



Still

MAGAZINE

Rising stars

ATSU's newest graduates prepare to shape the future of healthcare

A.T. Still University's alumni publication

Oath of service

Prior to ATSU-KCOM's Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, May 18, a military commissioning ceremony was held for eight students representing the Air Force, Army, and Navy. See more photos from ATSU's commencements beginning on Page 12.



FEATURES

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Rising stars

A new class of healthcare professionals is stepping into the spotlight, ready to make their mark on the world. These ATSU graduates embody the dedication, resilience, and innovation needed to lead in the ever-evolving and rapidly advancing healthcare field. Whether they go on to pioneer new treatments, advocate for underserved communities, or advance healthcare education, these rising stars are poised to illuminate the path forward, inspiring others and making a profound impact on the lives they touch.

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Stars in the making

Hundreds of new ATSU students embarked on their journey to become the next shining stars in the healthcare field. Traveling to Kirksville, Missouri; Mesa, Arizona; and Santa Maria, California, these aspiring professionals took their first steps toward careers dedicated to improving the health and wellness of their communities. Students across ATSU programs participated in white coat ceremonies, marking a significant milestone in their professional education and symbolizing their transformation from layperson to healthcare professional.

44
The moments in between

From the moment students enter their academic program at ATSU, they are immersed in a rigorous educational environment, whether in a physical classroom or online. Their daily lives are filled with assignments, research, group activities, after-hours study sessions, and eventually for many, clinical rotations and patient care. To showcase their academic journey, students across campuses and programs submitted their personal photos, offering a glimpse into their daily lives as they work toward graduation.

CONNECTIONS

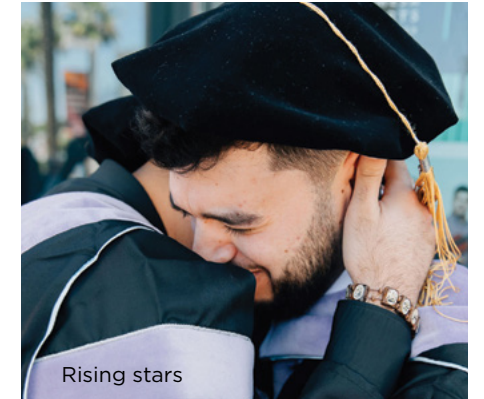
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ON THE COVER

Stephanie A. Lee, DO, '24, hugs faculty members during the recessional of the ATSU-SOMA Commencement Ceremony.



ATSU-SOMA students view an Air Evac helicopter at the 2024 Spring Expo. Photo submission by Rebecca Soto Caballero, OMS I, ATSU-SOMA.



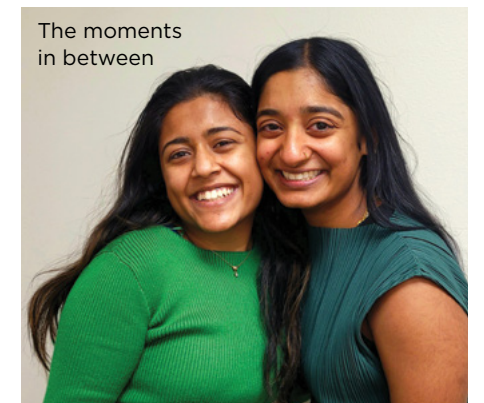
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ATSU MISSION
A.T. Still University of Health Sciences serves as a learning-centered university dedicated to preparing highly competent professionals through innovative academic programs. The University is committed to continuing its osteopathic heritage and focus on whole person healthcare, scholarship, community health, interprofessional education, diversity, and underserved populations.

A.T. Still University (ATSU) schools/colleges:
Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-ASDOH)
Arizona School of Health Sciences (ATSU-ASHS)
College of Graduate Health Studies (ATSU-CGHS)
College for Healthy Communities (ATSU-CHC)
Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (ATSU-KCOM)
Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-MOSDOH)
School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona (ATSU-SOMA)

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From the chancellor



Capturing milestones and memories

As we turn the pages of this *Still Magazine*, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for each student who has chosen ATSU for health professions education. This edition is particularly special as it captures the essence of our community through photos of white coat ceremonies, commencements, and all the moments in between.

The events featured throughout this issue are not just ritual. They are symbolic of the hard work, perseverance, and commitment our students have shown throughout their time with us. Commencement ceremonies were a celebration of achievement, where we watched our graduates take the next step into their professional lives. White coat ceremonies, equally profound and joyous, marked the beginning of journeys filled with knowledge, compassion, and the promise to uphold the highest standards of care.

This edition also includes some remarkable moments captured by our very own students. These photos provide a unique perspective into their daily lives, showcasing their experiences, camaraderie, and dedication. Our students are a constant source of inspiration, and the photos they have shared with us are snapshots of memories they will carry throughout their lives.

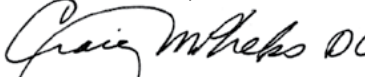
Additionally, we have the privilege of sharing stories of our dedicated ATSU board, faculty, and staff members. Their commitment to our university goes beyond the campus walls to our communities, making a better environment for our partners, neighbors, and friends.



Top left, clockwise: Students from the Doctor of Audiology program, class of 2027, receive their white coats; photo submitted by Lily Pokornowski, audiology student, ATSU-ASHS. ATSU-MOSDOH class of 2026 celebrates completion of their preclinical years; photo submitted by Hana Jeong, D3, ATSU-MOSDOH. Dr. Craig Phelps celebrates ATSU-ASDOH commencement with the Bedoya family.

As you explore these pages, I hope you feel as connected to our university as I do. Whether you graduated recently or many years ago, you are a part of a growing and flourishing legacy. ATSU thrives because of your support, passion, and involvement. Thank you for being an integral part of our story.

Yours in service,


Craig M. Phelps, DO, '84
ATSU Chancellor

Hand in hand

Dr. George and Elaine Pipes reflect on a lifetime of love, perseverance, and service to the osteopathic profession

By Katie Hubbard

For George, DO, '76, and Elaine Pipes, the last 66 years have gone by in a flash. Since their marriage in 1958, they have walked through life side by side, hand in hand.

Today, they both work at ATSU on the Kirksville, Missouri, campus. Dr. George is a family medicine physician overseeing residents at Kirksville Family Medicine, and Elaine is the office manager at the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine. As newlyweds, however, they struggled to make ends meet.

They grew up near Milan, a rural community in northeast Missouri. Shortly after Elaine graduated from high school, they got married and worked in Kansas City, coming home on weekends to help on their family farms. While they shared a lot of love, they had very little money.

After several months, and expecting their first child, the couple moved back to the Milan area permanently to be near family. They found a small rental house and began setting up their home. But, like any young couple, they were in need of several items, including a stove for cooking and canning.

Elaine had her heart set on a stove she found at the Skelly Oil Company gas station in Milan, which sold a variety of household appliances. Called "the burner with a brain," the large stove came with several burners that would turn down automatically if the stovetop got too hot. It also came with a hefty price tag of more than \$400.

When Dr. George told Elaine they couldn't afford it and they needed to save that money for a tractor, she was crushed. He instead found her an apartment-sized stove for \$99.

"I'll admit it, I really pouted about it," Elaine says. "I would complain to my mother-in-law about it. She was the sweetest lady. I loved them, and they loved me."

Then one day, as Elaine was complaining again about using that "awful" smaller stove instead of the burner with a brain, her mother-in-law threw a piece of paper at her and said, "Here, just win you one." It was an advertisement from the local newspaper about a jingle contest that said, "Why would you like to have, in 25 words or less, a burner with a brain stove?"

"I told her, 'Well, I just will!'" Elaine recalls, laughing.

George, DO, '76, and Elaine Pipes

For a pregnant and determined Elaine, this was a challenge. She went home, jotted down her jingle on the form, cut it out of the newspaper, and put it in an envelope. But she needed her last stamp for her brother's birthday card.

The envelope laid on the kitchen counter for a long time, until finally, Dr. George walked by and asked Elaine if the envelope was supposed to be mailed. She told him yes, but how she didn't have an extra stamp for the "jingle thing." She then told him to just throw the envelope away because she had since gotten over the challenge.

Seeing her disappointment and trying to be supportive, Dr. George told her he had 3 cents for a stamp and put the envelope in the mailbox. They went on about their day, and neither one of them said anything else about it.

Weeks later, on a hot summer day, Elaine was at her mom's house, and Dr. George was out in the field farming with her dad. They were canning green beans in a steamy kitchen when Elaine's mom noticed a strange car pull up. A man wearing a suit stepped out. Elaine recognized him as Russell Rigger, the funeral director of Rigger Funeral Home in Milan.

Rigger walked to the door and asked for Mrs. George Pipes. Elaine's mom ushered him inside. When he stepped into the kitchen, he looked at Elaine and told her she better sit down. Her mind racing and expecting bad news, Elaine sat down and held her breath as she waited to hear what he had to say.

After several seconds of silence, he said, "You just won \$5,000."

Confused, Elaine looked at him and laughed.

Rigger then began to explain by reminding her of the jingle contest she entered. It was a contest across 48 states with one winner - Mrs. George Pipes. Suddenly, Elaine remembered Rigger was not only a funeral director, but he also owned the Skelly gas station. Since the form Elaine submitted came from his store, he was told to get in touch with her about the prize and setting up an award banquet.

Elaine and her mom were in complete shock. After Rigger left, they were barely able to contain their excitement, so they drove out to the field to flag down the men. They waved and honked the horn to get their attention. Dr. George was the first to see this display and, thinking his wife was in labor, jumped off the tractor to ask if she was all right. When Elaine told him the news, Dr. George grabbed her and gave her the biggest hug.

To this day, Elaine can't remember the jingle she wrote, but she remembers every detail of the events that unfolded afterward. That \$5,000 changed the course of their lives, although she never used the money to buy the burner with a brain. She kept using the apartment-sized stove for years afterward, and Dr. George bought a tractor to get their own farm started.

They farmed for several years and raised two children, Lori and Andy. As the rise of big machinery in farming began, Dr. George and Elaine quickly realized their farm would not be large enough to generate the income necessary for their children's education. At the time, it was common for families to make a good living by farming in the summer and teaching in the winter.

Dr. George planned to get a degree to teach science at the Milan High School for a teacher who would be retiring in the next few years. In the meantime, Elaine got a job as a teacher's aide. She took the kids to school with her, and Dr. George drove 100 miles round trip to Kirksville to attend Northeast Missouri State College, now Truman State University.

In two and a half years, Dr. George earned his teaching degree as planned, but without notice, the science teacher in Milan decided not to retire. This news left Dr. George and Elaine disappointed and uncertain of what they should do next. They decided to press on, and Dr. George taught one year at Kirksville Junior High while Elaine got a job at Truman as secretary for the dean of students.

As time passed, Dr. George's interest in science grew. He had several friends from the Truman science program who began attending Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (ATSU-KCOM) to become physicians. He decided he, too, would pursue medical school.

Dr. George hoped to attend ATSU-KCOM because of his connection to several students and his roots with osteopathic medicine. He and Elaine were both delivered by and grew up with doctors of osteopathic medicine (DOs). However, he was denied acceptance because of his age. At 34 years old, he was just past the cutoff.

Disappointed yet again, Dr. George continued teaching. He also started working part time in the evenings at Laughlin Hospital, which formerly stood across the street from ATSU-KCOM, taking care of animals in the research labs. After work, he would often stop by the ATSU-KCOM anatomy lab to visit friends.

One night, outside the anatomy lab, Dr. George and his friend, Sam Price, DO, '76, who had also been denied acceptance because of his age, ran into a man wearing a long white coat. The man asked what they were doing and if they were students. Dr. George quickly explained they were visiting some friends who were students, and while they had applied to the program, they had been denied because they were "too old." The man responded, "Oh, is that right?"

About two days later, Dr. George and Dr. Price each received letters from ATSU-KCOM saying they were accepted, pending completion of two additional courses to meet the requirements. They later learned the man in the white coat was John Stedman Denslow, DO, '29, a pioneer in osteopathic research and husband of Dr. A.T. Still's granddaughter, Mary Jane Laughlin.

The rest of Dr. George and Elaine's story is now history. Dr. George graduated from ATSU-KCOM as a DO, and Elaine spent 30 years as manager of his medical office until he retired from active practice.

Dr. George's postgraduate education included an internship at Kirksville Osteopathic Medical Center and fellowship at Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology, Washington University Medical Center in St. Louis. He also completed a U.S. Army Flight Surgeon Course with Academy Health Sciences in Fort Rucker, Alabama, as well as a scientific program and Federal Aviation Administration Aviation Medical Examiner Seminar with the Aerospace Medical Association in New Orleans.

During his years of practice, Dr. George served as part of a medical health team in La Paz, Bolivia, a lieutenant colonel and state flight surgeon with the Missouri Army National guard, and director of medical education and vice chair of the Board of Governors for the Kirksville Osteopathic Medical Center. The American Association of Physician Specialists named him a Distinguished Fellow in 1991 and Family Practitioner of the Year in 1995.

When Dr. George retired from active practice and began overseeing residents at Kirksville Family Medicine, Elaine joined the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine and became part of ATSU-KCOM's interview process for selecting student applicants. She received the ATSU Employee Excellence Award in 2007 and honorary Kirksville Osteopathic Alumni Association membership in 2010. In addition to these honors, Elaine served as president of the Auxiliary of the American Association of Physician Specialists and, as a personal goal, learned to fly a plane at age 50, holding membership with the Missouri Pilot's Association.



Dr. George and Elaine Pipes serve as grand marshals for the 2024 ATSU-KCOM Commencement Ceremony.

Flying became an outlet for Dr. George and Elaine during their years of maintaining a busy practice. Dr. George was always fascinated with flying, even as a child. During medical school, they saved enough money for him to take lessons and get his pilot's license. Eventually, they were able to buy an engineless helicopter, fix it up, and fly it to nursing homes around the area to see patients. This was the first of several helicopters and planes they would own and restore throughout their lives.

"It's been a wonderful, wonderful journey," Elaine says. "It's not been easy. We still have our farms, but we live in Kirksville now. We have a great family, both Lori and Andy are registered nurses, and we have three beautiful, independent granddaughters."

In recognition of their lifelong dedication to ATSU-KCOM and the osteopathic profession, Dr. George and Elaine were asked to be grand marshals at the 2024 ATSU-KCOM Commencement Ceremony in May. Humbled by the honor, the couple led the procession of graduates into Baldwin Auditorium, holding hands every step of the way.

"We've had a good life, and we are as one," Dr. George says. "We did it together and helped each other."



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FEATURES



ATSU-ASDOH's White Coat Ceremony on Friday, July 12, was one of several ceremonies held across all three ATSU campuses this summer. Above, a group of incoming students from ATSU-ASDOH's class of 2028 pose on stage after the ceremony as they celebrate their next academic adventure.

Dean Robert Trombly, DDS, JD, opened the ceremony with a quote from 13th century poet Rumi, "Class of 2028, it's your road and yours alone. Others may walk with you, but no one can walk it for you."

Read more about ATSU's white coat ceremonies on Page 38.

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Rising Stars

ATSU's newest graduates prepare to shape the future of healthcare

By Katie Hubbard and Arselia Gales

A new class of healthcare professionals is stepping into the spotlight, ready to make their mark on the world. These ATSU graduates embody the dedication, resilience, and innovation needed to lead in the ever-evolving and rapidly advancing healthcare field. As they have transformed from student to professional, they carry with them the knowledge, compassion, and values instilled by the University, which will guide them as they shape the future of healthcare. Whether they go on to pioneer new treatments, advocate for underserved communities, or advance healthcare education, these rising stars are poised to illuminate the path forward, inspiring others and making a profound impact on the lives they touch.

McKenna Yost, DO, '24, is hooded by Dr. Darin Vercillo.



ATSU-ASDOH

ARIZONA SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY & ORAL HEALTH

Friday, May 10
Mesa, Arizona

Program

Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD)

Number of graduates

78

Commencement speaker

Lily T. Garcia, DDS, MS, FACP
Dean, Texas A&M School of Dentistry

“Take a moment to look around you and capture the moment when you and so many others are excited and hopeful for what lies ahead. Make the most of it, be a part of a wonderful community, guard the privilege and respect you earned, and guard this privilege knowing you’re a little bit of humble and a little bit of cautious, because you never want to let it go.”



Joshua Teague Rutherford, DMD, '24

on his desire to give back to his community as the first dentist from the Fort Belknap Reservation in north-central Montana, representing the Aaniiih and Nakoda Tribes.

“ I’m the first dentist from my reservation, my tribes, and my community, so that’s also an honor to carry that with me. I hope to not be the last, though.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/asdoh-rutherford

Thy Tran, DMD, '24

on why she pursued dental school, how she will be helping vulnerable populations, and her future plans.

“ Growing up, my mom had several language barriers, and going to the dentist was very challenging for her. So I think for me, it’s just realizing that I want to be able to eliminate those barriers for people who struggle with that, like when my mom did. In the future, I’ll be pursuing an orthodontics residency program in Chicago.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/asdoh-tran



Kara Ritterpusch, DMD, '24

on her passion for dentistry, connecting with patients, and supporting her community.

“ I love that dentistry lets you connect with people in a really unique way. It’s one of the only fields in healthcare where you’re able to see patients for their entire lives as long as you’re in the same area. I love building connections, and I love building relationships with my patients, and I feel like that has a really unique way of preventing future problems while solving current ones. I’m looking forward to being able to give back to my community and helping people out whenever I can.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/asdoh-ritterpusch



Alexander Stacy, DMD, '24

on his excitement to help patients and continue his education in orthodontics.

“ I just love helping people, changing their outlook on life. I had messed up teeth when I was younger, and I loved my orthodontist and had a great experience. And then it changed my self-confidence moving forward, so I wanted to be able to do that for others.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/asdoh-stacy



Program

Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD)

Number of graduates

62

Commencement speaker

Maxine Clark
Founder, Build-A-Bear Workshop
CEO, Clark-Fox Family Foundation
Inspirator, Delmar DivINe

“Dentists are entrepreneurs, especially when you work in your own practice or partner with others. I want to encourage you to look inside at what makes you happy, how you like to be treated, what you love, what makes you smile every day, and what you are passionate about. Listen to your heart.”

ATSU-MOSDOH

MISSOURI SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY & ORAL HEALTH

Friday, May 17
Kirksville, Missouri



Nicole Brubaker, DMD, '24

on her decision to pursue dentistry and help her community.

“ Giving someone’s smile back just makes the world of difference in somebody’s life, so the fact that I will be able to do that back in my community is really important and special to me.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/mosdoh-brubaker

Richa Ranpura, DMD, '24

on what she hopes to accomplish in her career and in her community.

“ I’m just hoping to really provide some care for the underserved and put my patients’ needs first, give back to the community.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/mosdoh-ranpura



Faisal Khan, DMD, '24

on his future plans, increasing his skillset, and making a difference for those in need.

“ I’m ready to take on the world and help treat other patients, those who are in need. ... I had extensive dental work growing up. I had braces for five years, and I had two oral surgeries while I was in middle school. So I always had a problem with self-confidence growing up. I want to be able to have that impact in other people’s lives and change the way they feel about themselves, and just give back to the community and those who need the help.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/mosdoh-khan



Hung Bui, DMD, '24

on his path to dental school and his career path moving forward.

“ For me, dentistry wasn’t my first goal. ... Over time, I found out I want to help people, I want to be in the healthcare field, I love working with my hands, and I love art, too. In a way, I feel like I’m an artist in dentistry. ... For the community I serve, I want to be able to help the people, especially those in the marginalized community.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/mosdoh-bui

Programs

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences (MS)

Number of graduates

169

Commencement speaker

Jennifer McArthur, DO, '93
Associate Member, Division of Critical Care Medicine, Department
of Pediatric Medicine, St. Jude Children's Hospital

"From the moment you started osteopathic training, the first moment you stepped in this medical school, your faculty taught you about the importance of the patient as a whole person. You have learned the importance of looking at healthcare as holistic and treating a person as a whole person, not just a disease."



ATSU-KCOM

KIRKSVILLE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Saturday, May 18
Kirksville, Missouri



James Liu, DO, '24

on being a first-generation immigrant, the first doctor in his family, and a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures.

“As a first-generation student, I’m big into mentorship. I want to get into academia. I really want to give back and serve because I was once that little kid that didn’t know what was next. I want to be that mentor I never had growing up.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/kcom-liu

Ellie Glasner, DO, '24, and Jacintha Thomas, DO, '24

on their future plans and giving back to their communities.



“I hope to give back to the community I’m from, Fargo, North Dakota. They helped me become a doctor and gave me opportunities to get into this career, so I hope I can go back and serve the people of that community.”
-Dr. Ellie Glasner

“I’m from Iowa City, from the Midwest. I love the community. They’ve always been supportive, given me great opportunities, and I’d love to go back and train under those doctors that helped take care of me and my family growing up.”
-Dr. Jacintha Thomas



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/kcom-glasner-thomas

Erin Fortner, DO, '24

on her decision to pursue medical school and next steps.

“I actually had a previous career as an attorney, a lawyer. I was a Special Victims Unit prosecutor, and some things happened in my life, professionally and personally, that made me want to kind of go from more of that side of things to being a healer and a helper.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/kcom-fortner

ATSU-CGHS

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE HEALTH STUDIES

Friday, May 24
Mesa, Arizona

Programs

Master of Education in Health Professions (MEd)
Master of Health Administration (MHA)
Master of Health Sciences (MHSc)
Master of Public Health (MPH)
Master of Science in Kinesiology (MSK)
Doctor of Education in Health Professions (EdD)
Doctor of Health Administration (DHA)
Doctor of Health Sciences (DHSc)
Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

Number of graduates

243

Commencement speaker

Alan Morgan, MPA
CEO, National Rural Health Association
Member, ATSU Board of Trustees

"This, beginning right now for each of you, is the place where health system redesign begins. I cannot strongly enough encourage each of you to share this perspective. A perspective and a reality in where each of you going forward is driving health system innovation in the face of challenge."





Breanna Adkins, EdD, '24

on how her degree helped her obtain a full-time faculty position and better prepare her students in occupational therapy.

“ I feel that I’ve been able to really give my students a more unique learning experience, more evidence-based learning experience, making sure I’m providing the best student assessment methods that align with the research. It led me into my dissertation topic, which was the occupational therapy education assessment practices, something that hasn’t really been explored too much in my field. I’m excited that this degree is going to help me continue to explore that research area.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/cghs-adkins

Kelly Halligan, MPH, '24

on why she pursued the Master of Public Health-Dental Emphasis program and how this degree will help her career.

“ I wanted an opportunity to excel in my own workplace. During the pandemic, I looked at how things were going in public health and thought, we can do better. ... This degree will give me the opportunity to advance in my own workplace organization. I also started my own business during the pandemic, during this program, so I hope I can grow my business as well.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/cghs-halligan



Michael Bodeen, DHSc, '24

on why he pursued this degree, how this program is elevating his teaching, and what he plans to do in the future.

“ I wish that all medical students would have an element of what is given in this program, because it would widen their world a lot more and make them think a little bit differently. ... What’s being taught here is now being embedded in that population, and hopefully, it will have a domino effect that goes beyond me.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/cghs-bodeen



Krista Cox, MHSc, '24, and Nichole Gale, MHSc, '24

on how their degrees are advancing their careers.

“ I am an occupational therapy assistant, and when I started the program, I was a staff member for the school that I work for. ... I am now faculty. It has helped me immensely, and I feel like I’m more present and able to connect with our students more because of the experience.”

-Krista Cox

“ A lot of my mentors that I look up to in the dental hygiene world have master’s degrees, and I thought that would be a great first step in doing what I really want to do, which is teach CE courses.”

-Nichole Gale



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/cghs-cox-gale

ATSU-SOMA

SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE IN ARIZONA

Friday, May 24
Mesa, Arizona



Program

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)

Number of graduates

150

Commencement speaker

Danielle Barnett-Trapp, DO, '11
Clinical Associate Professor, Midwestern University
College of Osteopathic Medicine
Member, ATSU Board of Trustees

“As you step forward from this day, you enter a world of unpredictable challenges. In today’s healthcare environment burnout is rampant. It’s not a matter of if you’re going to experience it, it’s when. When the times get tough, when the emotional burden gets too hard to carry, remind yourself of the journey to get to this day. Recall that grit, that resilience, that perseverance, and remember your why.”





Tahmin Akiha-Hassan, DO, '24

on her future plans and what she wants to achieve as a physician.

“What I really want to become is a good doctor that’s conscious of the people that she’s treating. I want to be a doctor that’s there for the community, and I want to be, at the end of the day, somebody that can treat children. My goal is now going into residency with my heart open, my mind open, ready to learn and take what ATSU-SOMA has given me and hopefully flourish.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/soma-akiha-hassan

Fatima Faisal, DO, '24

on achieving her lifelong goal of becoming a psychiatrist and her next steps.

“I matched at SUNY, upstate in Syracuse, New York, and so I am going to be a psychiatrist and hopefully go from there to become a child and adolescent psychiatrist. So there’s more to the journey, but I’m really excited to be here.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/soma-faisal



Ron Tang, DO, '24

on his decision to pursue osteopathic medicine and make the greatest impact for his patients.

“I wanted to become a doctor because first I was very interested in just athletics and sports and just helping the athlete get to the next level, but I knew I could really make an impact further than that, not just athletes, the most vulnerable populations.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/soma-tang



William Haynes, DO, '24

on his path to medical school and his excitement to help patients and clinicians.

“I actually liked art in high school and English, and never thought I was going to do medicine, but it was really some anatomy classes and other science classes in college that piqued the interest. I worked in dermatology for a few years after college and found that I really liked patient care, but now I’ll be going into radiology, which is kind of the polar opposite of dermatology.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/soma-haynes



Programs

Distance learning

Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT)
Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences (MSBMS)
Doctor of Athletic Training (DAT)
Post-Professional Doctor of Audiology (AuD)
Postprofessional Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)

Residential

Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT)
Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP)
Doctor of Audiology (AuD)
Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD)
Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)

Number of graduates

Distance learning

140

Residential

134

ATSU-ASHS

ARIZONA SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Friday, June 7
Mesa, Arizona



Nicole Babiarz, MS, '24

on being a member of the first speech-language pathology class and her future plans.

“It was really awesome just to be able to be that first class at A.T. Still University, and kind of pave the way for it, the other classes that will be coming through the same program. I actually have a clinical fellowship at South Mountain Post Acute, and I will be completing my year there in the medical setting.”

Eva Guerrero, MS, '24

on advocating for the speech community and continuing her education in speech-language pathology.

“I was a speech-language pathologist assistant for six years. ... I wanted to continue to show what speech-language pathology is all about. It's not just speaking. It's also cognition. It's swallowing. So I wanted to help more people that could use more services.”



To view Babiarz's full video, go to atsu.edu/ashs-babiarz



To view Guerrero's full video, go to atsu.edu/ashs-guerrero

Philans Ankrah, DPT, '24

on choosing ATSU and how the program has helped him in his clinics.

Jay Brahmbhatt, DPT, '24

on his career plans and moving to Houston, Texas.



“In the Cayman Islands, we don't have a lot of DPTs. I've always been looking for more challenges to keep getting better and better, so that I can practice and give the best to my patients. ... Based on ATSU's evidence-based practice model, where they always ensure we use high-quality evidence to support whatever we practice, I've been able to add that to my practice.”
-Dr. Philans Ankrah

“I intend to start my own private practice there. I'm in talks right now, hopefully with somebody else to partner up. And I do want to lend some of my years of expertise toward teaching and some instructional stuff, if possible.”
-Dr. Jay Brahmbhatt



To view Dr. Ankrah's full video, go to atsu.edu/ashs-ankrah



To view Dr. Brahmbhatt's full video, go to atsu.edu/ashs-brahmbhatt

Irene Kwangaba, OTD, '24

on her time in the program and her short- and long-term career goals.

“Right now, I want to pass my board exam, so I'm going to be studying in the short amount of time that I have next, but then after that, I'd love to go into inpatient rehab and start my future career. But I would also love to work in community-based OT in the future, so that's my long-term goal.”



To view the full video, go to atsu.edu/ashs-kwangaba

T

This summer, hundreds of new ATSU students from across the globe embarked on their journey to become the next shining stars in the healthcare field. Traveling to Kirksville, Missouri; Mesa, Arizona; and Santa Maria, California, these aspiring professionals took their first steps toward careers dedicated to improving the health and wellness of their communities.

Medical and dental students received their white coats after their first week of orientation, while audiology, physical therapy, physician assistant, and occupational therapy students received their white coats further into their programs as they prepare for clinical rotations and patient care.

The white coat, representing professionalism and ethical responsibility, has been worn for more than 100 years by physicians and has since been adopted by other health professions. The white coat ceremony, which involves a formal “robing” or “cloaking” of students, marks a significant milestone in their professional education. It symbolizes the transformation from layperson to healthcare professional – much like a star emerging from the nebula, ready to shine its light on the world.

ATSU-CHC CCPA program

“I felt really proud of myself and my classmates. We worked really hard to get here and I’m very proud to have my family watching me. It’s been a long journey – I’ve thought of this a really long time and it’s finally happening.”

–John Janisko, PA, '25
ATSU-CHC



Stars in the making

By Arselia Gales
and Katie Hubbard

ATSU students receive their white coats and reflect on journey ahead



ATSU-SOMA DO program

"It just means the world to me, especially as a young black girl seeing other black girls become doctors, that I can be part of the representation ... so another girl who looks like me can have faith that she can get here too."

-Francisca Okeke, OMS I
ATSU-SOMA



ATSU-KCOM DO program



ATSU-ASHS PA program

ATSU-ASDOH DMD program

"It felt like a dream come true. I've been in the admissions process for a really long time, and I'm finally able to start dental school soon, and I'm excited for the journey ahead. It's a dream to be able to receive my white coat."

-Nia Moquino, D1
ATSU-ASDOH



ATSU-MOSDOH DMD program



The moments in between

ATSU student-submitted photos capture favorite moments along their academic journey

By Katie Hubbard and Arselia Gales

From the moment students enter their academic program at ATSU, they are immersed in a rigorous educational environment, whether in a physical classroom or online. Their daily lives are filled with assignments, research, group activities, after-hours study sessions, and eventually for many, clinical rotations and patient care.

Students across campuses and programs submitted their personal photos, offering a glimpse into their journey through their eyes. Their experiences, depicted in the following photos, show the dedication, teamwork, and camaraderie essential in the health professions.



Previous page: Justin Hicklin, who completed his clinical rotations in Arizona, explores the outdoors with his classmates. Photo submitted by Justin Hicklin, DO, '24, ATSU-KCOM.

Above: Occupational therapy students celebrate ugly sweater day on the Mesa, Arizona, campus. Photo submitted by Morgan Peterson, OT, '25, ATSU-ASHS.

Page 3, bottom photo: The moments in between. Photo submitted by Rose Kalu Igwe, OMS II, ATSU-KCOM.



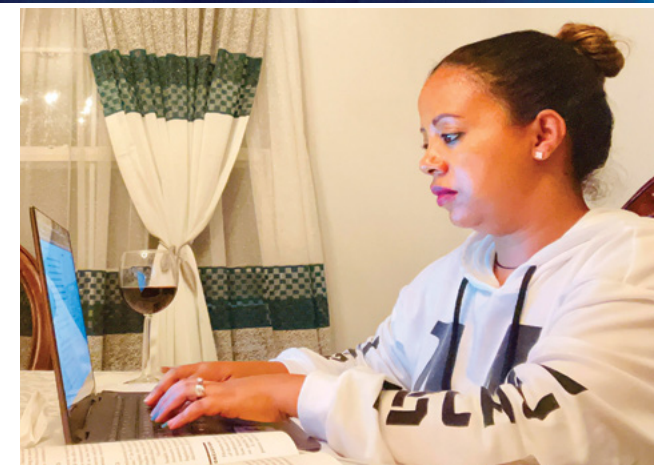
The various phases of studying.

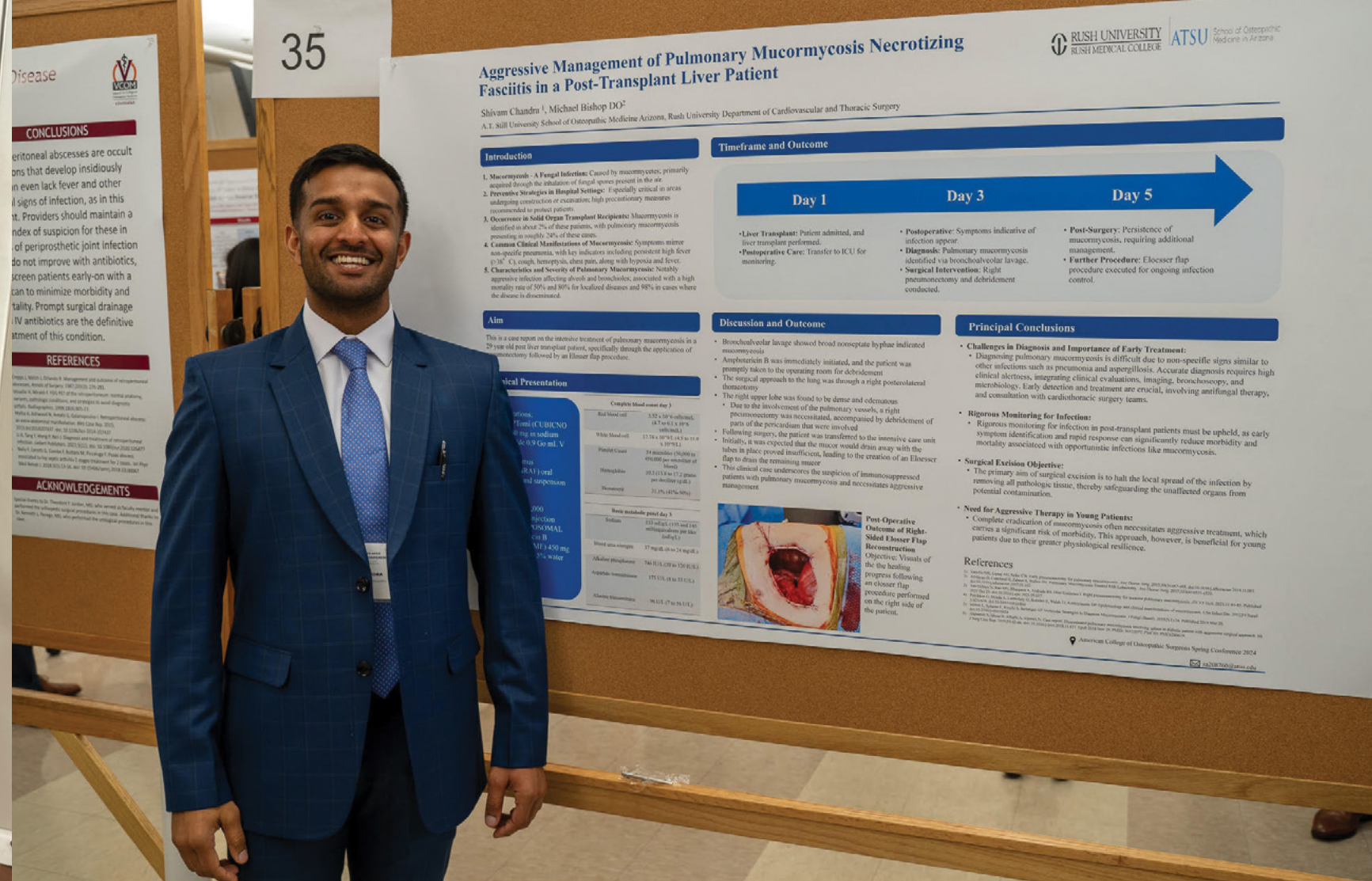
Left, clockwise: After a short lecture from ATSU-SOMA professor Inder Makin, MD, PhD, about views, proper imaging techniques, and abdominal structures, ATSU-SOMA students worked on abdominal phantoms with visceral organs, as well as engaged in peer-to-peer practice of scanning for hepatobiliary structures. Here, Deshaynee Iseri and Patricia Balatbat work together to bring the lecture to life. Photo submitted by Rebekah Feinberg, OMS II, ATSU-SOMA.

Meghana Ashok Kumar, a clinical audiologist in ATSU's online Post-Professional Doctor of Audiology program, shares a selfie during a quick work-study break. Photo submitted by Meghana Ashok Kumar, AuD, ATSU-ASHS.

Elshadie Ramdat is pursuing her dream, one course at a time, as a distance learning student. Photo submitted by Elshadie Ramdat, MHA, RRT-NPS, a doctor of health sciences student, ATSU-CGHS.

Rebeca Soto Caballero takes a quick nap during a study session. Photo submitted by Rebeca Soto Caballero, OMS II, ATSU-SOMA.





Making great achievements.

Previous page, top left, clockwise:
 Alexis Brown meets Bucky during the ATSU Central Coast Physician Assistant program welcome picnic for the class of 2025. Photo submitted by Alexis Brown, PA, '25, ATSU-CHC.

Mikayle Syczylo proudly holds her newborn daughter.
 Photo submitted by Mikayle Syczylo, OMS III, ATSU-KCOM.

Mariela Magaña Ceballos, a San Ysidro Health civic engagement intern for the External Affairs department, helps engage low propensity voters in the November election. Photo submitted by Mariela Magaña Ceballos, OMS IV, ATSU-SOMA.

Above: Shivam Chandra presents on pulmonary mucormycosis at the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons conference, discussing aggressive management strategies he employed in this case. Chandra says this opportunity was an invaluable experience in academic presentation and medical writing. Photo submitted by Shivam Chandra, OMS III, ATSU-SOMA.

Right: Heather Pelletier is honored at the Maine State Hall of Flags with the 2023 Community Star Award from Maine's Office of Rural Health and Primary Care program. Pelletier, CEO of Fish River Rural Health, a federally qualified health center, was recognized for her leadership and commitment to rural healthcare. Photo submitted by Heather A. Pelletier, MPH, '24, ATSU-CGHS.



Away from campus.

Previous page:

Elizabeth Williams sports ATSU gear while in a Black Hawk helicopter flying over the Panama and Colombia border. Williams was participating in a work mission for her day job with the U.S. government. Photo submitted by Elizabeth Williams, doctor of health sciences student and student ambassador, ATSU-CGHS.

Lance Attiq visits the U.S. Capitol during the American Dental Association Dentist and Student Lobby Day in April. Dentists and students lobbied for change to the legislature on the state and federal level to best support dentists and the dental profession. Photo submitted by Lance Attiq, D4, ATSU-ASDOH.



ATSU-SOMA students Maritza Vazquez-Trejo, Adriana Barranco, and Raashmi Krishnasamy visit the Arizona Capitol for DO Day in February. Photo submitted by Adriana Barranco, OMS II, ATSU-SOMA.



Matching outfits and unbreakable bonds.

Previous page, top left, clockwise:
ATSU-CHC students get fitted for white coats. Photo submitted by Alexis Brown, PA, '25, ATSU-CHC.

Speech-language pathology students attend their pinning ceremony. Photo submitted by Samantha Gardner, SLP, '25, ATSU-ASHS.

Maya Newton, Seth Suzuki, Faisal Kamal, Valerie Jabero, and Armin Radonic, celebrate being halfway through their didactic year of the Central Coast Physician Assistant program. Photo submitted by Faisal Kamal, MS, '24, ATSU-CHC.

An Vo, Jocelyn Pham, Kristen Nguyen, and Julie Jeong celebrate finishing their first year of dental school and pose with their typodonts. Photo submitted by Kristen Nguyen, D2, ATSU-MOSDOH.

Above: Meagan Bauer, dressed as Princess Peach, hugs a student at ATSU's annual Give Kids A Smile event in Mesa, Arizona. Photo submitted by Meagan Bauer, D3, ATSU-ASDOH.



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ATSU | Arizona School of Health Sciences

*ATSU alumni who implement the 20% tuition discount are encouraged to contact a tax professional regarding any tax implications. All discounts are independent and cannot be combined with any other offers.

On July 13, more than 110 veterans received free screenings at the St. Louis Dental Center, with significant support from Affinia Healthcare. Harold Thies, a 95-year-old Army veteran shown above, was overwhelmed with the hospitality and excited to get a new set of teeth, said his daughter, Phyllis Grohman. Nearly all third- and fourth-year ATSU-MOSDOH students volunteered for the event and provided comprehensive care to veterans under supervision of licensed faculty.

"It was such a rewarding feeling for me, and I am grateful for the opportunity to treat these patients," said Ally Kort, a third-year dental student who also holds a bachelor's degree in hygiene. "I also appreciate the veterans' commitment to following through with their care."

IN THIS SECTION

- Reconnect
- Donor recognition
- Board member service
- Class notes
- Faculty & staff news
- In memoriam

RECENT ALUMNI EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

When members of the ATSU family gather, a common thread emerges. Friends reconnect, new bonds develop, and students find inspiration. From Pismo Beach to Atlanta and many points in between, recent events brought energetic, diverse, accomplished groups of individuals together – enriching and reinforcing the tapestry of social and professional networks that bind the University community together.

SUMMER 2024



ATSU-CHC Founders & Friends Reception

ATSU-CHC Founders & Friends Reception
Ventana Grill | Pismo Beach, California



ATSU-ASDOH Alumni Chapter Board members (from L to R) Steven Richardson, DMD, '07; Rachel Duffy, DMD, '13, MPH, '12; and Clair Anderson, DMD, '12

ATSU-ASDOH Alumni Chapter Board Welcome Lunch for D1 Students

ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona

ATSU-CGHS Alumni & Students Reception | Kinesiology Summer Institute

ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona



AT Alumni, Students & Friends Reception

Athletic Training (AT) Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) Convention

Calcasieu Event Center | New Orleans, Louisiana



NACHC Alumni & Friends Reception

Alumni & Friends Reception | National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) Community Health Institute (CHI) & Expo

Hyatt Regency Atlanta | Atlanta, Georgia

UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS

Physical Therapy (PT) Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Combined Sections Meeting

Houston, Texas
February 2025

Give Kids A Smile and ATSU-ASDOH Alumni Weekend

ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona
Feb. 28-March 1, 2025

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Academy of Osteopathy (AAO) Convocation

Rosen Shingle Creek Resort | Orlando, Florida
March 2025

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Academy of Audiology (AAA) + HearTECH Exp

New Orleans, Louisiana
March 2025

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) Annual Convention & Scientific Seminars

Palm Springs, California
April 2025

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) conference

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
April 2025

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) Annual Session

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
April 2025

ATSU-ASHS 30th Anniversary Celebration & Alumni Reunion

Mesa, Arizona
TBD

ATSU-SOMA Alumni Reunion

Mesa, Arizona
TBD

Graduate Health Professionals Scholarship (GPS) Golf Tournament and GPS Scholar Reunion

Mesa, Arizona
TBD

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Association of Physician Associates (AAPA) Annual Conference

Denver, Colorado
May 2025

Attention job seekers and employers!

Alumni employment opportunities are available across the U.S.

The University provides an online job board for ATSU alumni seeking employment and for employers searching for ATSU graduates to fill vacant positions. These job opportunities are shared by external employers and other alumni who value the skills and expertise of ATSU graduates. As a free resource for employers and job seekers, we encourage you to check back often when you are looking for a new opportunity or when you have positions at your organization or company to advertise. Please contact alumni@atsu.edu with any questions.



atsu.edu/alumni-jobs

ATSU | ALUMNI RELATIONS

ATSU hosts NIH National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research Forum

By Katie Hubbard

ATSU hosted the National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) Forum in St. Louis on Tuesday, Aug. 20. The event gathered ATSU leadership, deans, and researchers to learn about NIDCR's priority research areas and identify joint research initiatives. Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-MOSDOH) Dean Dwight McLeod, DDS, MS, welcomed guests, delivered opening remarks, and introduced keynote speaker Jennifer Webster-Cyriaque, PhD, acting director of NIDCR.

NIDCR is the federal government's lead agency for scientific research on dental, oral, and craniofacial health and disease. Its mission is to advance fundamental knowledge about dental, oral, and craniofacial health and disease and translate these findings into prevention, early detection, and treatment strategies that improve overall health for all individuals and communities across the lifespan.

Dr. Webster-Cyriaque, an accomplished clinician, researcher, and leader, presented "Oral Health for All: Realizing the Promise of Science," which highlighted the state of oral health globally and in the U.S. She discussed oral disease as a universal challenge, affecting approximately 3.5 billion people – a \$500 billion burden – with untreated caries in permanent teeth being the most prevalent of all conditions. She also discussed societal implications of oral disease and how it affects issues including workforce productivity and military readiness.

"People cannot be productive when they are in pain," Dr. Webster-Cyriaque said. "Many people don't have access to care, and that is something you are working hard at to address."

Additionally, Dr. Webster-Cyriaque shared her own career journey using NIH's pathways and discussed NIDCR's programs for career development, re-entry, mentoring, and diversity.

"I was always very interested in what causes diseases," Dr. Webster-Cyriaque said. "I also liked the opportunity to work with other people who wanted to know the answer, so we could work together to make a difference for others."

The forum marked a milestone in the University's ongoing efforts to engage in research addressing the needs of underserved populations and contribute to the overall advancement of oral and whole person health. Following the keynote, a panel discussion was led by Gaylah Sublette, MBA, interim president of ATSU's Missouri campus; Ann Spolarich, PhD, RDH, assistant dean for research at Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-ASDOH); Hanan Omar, BDS, PhD, MSc, assistant dean for research at ATSU-MOSDOH; and Kim B. Perry, DDS, MSCS, chief partnership officer at ATSU.

Underscoring the University's commitment to supporting a pipeline of researchers, the forum included a session with ATSU alumni researchers. Josh Coffey, DMD, '18, ATSU-MOSDOH, and Samantha Yineman, DMD, MPH, '20,



Dr. Dwight McLeod welcomes more than 60 in-person and virtual guests.



Dr. Hanan Omar speaks to the audience during the panel discussion.

ATSU-ASDOH, who is also an ATSU-ASDOH assistant professor and faculty researcher, shared their career stories and research experience as students.

The forum concluded with a Q&A session and open discussion with Dr. Webster-Cyriaque. She provided insight on available funding programs, strategies for pursuing research, and the importance of collaboration in addressing complex health challenges.

"We were privileged to host NIDCR's acting director, Dr. Webster-Cyriaque, who provided a comprehensive update on NIDCR's latest research initiatives and shared her own inspiring career pathway to oral health research and mentorship," Sublette said. "Together, we discussed joint research initiatives and strategies to enhance patient care and oral health outcomes for all, and especially for the underserved."

"This forum also provided a platform for NIDCR to learn more about ATSU's mission-focused research and culture while stimulating collaborative conversations within ATSU's own research community. Moving forward, ATSU's investigators gained a much better perspective on NIDCR's funding mechanisms and pathways to improving oral health for all."

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Bryan N. Sewing, DO, '98 & Jennifer P. Sewing, DO, '98
Patricia S. Sexton, DHEd, '08 & William Sexton, PhD
Ronald E. Shaheen, DO, '84 & Kathleen L. Kudray, DO, '84
Eric Shirley
Aaron C. Sigler, DO, '09, MS, '07
William F. Sill, DO, '70 & Mrs. Bette L. Sill
Douglas N. Smith, DO, '78 & Mrs. Cynthia T. Smith
Mrs. Elizabeth Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert & Cathy Smith
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Floyd S. Stevens Jr., DO, '63 & Ms. Janet Stevens
Charles R. Stone, AuD, '01 & Rochelle Stone
Straumann USA
Mary H. Strizzi, DO, '09 & Mr. Mike Strizzi
Melissa K. Stuart, PhD
Alfred W. Studwell, DO, '62 & Regina A. Studwell, EdD
Gaylah & Werner Sublette
Jeff L. Summe, DO, '87
John R. Sutton, DO, '89
David J. Swofford, DO, '78 & Mrs. Patrice Swofford
Karen A. Sylvara, DO, '91 & John Tod Sylvara, DO, '91
Teget Foundation, Paul Cord Teget, DO, '04
Dr. Richard L., '73 & Kathleen S. Theriault
Ms. Bertha Thomas & Mr. Patrick Lobert
Stephen & Pamela Thorne Foundation
John R. Thurman Jr., DO, '12 & Ms. Audrey Thurman
Matthew R. Tommack, DO, '09
Michael Torgan, MBA, NHA
Dr. James Towry, '85 & Mrs. Keri Towry
Todd N. Troxell, DO, '17
Kenneth Tuong T. Truong, DO, '96
Robert & Ellen Uhl
Felix M. Valbuena, MD
Vanguard Charitable
Mr. Adam Vega
Michael D. & Jean A. Virkus
William H. Voss, DO, '58 & Mrs. Helen J. Voss
Leslie L. Walsh, DO, '82 & Ms. Lisa L. Walsh
Mrs. Evelyn Warren
Frederick Watson, DO, '97 & Mrs. Anne Merril Watson
Lynn Weinberg, AuD, '02
O.T. Wendel Jr., PhD & Ms. Janet C. Wendel
Wetzel Memorial Osteopathic Foundation
Bruce, '98 & Kathryn Wilkie
Heather Williamson, DO, '00 & Mr. James D. Quirk
Margaret Wilson, DO, '82 & Charles Lemley III
Michael D. Wilson, DO, '72 & Deborah Wilson
Ms. LaTricia Woods
Rick Workman, DMD
World Class Technology
Donald F. Yoder, DO, '69 & Marian Yoder
YourCause LLC
Mrs. Carol L. Yowell
Dr. Andrew, '79 & Mary Rose Zazaian



Michelle Mayo, PhD

The road to higher education

ATSU Board of Trustees member hopes to leave a lasting impact on the University

By Arselia Gales

Kirkville, Missouri, will always hold a special place in the heart of ATSU Board of Trustees member Michelle Mayo, PhD. A first-generation college student, Dr. Mayo attended Truman State University and earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's in education. During her time in Kirkville, Dr. Mayo met former ATSU board member Bertha Thomas and Dwayne Smith, PhD, interim president of Southern Connecticut State University.

"I was in Kirkville for eight years. I met some wonderful people who really poured into me and saw more in myself than what I saw in me," she says. "They really played a pivotal role in where I am today. I'm very grateful to have crossed paths with Bertha and Dwayne. Not only were they my mentors, but even today, they are some of my very closest friends and confidants."

After completing her undergraduate and graduate degrees, Dr. Mayo stayed in Kirkville an additional two years, which she says inspired her to work in higher education. She then moved to Indiana and received her doctorate in educational policy from Indiana University.

"I once again had people pour into me," she says. "That's where I really found my passion for addressing issues of access and equity for underserved communities."

Dr. Mayo has worked at a variety of universities, including Marquette University in Milwaukee, Harris-Stowe State University in St. Louis, and North Carolina Central University in Durham. She now works for California State University-Monterey Bay as the associate provost for student success and dean of undergraduate studies.

"ATSU is fortunate to have the skills, knowledge, and talents of a rising academic leader in Dr. Mayo. She makes us a better university by bringing innovative and timely ideas pertaining to academics, student life, and operations."

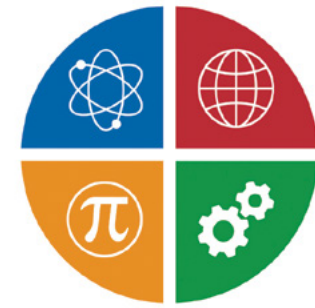
- Dr. Craig M. Phelps, ATSU chancellor

In her current role, Dr. Mayo is responsible for academic support and curating the undergraduate experience. She has also connected the university with the National Institute for Student Success. Dr. Mayo's extensive experience in higher education led Thomas to recommend her for ATSU's Board of Trustees back in 2016. Dr. Mayo was hesitant to join at first because of her lack of experience in the medical field, but she's glad she took the risk.

"I've had an opportunity to meet people from various walks of life that under normal circumstances I would not have had the opportunity to meet," she says. "It's only made me a better person, and I've been able to deal with issues of access and equity, one of my passions for working in higher education."

In her almost nine years with the board, Dr. Mayo got married and moved twice. When she initially joined the board, she lived in St. Louis and moved to Durham shortly thereafter. She helped ATSU develop pipeline programs with North Carolina Central University by introducing students to the Physician Assistant Studies program and subsequently informing them about ATSU's other academic offerings. She hopes she can translate what she's learned about student success at the undergraduate level and apply it to ATSU.

"It's been rewarding for me to share a piece of what I know with ATSU and see what I have to share be taken seriously and utilized within the University," she says. "I hope I've been able to bring that whole world of student success as the point of focus for a professional school so we can continue to enhance our students' experiences."



2024
INSPIRING PROGRAMS
IN **STEM** AWARD
FROM **INSIGHT INTO DIVERSITY**

Dreamline Pathways™ program receives 2024 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award

ATSU's Dreamline Pathways™ program received the 2024 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine. The award honors colleges and universities that encourage and assist students from underrepresented groups to enter the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This is the fourth consecutive year Dreamline Pathways program was recognized by *INSIGHT Into Diversity*.

"ATSU's Dreamline Pathways program works with community partners, parents, colleges, school districts, teachers, and campus constituents to introduce the health professions to K-12 students, nurture their journey toward a health profession, and support an atmosphere of mentorship for those who have achieved their dream of becoming a health professional," said Clinton Normore, MBA, chief diversity officer, ATSU. "Receiving the 2024 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award highlights the significance of such initiatives and recognizes the dedication of Stephanie McGrew, MHA, assistant director of diversity and inclusion, along with many others. ATSU is honored to receive this recognition."

CLASS NOTES

2000s

Melinda Brown, MHA, '09, was elected to the Carl Junction School District School Board in April. She also serves as the Missouri School Boards' Association delegate. Brown is director of the Gipson Center for Healthcare Leadership at Missouri Southern State University and resides in Carl Junction with her husband, Mark Brown, DO, '11. Their children are Zakory; Maggie, a master of public health student at ATSU-CGHS; and Ashdyn.

2010s

Antoinette "Toni" Farmer-Thompson, DHEd, '10, was named president of Strayer University in Virginia. She is the first Black woman to hold the position. Dr. Farmer-Thompson joined the university in 2021 as its provost and chief academic officer. She previously served as chief financial officer and chief operations officer of educational outreach and student services at Arizona State University.

Gabriel Anders, DO, '14, received critical care board certification from the American Board of Internal Medicine, an independent physician-led, nonprofit organization. Dr. Anders is a physician at Bothwell Regional Health Center in Sedalia, Missouri.

Vivek Babaria, DO, '14, was one of 20 spine surgeons featured in the North American Spine Society's SpineLine spotlight of specialists under 40. Dr. Babaria specializes in interventional spine and sports medicine and uses advanced ultrasound technology. In addition to his degree from ATSU, he received extensive training at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center and OSS Health.

Justin Silverstein, DHSc, FASNM, FASET, '14, was appointed clinical assistant professor of neurology at the Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra University/Northwell Health.

Christine Beeson, DO, FAAP, '16, is board certified in the pediatric specialty of child abuse and neglect. In April, she joined faculty on the Child Abuse team at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa. Dr. Beeson sees children for suspected abuse and neglect and is the fellowship's educational director.

Sondra DePalma, DHSc, PA-C, '18, a graduate of ATSU-CGHS, led research resulting in the article, "Medical Malpractice Payment Reports of Physician Assistants/Associates Related to State Scope of Practice Laws and Regulations," which was awarded the JMR Award for Distinguished Scholarship by the Federation of State Medical Board's *Journal of Medical Regulation* in recognition of an outstanding objective, scholarly contribution.

Andrea Hartford, DO, '18, joined Women's Excellence as one of the newest members of its Clarkston, Michigan, medical team.

2020s

Brittany Helmbrecht, DHEd, '20, was named interim dean of professional studies and applied sciences at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska. Previously an associate professor, Dr. Helmbrecht has been a member of the college's faculty since 2015. In addition, she is president of the Northwest Nebraska Trails Association, secretary of Bike Walk Nebraska, a member of the American College of Health Association, and a certified group fitness instructor by the American Council on Exercise.

Christa Lo, DHSc, MPAS, PA-C, '20, joined the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth's School of Health Professions as associate dean. She'll also serve as faculty in the Physician Assistant Studies program. In addition, she acts as a site visitor and commissioner for the Accreditation Review Commission for Education for the Physician Assistant.

Cheri Jrolf, DMSc, MPAS, PA-C, '22, received the 2024 American Mother of the Year award for Florida from American Mothers Inc., an organization encouraging and highlighting mothers across the U.S. Dr. Jrolf is a mother of five and is a board-certified physician assistant with more than 28 years of clinical experience. She is a champion of foster care awareness and has advocated for children born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.

Submit class notes to stillmagazine@atsu.edu



Antoinette "Toni" Farmer-Thompson, DHEd, '10



Vivek Babaria, DO, '14



Andrea Hartford, DO, '18

The bookshelf

Recent books from ATSU alumni



Hot Mess to Hot Mom: Transformational Tools for Thriving After Childbirth and Beyond

By Tara De Leon, MS, '09, ATSU-ASHS
Brave Healer Productions, March 2024

As a mother, personal trainer, and professor of health, fitness, and exercise studies, De Leon aims to help women who have given birth become HOT (healthy, on it, and thriving). This book features authentic stories and expert tools from women who know what it's like to run on little sleep in a body they no longer recognize. Chapters include gentle exercises for postpartum recovery, single steps for getting great sleep again, healthy eating strategies, recovering one's body confidence, and more.

UPCOMING CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Athletic Training

Clinical Outcomes Assessment: An Overview

Concepts of Diagnostic Accuracy in Athletic Training

Evidence-Based Practice in Athletic Training

Examination of Concussion Reporting Influences and Educational Programs

Guidelines for Best Practices in Concussion Management: The Development of Position and Consensus Statements

Health Information Technology in Athletic Training

How Much Information is Too Much? The Role of Unlearning in Athletic Healthcare

Incorporating Evidence-Based Practice into Athletic Training: An Overview of Practice-Based Partnerships

Lower Limb Preventive Training Program Best Practice and Implementation

Medicolegal Considerations for Sport-Related Concussion

Optimizing Lateral Ankle Sprain Rehabilitation

Pain: How it Affects Stability and Movement

Promoting Patient Mental Health: Lessons & Considerations from a Sport Psychology Perspective

Quality Improvement in Athletic Healthcare

Role of Sports Specialization on Injury, Overtraining, Burnout, and Mental Health Considerations

Social Determinants of Health in Athletic Healthcare

Home study courses are available year-round and are web-based. Please email atce@atsu.edu for more information.

Dental

"Fluorescence Enhanced Theragnosis" - An Evidence-based Reliable New Approach for Clinical Dentistry
Nov. 1, 2024

Simplifying Adhesive Dentistry
Nov. 4, 2024

Panoramic 2D Pathology and CBCT 3D Pathology
Nov. 9, 2024

Pack the Punch: Soft Tissue Biopsy Technique for the General Dentist
Nov. 17, 2024

Dental, cont.

Updates from the University of Minnesota on Dental-dedicated MRI
Dec. 6, 2024

The Use of Contemporary Ceramics in Dental Implant Rehabilitation
Dec. 13, 2024

ATSU-MOSDOH is ADA CERP and AGD PACE approved.

All opportunities are held virtually. For more information, mosdohce@atsu.edu or call 314.685.3557.

Medical

Primary Care Update
Dec. 5-7, 2024
Big Cedar Lodge | Ridgedale (Branson), Missouri

ATSU CME Cruise
Primary Care Update
Jan. 19-26, 2025
Royal Caribbean - Wonder of the Seas

Las Vegas
Primary Care Update
Feb. 27-Mar. 1, 2025
Treasure Island | Las Vegas, Nevada

ATSU is accredited by the American Osteopathic Association to provide osteopathic continuing medical education for physicians.

For more information, email continuingeducation@atsu.edu or call 660.626.2232.

Physical Therapy

"Overcoming the Invisibles: Chronic Pain, Functional Movement Disorders (FMD), Post Concussive (PCS), Persistent Postural Perceptual (PPPD), and More!"
Nov. 9, 2024
Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona

For more information, contact ptceu@atsu.edu or call 480.265.8035.

To register for courses online or learn about upcoming activities, please visit atsu.edu/ce or call 866.626.2878, ext. 2232.

The power of positive influence

Matt Heeren's service to community supports local youth

By Katie Hubbard

Matt Heeren, JD, understands the importance of community involvement. While Heeren serves ATSU as chief operating officer & general counsel, he also serves the Kirksville, Missouri, community with his time and talent. He is a former member of several local boards, past president of Kirksville Regional Economic Development Inc., and his personal favorite, youth soccer coach.

Heeren began coaching in 2013 when his son started playing soccer at the local YMCA. At the time, the YMCA soccer club mainly held practices for a few dozen kids with occasional games. When his players wanted more opportunities to develop their soccer skills, he was asked if he would help the club grow, to which he agreed. His vision was to grow the sport in Kirksville by establishing a local league for youth and, eventually, offering competitive travel opportunities for players who wanted to play soccer in high school.

"I am so passionate about teaching kids early on the power of their own influence," Heeren says, "the power that influence can have on themselves

and, just as importantly, the power that influence can have on other people."

Heeren lectures his players about this concept, and to put words into practice, he encourages intergenerational training, where players of all ages play together. The older players take responsibility for teaching the younger players and being good role models. He also tells his players if he could go back to high school and change one thing, it would be to firmly learn the power of his influence on others.

"I never realized that as a high schooler. The middle school kids admired me and my teammates and wanted to be just like us," Heeren says. "What an opportunity to make the world better by simply learning early the power of your own positive influence, but I never realized I had it until I was much older."

At just 7 years old, Heeren's father passed away. The many important lessons Heeren would have learned from his father, he instead learned through youth sports and the coaches who cared about him and his future. When Heeren became a coach, his

only goal was to support local kids and help them envision their potential. His mindset and leadership led to his recognition as Missouri Girls Recreation Coach of the Year and Regional Girls Recreation Coach of the Year in 2021, followed by National Girls Recreation Coach of the Year from U.S. Youth Soccer in 2022.

Today, Heeren's vision for the club is complete. It serves as a consistent feeder of strong soccer players - and principled students - for the high school soccer program, with dozens of volunteers supporting the local recreation and competitive travel teams. Currently, more than 300 kids participate in the local soccer club, and the sport has grown so popular, there are more interested high school players than there are spots available.

"I told my players' parents from the very beginning we are playing soccer, but don't tell the kids the importance of all of this has nothing to do with soccer," Heeren says. "It has to do with finding a passion, creating a process, finding mentors, and working hard. If you do that, then success will come in anything, not just soccer."



Matt Heeren (left) with one of his soccer teams after winning a tournament.

FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

ATSU

Nelida Acosta, Hometown Scholars coordinator, strategic university partnerships, received the 2024 Outstanding Migrant Health Center Board Member award from the National Association of Community Health Centers. Acosta was recognized for her commitment to Adelante Healthcare in Phoenix and for advancing migrant health initiatives.

Don Altman, DDS, DHSc, EdD, '12, was promoted to vice chancellor, academic support.

John Dougherty, DO, was appointed chief strategy officer, effective July 1. Located in St. Louis, he will oversee development of ATSU real estate initiatives in St. Louis and Mesa, Arizona. Dr. Dougherty earned his doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from Kansas City University's College of Osteopathic Medicine (KCU-COM). His leadership roles have included interim dean of KCU-COM Joplin campus, dean of Touro University Nevada, and founding dean and chief academic officer of Noorda College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Brenda Jackson, senior administrative assistant, academic affairs, received the Employee Excellence Award for Arizona and California campuses for the second quarter of 2024.

Holly Klusmeyer, project manager, assessment & accreditation, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Introduction to Educational Technology course.

Stephanie McGrew, MHA, assistant director, diversity & inclusion, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Alumni of the Year award.

Kim Perry, DDS, MSCS, was promoted to chief partnership officer.

Dalton Rolland, associate director of sustained giving, development, received the Missouri campus Employee Excellence Award for the second quarter of 2024.

Michael Shoop was promoted to specialist in Academic Technologies.

Julie Speer, PhD, MS, was promoted to assistant director of the Teaching & Learning Center.

Lisa Windy, MAcc, was promoted to director of student accounts in Finance.



Nelida Acosta, ATSU



Dr. John Dougherty, ATSU



Dr. Kim Perry, ATSU



Lisa Windy, ATSU



Daniel Lebedies, ASDOH



Dr. Nicolette "Nikki" Harris, ASHS

ATSU-ASDOH

Desmond "Des" Gallagher, BDS, MA, was appointed dean of ATSU-ASDOH, effective Sept. 11. He previously served as associate dean for clinical services at University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry in San Francisco.

Dr. Gallagher earned a dental degree from University of Wales College of Medicine School of Dentistry, postgraduate diploma in clinical dentistry from Trinity College Dublin School of Dentistry, and master's degree in dental education from University of the Pacific. He completed seven years of active military service with several operational tours. After military service, he established a dental office. He began teaching as a part-time clinical instructor before joining University of the Pacific in 2012 as a group practice leader and course director.

Daniel Lebedies, specialist, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Introduction to Educational Technology course.

Kimberly Lovell, MEd, instructor, dental hygiene, predoctoral education, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Introduction to Educational Technology course.

Mitzi Wasden, DDS, MS, adjunct faculty, predoctoral education, completed the Teaching & Learning Center's Level Up! certificate program to become an ATSU-certified health sciences educator.

ATSU-ASHS

Shelley Baltodano, AuD, assistant professor, audiology, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Introduction to Educational Technology course.

David Doublestein, PT, PhD, CLT, Cert MDT, LLCC, assistant professor, director of progress, physical therapy, received the 2024 ATSU-ASHS Scholar of the Year award during the ATSU-ASHS faculty assembly in May.

Nicolette "Nikki" Harris, DAT, LAT, ATC, CSCS, '17, assistant professor, director of student recruitment, athletic training, received the 2024 National Athletic Trainers' Association Ethnic Diversity Advisory Committee Bill Chisolm Professional Service Award. Dr. Harris was recognized for her contributions to the development and enhancement of ethnically diverse athletic trainers.

Pamela Kays, PT, DPT, EdD, assistant professor, director of curriculum, physical therapy, received the 2024 ATSU-ASHS Educator of the Year award during the ATSU-ASHS faculty assembly in May.



Dr. Pamela Kays, ASHS

Ivonne Maldonado De la Rosa, PhD, CCC-SLP, assistant professor, speech-language pathology, received the 2024 ATSU-ASHS Faculty Service of the Year award during the ATSU-ASHS faculty assembly in May.

Kelsey Picha, PhD, ATC, associate professor, interdisciplinary health sciences, was co-author of "Exploring the Use of a Social Determinants of Health Focused History Script to Facilitate Patient Conversations," which received the 2023 Outstanding Manuscript Award from the *Athletic Training Education Journal*.



Dr. Kelsey Picha, ASHS

Adam Story, PT, DPT, OTR/L, OTD, MTC, assistant professor, occupational therapy, received the 2024 ATSU-ASHS Junior Faculty of the Year award during the ATSU-ASHS faculty assembly in May.

Malathy Venkatesh, PhD, CCC-SLP, assistant professor, speech-language pathology, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Introduction to Educational Technology course.



Dr. Malathy Venkatesh, ASHS

Cailee Welch Bacon, PhD, ATC, associate professor, athletic training, received the 2024 Professional Development Excellence Award from the National Athletic Trainers' Association Professional Development Committee. Dr. Welch Bacon was recognized for her outstanding contributions to athletic training continuing education and professional development.



Dr. Candace Ayers, CGHS

ATSU-CGHS

Jeff Alexander, PhD, FAACVPR, ACSM-CEP*, was promoted to professor of health sciences.

Candace Ayars, PhD, associate professor, health education, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Professor of the Year award for the second consecutive year. Dr. Ayars retired in June after 12 years with the College.



Dr. Doug Brtek, CGHS

Doug Brtek, EdD, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Adjunct of the Year award for health professions education.

Jeffrey Chaffin, DDS, MPH, MBA, MHA, was promoted to associate professor of dental public health.



Sue McDaniel, CGHS

Lihua Dishman, DBA, MBA, FACHE, associate professor, health administration, received the 2023-24 Service Award from the American College of Healthcare Executives.

John Fick, EdD, MS, FACHE, associate professor, health administration, was appointed to the Association of University Programs in Health Administration/Health Administration Press Editorial Board for a three-year term.

Marisa Hastie, EdD, MS, ACSM EP-C, PN-1, FACSM, dean, was appointed to American College of Sports Medicine's Exercise is Medicine Underserved and Community Health Committee for a three-year term.

Clair Lunt, DHSc, MN, RN, '19, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Adjunct of the Year award for nursing.

Sue McDaniel, MS, instructional designer, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Adjunct of the Year award for health sciences.

Patrick Palmieri, DHSc, EdS, MBA, MSN, ACNP, RN, '12, adjunct faculty, health sciences, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Michael Samuels Impact Award.

Scott Rankin, DDS, MS, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Adjunct of the Year award for public health.

Matt Rhea, PhD, professor, kinesiology, retired in June after 18 years with the College.

Michael Ryan, PhD, MS, '19, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Adjunct of the Year award for kinesiology.

Jason Salas, MAEd, instructional designer, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Outstanding Employee Award.

Daniel Smith, PhD, MBA, associate professor, public health, ATSU-CGHS, was awarded funding from the ATSU Community Health Workgroup Quality Improvement & Research Pilot Project Grant as primary investigator for an innovative community health project aligning with ATSU's strategic focus on improving community health research outcomes.

Kathie Thomas, DHA, '16, MPH, '11, received ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Adjunct of the Year award for health administration.

ATSU-CHC

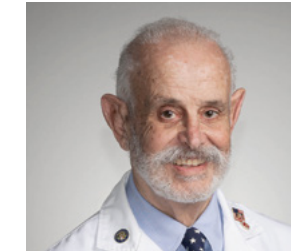
Eric Sauers, PhD, '97, dean and professor, was invited to serve as a member on the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce board of directors. His three-year term began July 1.



Dr. Eric Sauers, CHC

ATSU-KCOM

Sumitra Miriyala, PhD, MBA, MPH, FAHA, associate professor, anatomy, completed the Teaching & Learning Center's (TLC) Level Up! certificate program to become an ATSU-certified health sciences educator. In addition, Dr. Miriyala graduated from the TLC's 2024 Introduction to Educational Technology course.



Dr. Herbert Silva, MOSDOH

ATSU-MOSDOH

Herbert Silva, DMD, FICD, assistant professor and director, dental comprehensive care unit, clinical education, received the Distinguished Humanitarian Award from the International College of Dentists during its 90th annual convocation in September.



Dr. Breanne Jaqua, SOMA

ATSU-SOMA

Breanne M. Jaqua, DO, MPH, '17, associate professor, clinical science education, was selected for the class of 2024 National Academy of Medicine Fellowship in Osteopathic Medicine.

Briana Langston was promoted to senior administrative assistant of continuing education.

Maurice Lee, MD, MPH, FAAFP, assistant professor, clinical science education, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Introduction to Educational Technology course.

Melchiorra Mangiaracina, DO, was promoted to course director of osteopathic principles & practice.

Submit faculty & staff news to stillmagazine@atsu.edu

IN MEMORIAM

Still Magazine remembers those who have passed away and extends deepest sympathies to their families and friends. Visit stillmagazine.atstu.edu to read full-length obituaries.

1950s

Ira Hershman, DO, '58
April 1, 2024
Coral Gables, Florida

David W. Swayze, DO, '59
April 18, 2024
Punta Gorda, Florida

1960s

David W. Bashline, DO, '61
Jan. 22, 2024
Cranesville, Pennsylvania

Richard C. MacDonald, DO, '65
Nov. 25, 2023
Camden, Maine

Albert L. Pick, DO, JD, '67
Oct. 11, 2023
Alpharetta, Georgia

1970s

Ronald J. Bitza, DO, '74
Aug. 30, 2022
Peoria, Arizona

Richard A. Hall, DO, '76
May 21, 2024
Cass City, Michigan

Ronald J. Proctor, DO, '79
Feb. 13, 2024
Osage Beach, Missouri

1990s

Thomas F. Kabisch, DO, '93
May 28, 2024
Ann Arbor, Michigan

2000s

Leslie R. Schmeltz Jr., AuD, '01
July 23, 2024
Mesa, Arizona

Karen Mercer, AuD, '07
Aug. 1, 2024
Montrose, Colorado

2010s

Janice M. Beaton, AuD, '10
July 17, 2024
New Berlin, Wisconsin

Shamshudeen Khan, DHSc, '16, MS, '11
June 30, 2024
Westlake, Ohio

Faculty, staff & friends

Forrest Bollow, EdD
June 1, 2024
Shelbina, Missouri

Earl P. Duffy Jr., DDS
Aug. 14, 2024
Mesa, Arizona

Picture perfect

ATSU-MOSDOH graduates take a group selfie before commencement. See more about ATSU's commencements on Page 12.





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