considerably, providing the ability to seamlessly connect distance-learners, essentially anywhere in the world, to the active-learning experience.

Halsey says the new classroom also expands Creighton’s tele-dental capabilities, enabling easy, consultative reach to dentists practicing, for example, in rural Nebraska.

Similarly, the virtual reach of the classroom gives students the option to dial in remotely to class “and still have a very engaging experience,” LeFeber says.

The new building’s plans call for one active-learning classroom to start. Two additional classrooms will be equipped with the framework to convert to the technology as needed.

“This is going to help bring Creighton University dental education to a very highly competitive, national level,” Halsey says. “We’re really just giving the building and structure a way to catch up to the high level of innovative instruction already happening at the school, and it will help with recruiting both faculty and students.”

“The active-learning classroom is a key part of what represents the leading edge of dental instruction in our new facility.”

Mark Latta, DMD, Dean of the School of Dentistry

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The advent of a new building and expanded class sizes has also meant a bold step into the future for the School of Dentistry’s already robust community outreach programs.

In the fall, dental students, staff and faculty adopted Sacred Heart School in North Omaha, the second elementary school to be “dentally adopted” by Creighton. With a dental adoption, third- and fourth-year dental students, overseen by faculty, provide education, screenings and basic treatments for the elementary students.

Creighton started the dental adoption program last year with about 140 students at Nelson Mandela Elementary and adds another 140 students with Sacred Heart. Adding in the 10 Omaha Public Schools for which the School of Dentistry provides a sealant program and the number of annual dental visits in these programs alone amounts to more than 4,000 dental visits annually.

“We’re very proud of our adopt-a-school program and we’re excited to be able to expand it to Sacred Heart,” said Kim McFarland, BA’83, DDS’87, professor and chair of the Community and Preventive Dentistry Department. “One of the main prerequisites for us, as we move into a new facility and increase our class sizes, is that we have corresponding growth with our community-based programs. Our students have been up to the challenge of increasing not only our school-based programming, but the community outreach we do in other areas.”

That outreach includes expanded geriatric patient care at the Heart Ministry Center and care for patients in rural areas, which has developed into partnerships with the Good Neighbor Community Center in Columbus and Fremont and the Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska in Chadron. In addition, a geriatric rotation at Notre Dame Housing and a special care rotation at Mosaic, both located in Omaha, have been added.

“It’s a new emphasis on community-based care that ranges from birth to senior citizens,” McFarland said. “For our students, it’s a chance to see that dentistry is not just practiced within the four walls of an office, but it’s out in the schools, the community centers, the cities, the rural portions of the state.”

As student-led efforts, the dental
adoptions and other school-based programming is fulfilling a cornerstone of the University’s overall mission of service for and with others, and the School of Dentistry’s desire to see its graduates not only enjoy success in their careers but also carry on a tradition of giving back.

Katrina Goebel, a fourth-year dental student, is the lead organizer for the Sacred Heart School adoption — orchestrating volunteers, arranging for services and generally making the program run smoothly.

“It’s a model that you can take just about anywhere,” said Goebel, who hails from North Dakota. “When I get out into my own practice, wherever I land, it’s something I hope I can recruit a few dentists to do out in the community. Being able to work with students and their families and encourage them to find a dental home is one of the best ways you can work on prevention of dental health problems. It’s key with kids to get them started early.”

Already, the influence of early dental interventions at the schools is being felt. In addition to the basic services being provided, the elementary students also are receiving vouchers called Bluejay Bucks, allowing patients to visit the Creighton dental clinic and receive all necessary services for just $10 per visit.

Roughly 150 of the Bluejay Bucks vouchers were distributed last year. The vouchers are renewable, such that a family pays just $10 for each visit to the Creighton dental clinic.

The school visits and vouchers are aimed at a goal the Department of Community and Preventive Dentistry has adopted in its school outreach: Cavity-Free by 2023.

“You can see the difference as we get to more students in the school and the families take the steps to get regular care,” said Ashley Aubry, a clinical instructor in the Department of Community and Preventive Dentistry. “In just a year with the school adoption and using Bluejay Bucks, we’ve seen a significant drop in urgent and early dental problems. We’ve done a lot of follow up with students and families, making a lot of calls and working with school nurses. That’s the awesome part of this program: It truly is a community effort for better dental health, better overall health.”

Aubry cited one school Creighton serves that saw a jump from just 40 percent of consent forms returned to approximately 86 percent of the school’s students taking part in the Healthy Smiles dental sealant program.

“It speaks volumes to what we are trying to accomplish in this program,” Aubry said. “And it’s attributable to our students who have seen the need — just blocks from Creighton — and said that they wanted to make a difference for the kids who most need it. I think that’s something Creighton does so well and what sets us above and beyond. We don’t just do the sealant and hand a goodie bag over. We try to engage the children and the families, to show them how important dental health is to overall health.”

Moreover, as the School of Dentistry makes its expansion, youth who are interacting with dentists and dental students today may just become the dentists and dental hygienists of tomorrow.

“We had a young student the other day tell us that he wanted to be an astronaut, a police officer and a dentist,” McFarland said. “We’re getting out into the schools and the children are seeing what it can be like to be a dentist. That formation is important, too, and we like to see it start happening at that elementary age.” — BY ADAM KLINKER

While visiting Nelson Mandela Elementary in Omaha last year, Brooke Wehle, DDS’17, showed proper toothbrushing techniques to children at the school.

Dental student Mahum Abbas, left, volunteered at the Good Neighbor Community Health Center in Fremont, Nebraska.
A Family Tradition

When Samantha Kappenman graduates from the School of Dentistry in May, she will be continuing a proud family tradition.

She will be a third-generation Creighton dentist. Her father, Tim, graduated from the Creighton dental school in 1987, following in the footsteps of his father, James, who graduated in 1946. But the connections don’t stop there. In fact, the Kappenman family tree is ripe with Creighton dental graduates.

Four of the seven children of the late James and Rosemary Kappenman are graduates of Creighton’s dental school. In addition to Tim, they are: Anlee (Kappenman) Rola, DDS’77; Jay, DDS’87; and Tami, DDS’93. James’ brother, Steve, was also a Creighton dentist (Class of 1943).

Jay’s son William graduated from Creighton dental in 2012, and Anlee’s daughter Jaclyn (Rola) Schuler is a Class of 2005 Creighton dentist.

Tim, Anlee and Jaclyn all practice together at Dakota Dental in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Samantha Kappenman, who plans to join her father and extended family members at Dakota Dental after graduation, says she felt no pressure to pursue a career in dentistry or to attend Creighton.

“Dad just wanted me to be happy,” she says. “But knowing about Creighton made the choice clear.”

The clinical experience in the dental school and the “amazing professors” — in addition to family ties — were what attracted her to Creighton.

Samantha has had the unique experience of having her father as a teacher. Tim volunteer teaches at Creighton twice a month in oral and maxillofacial surgery and operative dentistry.

“It’s cool to be the one doing the surgery and have him looking over my shoulder,” she says.

Tim Kappenman says he loves being a dentist. “I’ve enjoyed it immensely, I’ve never worked a day in my life,” he says. And he loves Creighton.

“Creighton gives you a well-rounded education in all fields of dentistry,” he says.

Tim and Samantha say they have enjoyed sharing the Creighton experience together, as father and daughter and teacher and student.

“I’ll remember little things for years, and I hope she does too,” Tim says.

“My dad loves giving back and always comes home with a story,” Samantha says. “He loves teaching.”

“It’s been wonderful to watch her grow up and mature,” adds Tim. “Creighton has been a very big part of our lives. It’s been more than a school. It’s been a philosophy.” — BY MOLLY BOHANNON
The School of Dentistry’s most recent Alumni Merit Award recipient acknowledges his long record of giving back — through advocacy for the community’s underserved and a host of other endeavors — with a certain shrug.

The award, he offers, is humbling.

“You don’t think of yourself as having done anything special,” says Terry Lanphier, BS’78, DDS’82, MBA’10.

It’s how he was raised, he says; it’s just what he does.

In fact, he says, most dentists give back to the community in one way or another.

“All the dentists I know do that,” he says. “We just don’t make a big deal of it.”

Lanphier’s humility notwithstanding, Creighton’s dental school bestowed on him its highest alumni honor at Homecoming last fall.

An associate professor of oral and maxillofacial surgery at the dental school since 2001, Lanphier is known as a committed and passionate teacher. He serves as the director of the school’s local anesthesia and pain control course and a clinic instructor for oral surgery courses.

On the private practice side, he serves as regional president of Summit Dental Health, PC.

Lanphier has long provided a free day of dentistry to the Omaha community’s underserved. And with the help of many Creighton dental students over the course of more than 30 years, he has provided much-needed dental care for incarcerated men and women.

It was Lanphier’s mother, he says, who instilled in him the importance of giving back.

He grew up in North Omaha, the ninth of 14 children (and “the favorite,” he quips). Not surprisingly, family funds were stretched thin, and it was thanks to a partial scholarship that Lanphier was able to attend Creighton. He worked and, with every paycheck he earned, made payments to cover the remainder of his tuition.

He was hardly the first in his family to pursue a Creighton education. Six of his brothers attended the University. Long before them, Lanphier’s grandfather attended the School of Medicine, graduating in 1908.

For Terry Lanphier, the opportunity to attend Creighton, he says, was a fortunate and life-changing turn of events. Not only in terms of the education he would receive, the values he would learn and the career in dentistry and academics he would subsequently pursue, but also on a more deeply personal level: He met his wife at freshman orientation. They began dating during their second semester and married after their sophomore year.

help of many Creighton dental students over the course of more than 30 years, he has provided much-needed dental care for incarcerated men and women.

They’ve got their undergraduate years at Creighton to thank for other connections, too.

“We truly enjoyed the Creighton experience,” Lanphier says. “We made really good friends here.”

The Creighton tradition in the Lanphier family keeps running strong. His daughter recently decided to pursue a career change and is a first-year student at the law school. He takes his grandchildren to Creighton athletic events often.

Beyond the extensive familial and social ties to Creighton, it’s the experience of teaching future generations of dentists that continues to give Lanphier satisfaction.

“If dental school can be hard. It’s a tough four years. If I can make it enjoyable for them, just a little bit, that’s a success.”

Terry Lanphier, BS’78, DDS’82, MBA’10
1956
George Blue Spruce Jr., DDS, Surprise, Arizona, was honored by the city of Cincinnati on June 22, 2017, when Mayor John Cranley issued a proclamation declaring the day to be “Dr. George Blue Spruce Day.” The announcement was made as the city hosted the 27th conference of the Society of American Indian Dentists. Blue Spruce founded the organization and served as president for 16 years. He now serves as president emeritus. Blue Spruce has made significant contributions to the field of dentistry. As the first American Indian dentist in the U.S., he has been a tireless advocate for diversity and inclusion in the profession. He considers his life’s work to be encouraging people of American Indian heritage to consider careers in dentistry and the health professions.

1971
John J. Kirby, DDS, Hillsborough, California, participated in the annual Mending Faces Cleft Lip/Cleft Palate Mission in Lucena, Philippines, from Jan. 29 to Feb. 3, 2017, providing pro bono surgeries to 61 patients.

1981
Christopher M. Biety, BS’77, DDS, Golden, Colorado, participated in the annual Mending Faces Cleft Lip/Cleft Palate Mission in Lucena, Philippines, from Jan. 29 to Feb. 3, 2017, providing pro bono surgeries to 61 patients.

1991
Michael W. Zacher, DDS, Phoenix, is the dentist for the Arizona Cardinals and Arizona Diamondbacks.

2006
John C. Boain, DDS, and Jennifer Cornelius Boain, DDS, Chesterfield, Missouri, welcomed a daughter, Lindley Angel, on Nov. 2, 2016.
Jared W. Mosley, DDS, and Dr. Alison M. Mosley, Fresno, California, welcomed a son, Andrew William, on Jan. 2, 2017.

2007
Alan Jeppson and Kelcey Berg Jeppson, BS’02, DDS, Hebron, Nebraska, welcomed a son and daughter, Ellis Tyler and Ivy Louise, on June 23, 2017.

2009
Aaron Schwieterman and Danielle Ternes Schwieterman, DDS, Bozeman, Montana, welcomed a son, Weston William, on Oct. 22, 2015.

2013

Patrick R. Wachter, BA’09, DDS, and Dr. Chelsea N. Kropp, Omaha, welcomed a daughter, Chloe Elizabeth Ann, on May 30, 2016.

Do you have alumni news to share? Please send to alumninews@creighton.edu.

In Memoriam

J. Robert Bohacek, BS’49, DDS’53, Omaha, April 1, 2017.
Emmet G. Bruning, DDS’56, Omaha, Nov. 21, 2017.
Harry A. Strohmyer, DDS’69, Cypress, California, Aug. 18, 2017.
John D. Kellen, DDS’75, Stockton, California, Nov. 12, 2016.
Thomas A. Rainbolt, DDS’91, Lawrence, Kansas, April 29, 2017.
Katherine Leech Gordon, DDS’02, Toledo, Oregon, March 8, 2017.

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“Ray and Teena made a tremendous difference in the lives of our students and in our school,” said Dean Mark Latta, DMD, MS. “Those of us who knew them were blessed to have called them teachers, mentors, colleagues and friends.”

Teena Beehner

Teena Beehner, a dental hygienist, joined the dental school faculty in 1993 as an instructor in the Department of Oral Diagnosis and Radiology, was promoted to assistant professor in the Department of General Dentistry in 2003, and joined the Department of Diagnostic Sciences in 2013. She also held a secondary appointment in the Department of Community and Preventive Dentistry.

Her seven children remembered their mother as someone who lived a “very full and vibrant life.”

John Shaner, DMD, associate professor and chair of the Department of Diagnostic Sciences, remembered Beehner as a hardworking, compassionate colleague who was beloved by her students.

“Few people have the passion she displayed every day for teaching and encouraging students to achieve more than they thought possible,” Shaner said. “We always benefited from her insights and ideas on how to make things work better.”

“Teena was surely one of those whose life was that kind of blessing not only in the School of Dentistry, but everywhere she walked.”

Raymond Olmo Sr., DDS

Raymond Olmo Sr., DDS, first joined the School of Dentistry from 1979 to 1985 and returned in 1996 as an associate professor of periodontics. In 2008, he was awarded a Dean’s Innovations in Teaching Award for his diagnosis and treatment-planning course. Creighton dental alumnus William Carney, DDS’81, now an assistant professor of general dentistry, wrote about his friendship with Olmo, which started while Carney was a student at Creighton.

“He was particularly hard on me,” Carney wrote, remembering how Olmo would peer over his shoulder while he was working on perio cases in the clinic. “I started to wonder why this guy had it in for me. I started dreading showing up in perio.”

Then Carney saw his professor at a fraternity casino night. “He walked up to me, threw his arm around my shoulder and said, ‘Carnes, what’s happening?’ That began a friendship that would last 38 years.”

Carney eventually asked the professor why he was so hard on him. “He told me that he was particularly hard on students who he saw potential in.” After Carney’s graduation, the two became hunting and fishing buddies. When Carney moved back to Omaha in 1987, his former professor paid him the ultimate compliment. “He became a patient of mine.” Carney remembers visiting Olmo five days before his retired friend and mentor died.

“He was in good spirits,” Carney said. “He said that the only thing he really missed was being at school.

“When it was time to go, we hugged each other. He said, ‘I love you.’ I said, ‘I love you.’ That was the last I ever saw of him. Goodbye my friend. I cannot tell you how much I miss you.”
Graduates of the School of Dentistry are taught to serve their communities. The dental school continues to be a leader in dental education and patient care.

The new School of Dentistry building will allow us to:

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