

# Still

MAGAZINE

## The AI generation

ATSU embraces high-tech,  
high-touch learning experiences

A.T. Still University's alumni publication

### A Bucky welcome

On Friday, Feb. 23, approximately 200 uninsured and at-risk children received free dental care during the 17th annual Give Kids A Smile event hosted by ATSU's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health and the Arizona Dental Foundation. In total, 275 students, 44 alumni, and 70 faculty and staff members participated in this year's event.



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**The AI generation**

ATSU is integrating the latest learning technologies into its curricula, shaping the next generation of healthcare leaders, and ensuring graduates are well-prepared to meet the evolving needs of patients and healthcare systems.

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**Don't be out of touch**

An osteopathic physician shares her personal account of the importance of touching patients and the need to bring the physical exam back to the forefront of patient care.

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**In good hands**

When ATSU-MOSDOH faculty face a complex patient case at the St. Louis Dental Center, they combine clinical expertise with an innovative treatment plan to deliver high-quality oral healthcare.

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ON THE COVER

Using the AI option in Shutterstock, the cover image was generated with the following prompt: diverse male and female medical students wearing HoloLens, in blue tones.



AI-generated image of medical student surrounded by technology



Don't be out of touch



In good hands



ATSU's evolving legacies

# A.T. Still Memorial Library recognized for excellence in access and diversity



ATSU's A.T. Still Memorial Library has been named a recipient of the 2024 Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) Award by *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. The LEAD Award honors academic libraries' programs and initiatives encouraging and supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

*Insight Into Diversity* magazine selected A.T. Still Memorial Library because of the library's multitude of projects in support of its diversity statement and action plan, including staff education initiatives on accessibility and cultural competency, diversity collections and exhibitions, and engagement with ATSU's Diversity & Inclusion department, student organizations, diversity initiatives, and committees.

"Diversity and serving the underserved, both of which are mentioned in our university's mission statement, are some of the strongest core values of ATSU," said Hal Bright, MLS, AHIP, university library director. "I am proud of the work our team has performed in these areas, and this award shines a light on the success we have had in the past year."



For more information about the 2024 LEAD Award, visit [insightintodiversity.com](https://insightintodiversity.com)

# Still

MAGAZINE

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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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## ATSU's AI era

As we navigate an era of unprecedented innovation, ATSU remains dedicated to our osteopathic heritage and equipping our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape. In this issue of *Still Magazine*, we explore the importance of listening to and thoroughly examining patients, the transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) in our health professions programs, and demonstrating how technology and tradition can synergistically come together to enhance both education and patient care.


AI technology holds immense promise in revolutionizing healthcare education by providing new tools and resources for teaching, learning, and research. At ATSU, we are integrating AI into our curricula to create immersive and interactive learning experiences. These advancements allow our students to engage with complex healthcare scenarios in ways previously unimaginable. Turn to Page 12 to discover how we are harnessing the power of AI to enhance the educational experience.

Despite the many benefits AI offers, it cannot replace the human element essential for providing compassionate, whole person healthcare. Linnette Sells, DO, '82, shares her insights on the enduring importance of physical exam skills on Page 24. Additionally, our faculty at the St. Louis Dental Center showcase an innovative approach to a complex patient case on Page 30, highlighting the ongoing interplay between cutting-edge technology and hands-on clinical expertise.

Furthermore, ATSU's Board of Trustees is committed to the University's ongoing development and innovation. As we continue to grow, our governance structure has been updated to reflect our four locations and to lay a solid foundation for future leadership. The new structure includes a chancellor overseeing the entire University system, supported by two regional presidents - one for Kirksville and St. Louis, Missouri, and another for Mesa, Arizona, and Santa Maria, California. This streamlined approach enhances efficiency and ensures responsible use of resources, all in support of ATSU's mission and vision.

Through your continued support, we are shaping the future of healthcare education and driving positive change in the communities we serve. Thank you for being a part of our journey.

Yours in service,

  
Craig M. Phelps, DO, '84  
ATSU Chancellor



Top: ATSU-SOMA students wear HoloLens headsets in an anatomy lab. Bottom: Fourth-year ATSU-ASDOH student Timur Souchiski uses the AI tool VideaTeach.

# Being a good neighbor

ATSU-SOMA alumna shares inspiration behind speech at campus event

By Arselia Gales

When Renée J. Crawford, DO, '20, spoke at ATSU's Championing the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. event on Jan. 16, she captivated the audience with her unique point of view, depth of knowledge, and passion for serving the underserved.

Dr. Crawford, a graduate of ATSU's School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona (ATSU-SOMA), strives to be a clinically excellent, culturally proficient, and socially conscious physician. She hoped those tenets would shine through in her speech.

"I wanted to highlight Dr. King's foundation and why he fought for what he fought for. I went to our founding documents, the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence," Dr. Crawford says. "I went to Dr. King's foundation, the Bible, and from a theological standpoint, the focus was to inspire us to be a good neighbor. So, in whatever role you play at ATSU, you need to look out for those you interact with."

During her time at ATSU-SOMA, Dr. Crawford was recognized as a Graduate Health Professions scholar, awarded the 2019-20 ATSU Diversity Excellence Award for her work with ATSU Diversity & Inclusion and the Student National Medical Association, and named ATSU-SOMA 2020 Student DO of the Year.

Now, she is a chief resident at Phoenix Children's Hospital Pediatric Residency Program Alliance. As a resident, she received the Phoenix Children's J. Kipp Charlton, MD, Resident Humanitarian of the Year award for the 2022-23 academic year. In addition to support she's received from ATSU-SOMA and Phoenix Children's, she credits her success to the mentors she's had throughout her healthcare journey.

A Southern California native, Dr. Crawford knew she wanted to be a doctor when she was just 5 years old. However, medicine wasn't the only thing on her mind - she also had a passion for basketball. She attended Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego on an athletic and academic scholarship. She majored in biology and was pre-med, and played point guard for the women's basketball team, becoming team captain in her senior year.

In her gap year before attending ATSU-SOMA, Dr. Crawford was a substitute teacher and enjoyed teaching preschool, kindergarten, and second grade, solidifying her desire to be a pediatrician. She also was an assistant coach for Varsity girls' basketball and head coach for freshman and Junior Varsity girls' basketball.

When it came to her speech, Dr. Crawford not only focused on Dr. King, but she drew from her religious background as well as her love for sports and Disney movies. She opened with a quote from Dr. King's speech at the annual meeting of the Medical Committee for Human Rights in 1966: "We are concerned about the constant use of federal funds to support this most notorious expression of segregation. Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhuman because it often results in physical death."

She then took listeners on a journey through America's healthcare system, highlighting how even through the passage of certain laws, including the Hill-Burton Act of 1946 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, racist ideologies still crept into healthcare, contributing to health disparities and certain patients not getting the care they need.

"Our question for today is, if I don't stop to help, what will happen to this community?" she asked the audience.



Dr. Renée Crawford



On the day of her speech at ATSU, Dr. Renée Crawford (second from right) was joined by (left to right) Clinton Normore, her aunt Mary Shumate, Dr. Craig Phelps, and her uncle John Shumate, a former NBA player.

**“Our question for today is, if I don’t stop to help, what will happen to this community?”**

**– Dr. Renée J. Crawford**

Dr. Crawford believes the best way for healthcare professionals to advance equality and justice in healthcare is simply by learning.

“We’re lifelong learners. Our goal should be to ensure our patients get access. We have to be socially conscious and aware of things affecting our patients,” she says. “When you take continuing education, you’re learning about new guidelines and clinical pathways and ensuring all your patients get access to care.”

At Phoenix Children’s, Dr. Crawford does just that and continues the work she did at ATSU-SOMA. As an intern, she joined the Diversity and Inclusion committee and Health Equity committee. She also is an integral part of the residency program’s Health Equity Advocacy Leaders (HEAL) curriculum. Through this program, all residents participate in the evidence-based Health Equity Pearl curriculum and HEAL rounds.

The Health Equity Pearl curriculum is a resident-designed, -led, and -sustained curriculum all residents present during the academic half-day conference. HEAL rounds are case reports of clinical cases seen in the program’s institution, which spark multidisciplinary discussion on how to pursue health equity for patients and their families. HEAL rounds are designed to extend beyond the residency program to inspire transformational change within the hospital system and achieve health equity for all patients and their families.

Through these programs, Dr. Crawford aims to foster an inclusive environment and give back to the community, further promoting Dr. King’s philosophy of being a good neighbor.



To listen to Dr. Crawford’s speech, visit [atsu.edu/crawford-MLK](https://atsu.edu/crawford-MLK)



Dr. Renée Crawford shoots a basket during a game in her senior year at Point Loma Nazarene University.



Dr. Renée Crawford during her fourth year of medical school with fellow GPS scholars and classmates along with Clinton Normore (center).



Dr. Renée Crawford celebrates her residency graduation with her oldest brother Josh (left) and great aunt Gloria McQueen.



Dr. Renée Crawford joins residency classmate Abhijeet (far right) and intern Jacob (center) at the 2023 Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting in Washington, D.C.



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# FEATURES



ATSU was awarded a patent for a 3D cervical, pelvic, and lumbar model designed to transform epidural placement instruction. Developed by Debra Loguda-Summers, public service and 3D print service manager, A.T. Still Memorial Library; Jamie Carroll, senior graphic designer, academic technologies; Marcus Matson, DO, '20; and Zachary Headman, DO, '20, the project is a culmination of several years of collaborative work.

"I want to extend my gratitude to ATSU for their support of this project during the last several years," says Loguda-Summers. "Collaborating with such a talented and dedicated group of individuals has been inspiring. It was a collective effort to design a resource that benefits our students."

Loguda-Summers, D., Headman, Z., Matson, M., Carroll, J. (2023) Systems and Methods for Injection Placement Training (U.S. Patent No. 11,798,433). U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

### IN THIS SECTION

- AI at ATSU
- Don't be out of touch
- In good hands
- ATSU's evolving legacies
- A return to campus

# The AI generation

ATSU integrates the latest technologies to educate healthcare professionals of the future

By Katie Hubbard

Artificial intelligence (AI) is seemingly everywhere. It's become a popular topic in conversation and daily news headlines. While many people may feel intimidated or uninformed about AI, chances are, they are more familiar with it than they realize. One doesn't have to be an expert on the latest technology to know how to ask Siri or Alexa to set a timer or add items to a grocery list. However, AI-based applications, like these personal assistants, are becoming more common to everyday life, including life at ATSU.



ATSU



### AI WROTE THIS ABOUT ITSELF

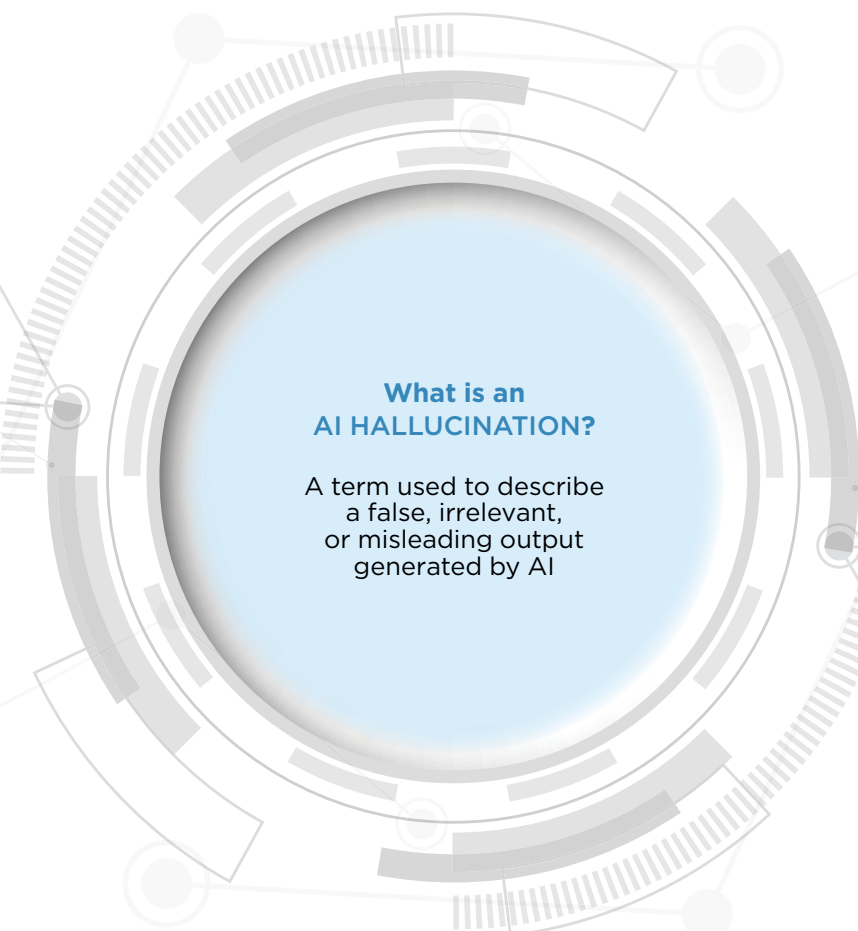
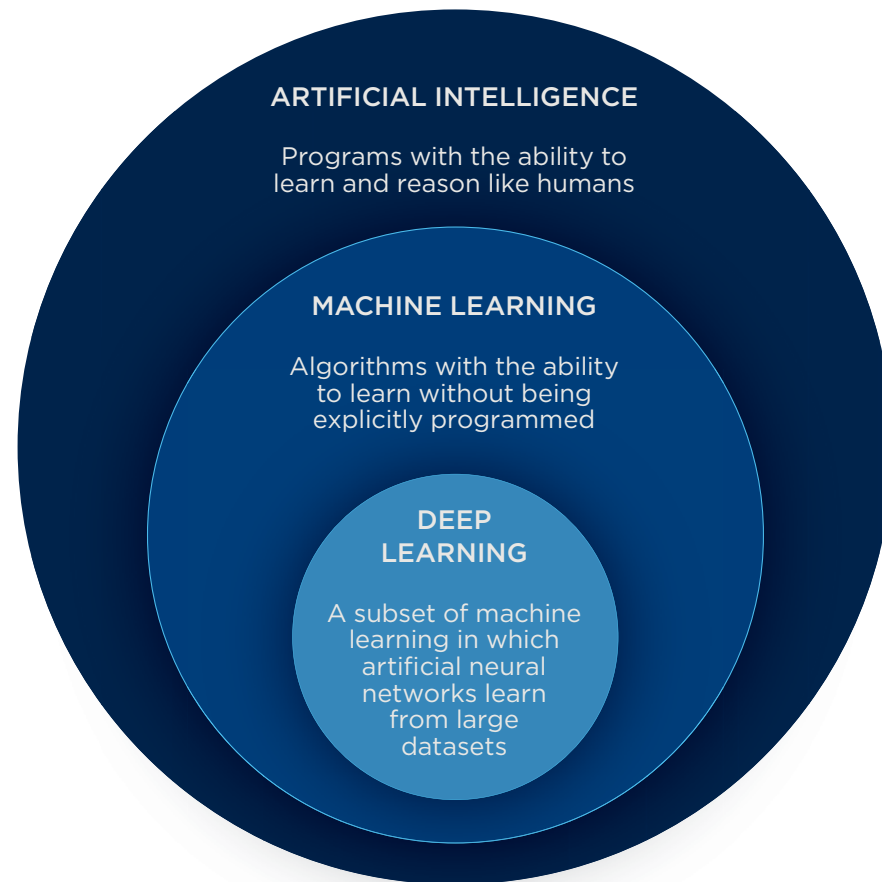
*AI has undergone a remarkable evolution since its inception. The concept of AI emerged in the mid-20th century, with pioneers such as Alan Turing proposing the idea of machines that could exhibit intelligent behavior. Early AI systems focused on rule-based reasoning and symbolic manipulation, but progress was limited by computational power and the complexity of real-world problems. However, the field experienced a resurgence in the 21st century, driven by advances in computing technology, the availability of vast amounts of data, and breakthroughs in machine learning algorithms.*

*Today, AI permeates many aspects of our lives, from virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa to recommendation systems, autonomous vehicles, and medical diagnostics. Deep learning, a subfield of machine learning, has been particularly influential, enabling AI systems to learn from large datasets and make complex decisions with human-like proficiency. While AI has made tremendous strides, challenges remain, including ethical concerns, biases in algorithms, and the need for transparency and accountability in AI systems. Nevertheless, AI continues to transform industries and societies, promising a future of unprecedented innovation and opportunity.*

### WRITING WITH AI

Using ChatGPT, version 3.5, with the prompt “Please provide a paragraph or two on the history of AI and where it is today,” the previous two paragraphs were displayed within seconds. (Please and thank you go a long way, right?) Using the same prompt two more times, it gave similar versions of this response with slightly different wording, demonstrating its ability to offer multiple perspectives and levels of detail.

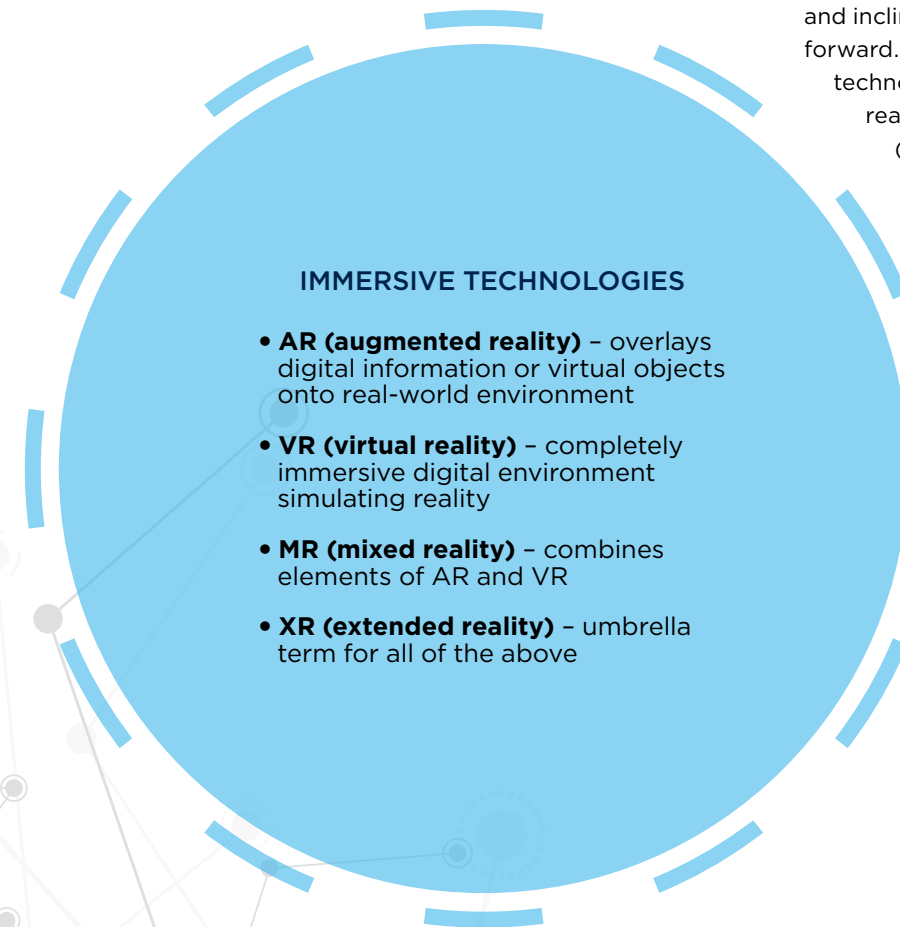
Responses will vary by the application and version used. In this writer’s experience, prompts are key to getting desired responses. According to ChatGPT, prompts play a vital role in guiding, clarifying, customizing, controlling, and optimizing interactions with AI systems. Essentially, quality inputs yield quality outputs. However, it is important to be aware of “AI hallucinations,” which are incorrect or nonsensical responses.



### WHERE IN THE WORLD OF AI IS ATSU?

As ChatGPT mentioned previously, AI has been around for decades. However, in the last few years, the use of generative AI has exploded with its powerful capability to produce complex and creative outputs of text, images, video, and more. Navigating the world of AI is daunting, and at times overwhelming, with new applications launching on a regular basis.

“AI is fueling many new tools because it can facilitate writing code. One example is the ability for virtual worlds to progress very quickly,” says Bryan Krusniak, MBA, chief information officer, ATSU. “There are new developments to learn about almost every day.”



The growing influence of AI applications stretches across industries, including education and healthcare, where ATSU intersects. ATSU has recognized it’s not a matter of if, but how, AI will be used throughout its operations. The University’s approach has been to embrace the technology and explore its uses by finding early adopters and supporting their endeavors.

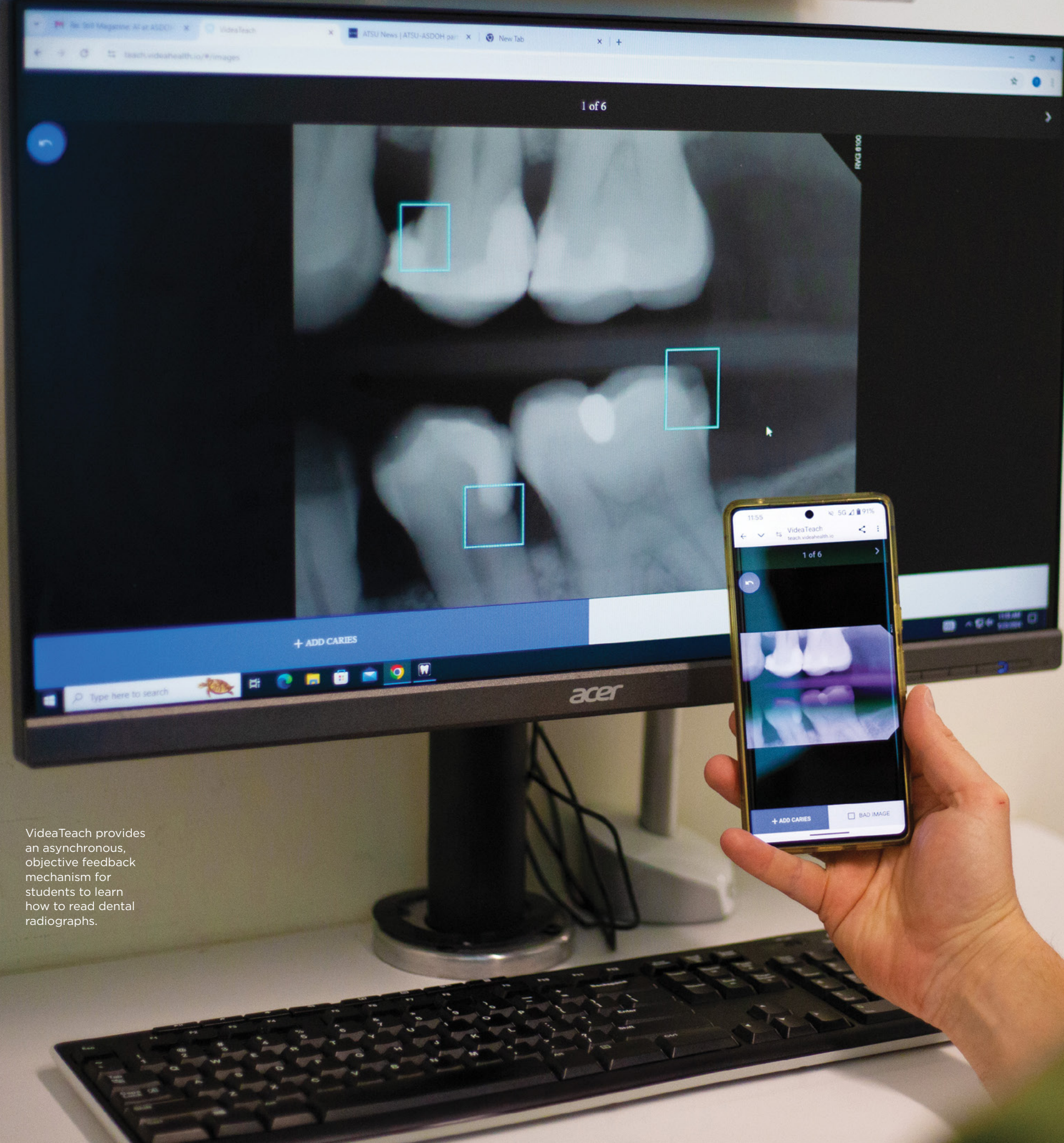
“The University is actively exploring AI’s emerging role in healthcare and education,” says ATSU Chancellor Craig M. Phelps, DO, ’84. “We are using this opportunity to find innovative ways to learn, work, teach, and advance healthcare research and practice.”

Innovation is central to ATSU’s mission, and the University is filled with faculty and staff who are aligned with the mission and inclined to pursue activities propelling the University forward. Projects and initiatives using new learning technologies of AI, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), mixed reality (MR), and extended reality (XR) are popping up across the University. These projects include enhanced learning activities, research projects, curriculum development, chatbots, customer relationship management, call monitoring, lead acquisition, and so much more.

The University views AI as a tool to enhance human intelligence and capabilities, not replace it. When used accordingly, the technology has the potential to increase efficiency across ATSU, and ultimately, empower students to become next-generation healthcare professionals.

“AI is a powerful tool,” Krusniak says. “Especially when put in the hands of those who have existing subject matter expertise.”





VideaTeach provides an asynchronous, objective feedback mechanism for students to learn how to read dental radiographs.

## AI ON CAMPUS

A number of ATSU programs are integrating AI into their labs and clinical activities. Jonny Brennan, MD, DMD, MPH, '11, assistant professor and associate dean, innovation and curriculum, ATSU's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-ASDOH), has been at the forefront of the latest technology in dentistry. He says the School is carefully and judiciously stepping into AI with a few projects underway.

One of those projects is VideaTeach, an AI-powered gamified tool teaching students how to diagnose and plan treatment for oral diseases. Since October 2019, ATSU-ASDOH has partnered with VideaHealth AI to use this tool in the classroom where students view a series of dental radiographs and identify any problem areas. At the end of the series, students are shown their answers alongside AI's answers. This provides an asynchronous, objective feedback mechanism for students to learn how to read dental radiographs early in their academic program.

Additionally, ATSU-ASDOH shared more than 1 million anonymized images and just as many metadata points with those images to give VideaHealth AI greater predictive success. VideaHealth AI has built its platform seamlessly into the School's electronic dental record, allowing ATSU-ASDOH the ability to turn on its AI predictive technology as soon as the School completes development of its AI policy and implementation plan, which is in progress.

"We have one current faculty-supervised, student-led research project partnering with Overjet AI related to predictive analysis of 2D radiographs and are exploring another potential project with them around our new 3D Tomosynthesis technology by Portray," Dr. Brennan says. "In addition, we are exploring potential research opportunities in collaboration with ATSU's Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-MOSDOH) around using AI within a VR/AR/MR/XR context to develop a virtual campus where dental students from both programs can have a shared experience."

Across campus at ATSU's School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona (ATSU-SOMA), the Anatomy department added the Microsoft HoloLens 2 to its virtual anatomy curriculum last year. HoloLens 2 is an untethered MR headset enabling users to view computer-generated content displayed against their real-world surroundings. It adapts to the user's hands, allowing students to touch, grasp, and move anatomical structures. It even allows students to "peel back" layers and study anatomical intricacies by simply stepping toward the model.



The Microsoft HoloLens 2 allows ATSU-SOMA students to touch, grasp, and move structures and study anatomical intricacies.

“At ATSU-SOMA, we have embraced MR using the Microsoft HoloLens 2 to harness the power of collaborative learning,” says Anna Campbell, PhD, associate professor and chair, anatomy, ATSU-SOMA. “Students engage in enriching discussions while navigating holographic anatomical models. They apply their knowledge of anatomy to real-world clinical cases. It is truly a unique learning experience.”

In Missouri at ATSU's Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (ATSU-KCOM), the original school of osteopathic medicine also keeps at the forefront of new learning technologies as medical education and clinical practice evolve. The College is looking at several AI applications for skill development and medical procedures.

“While AI cannot take the place of a physician's ears, eyes, or hands, it will be useful in practicing new skills with high fidelity through simulation,” says Patricia Sexton, DHed, FNAOME, '08, associate dean, medical education, ATSU-KCOM. “We currently have a few early implementations on which our students practice in the human patient simulation lab.”

## AI IN ONLINE EDUCATION

The University's online college, ATSU's College of Graduate Health Studies (ATSU-CGHS), is integrating AI in its education, research, and practice through course design, curriculum and program development, differential diagnoses, research analysis, and more.

For example, Erin Breitenbach, PhD, MEd, professor and chair, health education, ATSU-CGHS, is developing a recommended methodology for AI use in curriculum development. She has a dual purpose to her work. First, her goal is to ensure assignments, discussion posts, and other coursework continue to optimize critical thinking skills in students and are not easily produced using an AI prompt. Second, her goal is to maximize efficiency and accuracy in the development and fine tuning of learning outcomes and rubrics.

“AI is an accelerant, an opportunity to enhance what we do in our role as instructors,” Dr. Breitenbach says. “We need to be asking ourselves how we can leverage AI to make us work better as instructors.”

**“Instead of threatening what we do, we hope AI can help us do our jobs better.”**

**– Dr. Milton Pong, associate professor, ATSU-SOMA**

From a research standpoint, students and faculty are using ATLAS.ti, an AI-powered research analysis tool for qualitative research. This tool facilitates data analysis, allows for collaboration with team members, and automatically codes and summarizes documents, providing customized results. It saves time with manual tasks, allowing faculty and students to focus more time on their actual research.

Further, ATSU-CGHS is engaging students in its AI integration. In one course from the Doctor of Education in Health Professions program, ATSU-CGHS involved students in evaluating the presence and usefulness of a course chatbot, serving as a virtual help desk agent. Additionally, students were asked to examine ATSU-CGHS' plagiarism policy and the University's academic integrity policy to determine whether they fully encompassed emerging AI technology.

Students analyzed pros and cons of AI and presented recommendations to ATSU-CGHS deans. The deans reviewed recommendations, developed a position statement on AI use for the College, and revised its plagiarism policy based on student recommendations. ATSU-CGHS also made recommendations to the University for revisions of its academic integrity policy.

“All six departments in ATSU-CGHS have engaged students and faculty to ensure we are promoting the ethical use of AI. We want to recognize the many benefits AI offers, while also teaching responsible use and maintaining academic and professional integrity,” says ATSU-CGHS Dean Marisa Hastie, EdD, MS, ACSM EP-C, PN-1, FACS. “Many courses now have assignments that provide opportunities for students to use AI for brainstorming, writing refinement, review, etc. Our team is learning alongside our students in exploring this powerful and evolving tool.”

## AI IN A COURSE

Tricia Dabrowski, AuD, associate professor, audiology, ATSU's Arizona School of Health Sciences (ATSU-ASHS), integrated AI into her Audiologic Rehabilitation course. As she considered how AI could be used, she questioned whether traditional course assessment methods reflected student knowledge and understanding of learning objectives and prepared them to apply concepts during clinical rotations and patient care.

Previously, the course grade was weighted heavily on the student's ability to develop a five-week group aural rehabilitation program. Course content included lesson plan development and facilitation skills, which limited time spent on rehabilitative methods, like communication and speech perception training or development of patient resources. Dr. Dabrowski hoped time spent developing this group program would increase the likelihood of its implementation when students entered clinical practice.

As Dr. Dabrowski experimented with AI to see how it might affect this course component, she discovered ChatGPT completed this heavily weighted assignment in 15 seconds. Realizing a different approach was needed, she reconsidered what she truly wanted students to learn, which was how to provide comprehensive audiologic rehabilitation to patients. Helping students understand the benefits associated with each rehabilitative technique became more important than developing their group program.

The new course introduces students to the importance of patient-centered care and age-related hearing changes, which limit an older patient's success with amplification. Students spend more time investigating the patient's perspective and researching supporting perceptual training, benefits of communication strategies, and consequences of communication behaviors. Throughout the course, students use AI tools to investigate ways to improve quality of care, design decision aids, identify community-based referral resources, and show how easy it is to design and implement group audiologic rehabilitation programs. The follow-up discussions generated by these activities proved to be an invaluable course asset.

“I'm still refining the course design as we consider ways to use AI and to evaluate the quality of the provided content, but the first attempt felt like we were moving in the right direction,” Dr. Dabrowski says.

## AI IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

In the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at ATSU-ASHS, assistant professor Sara Parker, PT, DPT, just completed her first year teaching the Documentation & Clinical Reasoning course. In this course, students learn how to document in all aspects of the profession, and writing patient goals is an important component. Traditionally, goals have been taught using the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound) framework.

“In previous first-year comprehensive practical documentation, it was apparent students had not grasped the concept of including all components of the SMART framework,” Dr. Parker says. “This can lead to poor clinical reasoning and, ultimately, lack of reimbursement for skilled services.”

To address students’ difficulty with writing patient goals, Dr. Parker tried to find an innovative way to teach students this skill. She considered the growing popularity of ChatGPT and thought this course was a perfect fit for implementing AI. She then collaborated with Julie Speer, PhD, MS, and Brittany Williams, MS, from ATSU’s Teaching & Learning Center and received approval from ATSU’s Institutional Review Board for a research project titled “AI-based Learning Activity to Teach Physical Therapy Students How to Write SMART Goals.”

As a learning activity and research project, Dr. Parker’s hope was for students to explore using AI in a guided and healthy way, produce accurate and comprehensive SMART goals with real-time feedback, and learn how to use ChatGPT as a tool for future learning. It was delivered to students as a survey with four parts: playground to introduce ChatGPT, guided prompts to learn about SMART goals, clarifying lecture, and practice developing patient cases and writing their own goals.

From the data, Dr. Parker found statistically significant improvements in students’ ability to identify SMART goal components and write them accurately. She says many students retained this knowledge and used this tool to help them modify their goals in later assignments. She also says one of the greatest benefits of this activity was the real-time or formative feedback the platform provided. Students were able to see their mistakes and fix them immediately, without waiting for instructor feedback.

“The intent of the activity was to provide students with a tool to learn materials throughout their career,” Dr. Parker says. “I believe AI-based learning has limitless possibilities; however, we need to ensure we scaffold it in a safe way to uphold academic integrity.”

**“I believe AI-based learning has limitless possibilities; however, we need to ensure we scaffold it in a safe way to uphold academic integrity.”**

**– Dr. Sara Parker, assistant professor, physical therapy, ATSU-ASHS**

## SPECIAL INITIATIVE FUNDING

To encourage further exploration of AI across the University, ATSU made financial support available to faculty and teams pursuing innovative projects using this technology. In early 2024, ATSU’s Division of Research, Grants & Scholarly Innovations announced seven proposals were funded under this one-time, internal AI/MR Innovation in Health Professions Education Grant competition. Collectively, \$28,476.55 was awarded for seven proposed projects.

“AI is everywhere you turn,” says Milton Pong, PhD, associate professor, ATSU-SOMA, and a recipient of ATSU’s special initiative funding. “We think it has a place in medical education, too. The challenge is finding the right place. Instead of threatening what we do, we hope AI can help us do our jobs better. It may take a few iterations to get to where we want to be, so our project will start us on this journey.”

Another recipient of the special initiative funding is Brittney Hulsey, DMSc, PA-C, associate professor and program director, physician assistant studies, ATSU-ASHS, who took an interprofessional approach to using AI by collaborating with Dr. Anna Campbell and third-year medical student Anna King from ATSU-SOMA. The project, “Beyond the Surface: Augmented Reality in Procedural Skill Development in Physician Assistant Education,” assesses the feasibility and value of integrating AR technology in a physician assistant clinical skills course.

The project’s aim is to enhance learning and course delivery by using the Microsoft HoloLens 2 technology in combination with physical models, ultimately improving students’ anatomical understanding and procedural skills. The current course relies on physical models to teach students to perform medical procedures. However, physical models are limited in showing underlying anatomical structures, which are critical for comprehensive understanding of the procedures performed.

## FUNDED PROPOSALS

**“Development of an Interactive Artificial Intelligence (AI) Virtual Reality (VR) Dental Simulated Patient as a Learning Activity for Dental Students” – \$4,950**

Richard Allinson, DDS, assistant professor, ATSU-MOSDOH, with collaborators Grishondra Branch-Mays, DDS, MS; Graziela Batista, DDS, PhD; Leila Nasiry Khanlar, DDS, PhD, MSc; Dave Kojic, DMD, PhD, MS; Hanan Omar, BDS, PhD, MSc; and Ammar Musawi, MDS, BDS, MPH

**“Use of Virtual and Mixed Reality in Enhancing Dental Education” – \$5,000**

Amira Elgreatly, BDS, MS, FAGD, associate professor, ATSU-ASDOH, with collaborators Ahmed Mahrous, BDS, MS, FACP; Jonathan Brennan, MD, DMD, MPH; Erin Maruska, DMD, MPH, FAGD; William Madaio, DMD; and Klud Razoky, BDS, NZDREX

**“Beyond the Surface: Augmented Reality in Procedural Skill Development in Physician Assistant Education” – \$2,000**

Brittney Hulsey, DMSc, PA-C, associate professor and program director, ATSU-ASHS’ Physician Assistant Studies program, with collaborators Anna Campbell, PhD, and Anna King, OMS III, from ATSU-SOMA

**“AI-Assisted Crown Margin Identification: A Comparative Faculty Development Program” – \$4,526.55**

Ahmed Mahrous, BDS, MS, FACP, associate professor, ATSU-ASDOH, with collaborators Jonny Brennan, MD, DMD, MPH; Amira Elgreatly, BDS, MS, FAGD; Mindy Motahari, DMD, MAEd; Tamer El-Gendy, DMD, BDS, MS; and Ann Spolarich, PhD, RDH, FSCDH

**“Harnessing the Power of AI Image Generators/Manipulators for Creating Custom Innovative Anatomical Resources” \$3,500**

John Olson, PhD, professor, and Anna Campbell, PhD, associate professor and chair, anatomy, ATSU-SOMA

**“Holographic Medical Imaging Overlays: An Interactive Medical Image Holographic Visualization System for 3D Headsets in an Educational Environment” – \$3,500**

John Olson, PhD, professor, ATSU-SOMA

**“Finding a Place for Artificial Intelligence in Foundational Medical Science Education” \$5,000**

Milton Pong, PhD, associate professor, ATSU-SOMA, with collaborators Timothy Shipley, PhD, and Robert Lewis, PhD

“While students are presumed to possess foundational knowledge of anatomy from prior coursework and preparatory materials, the existing training setup lacks direct visualization of relevant anatomical landmarks and spatial relationships,” Dr. Hulsey says.

She hopes using AR technology alongside physical models will address these limitations. By overlying specific holographic models onto the physical models, this innovation will allow students to see and identify anatomical landmarks necessary for successful procedures in real time.

“It is possible a comprehensive visual understanding will contribute significantly to students’ knowledge and preparedness in performing procedures and understanding complications with an anatomical basis,” Dr. Hulsey says. “By combining AR with traditional methods, the study will reflect a flexible education delivery system that accommodates diverse learners.”

## HOW WILL AI AFFECT ATSU STUDENTS?

With AI and other technologies advancing by the day, it is difficult to predict what challenges and opportunities ATSU students will face by the time they become practicing professionals. At the rate AI has advanced in the last year alone, this technology could, and likely will, look much different several years from now when current first-year students enter their respective professions. As with everything, students will need to be lifelong learners and adjust with the times.

“When it comes to advanced technologies, what do we need to teach our students, and how do we prepare them? ATSU needs to continue preparing students for what could be,” Krusniak says. “One of ATSU’s core professional attributes (CPAs) is critical thinking, and this component will be crucial for students to be able to evaluate and validate AI responses.”

The CPAs are a set of five cross-curricular meta-skills inherent to all ATSU graduates. They enable graduates to select, adapt, and apply their discipline-specific knowledge and skills to varying situations. This enhances their competence as healthcare professionals and ultimately improves outcomes in aspects of their professional roles.

The future of healthcare lies in the hands of professionals equipped with the knowledge and skills to use advanced technology effectively. As AI gets smarter, the demand for healthcare professionals who understand how to leverage AI as a tool will continue to grow. By integrating AI into curricula and preparing students to navigate its complexities, ATSU is not only shaping the next generation of healthcare leaders but also ensuring they are well-prepared to meet the evolving needs of patients and healthcare systems. ■



Dr. Kevin Farberow

## A HUMAN-TO-HUMAN Q&A

with Kevin Farberow, DHSc, '12

Dr. Farberow is vice president of strategic partnerships at Atropos Health, an organization rapidly transforming medical data into real-world evidence, closing evidence gaps in medicine, and expediting research. He also holds positions with the Medical Reserve Corps and Community Emergency Response Team. In addition, he stays apprised of advances in technology and remains engaged with the global health community, including participating in the recent Intelligent Health AI global summit in Basel, Switzerland.

### Q: What are some benefits and challenges you've experienced with AI?

**A:** There are lots of benefits I've experienced firsthand by using AI. For example, comparing clinical outcomes or even therapeutic areas of focus across multiple international health systems, I was able to quickly generate a summary report detailing all the variables I wanted to contrast by country. On the other hand, there are a host of notable challenges I've faced using AI applications. Using the previous example, ensuring scholarly sources are retrieved or cited is an issue with certain AI applications. In another example, I've come to appreciate the accuracy of AI applications depends on multiple factors, including training data, update frequencies, and even bias.

### Q: What role will AI play in healthcare?

**A:** I think a more appropriate question is what role will AI *not* play in healthcare?! From returning results on complicated clinical questions, to summarizing or even translating languages of real-world evidence derived from real-world data, all the way to helping refine hypotheses.

### Q: Which areas of healthcare do you think AI will have the biggest impact and why?

**A:** One of the healthcare areas I foresee AI having the biggest impact is in alleviating clinician burnout and automating administrative tasks in clinical workflow, including drug discovery, prior authorization, and claims adjudication.

### Q: Is AI ready to take over the healthcare world?

**A:** AI is just not ready to be unilaterally relied on for clinical decision support without a human in the middle. Additionally, until the percentage of AI hallucinations improves, be conscientious of the positive and negative results before totally relying on AI.



### Want to learn more?

Learn about navigating AI at ATSU by visiting [atsu.edu/navigating-AI](https://atsu.edu/navigating-AI) or scanning the QR code.



### Interact with ATSU's chatbot

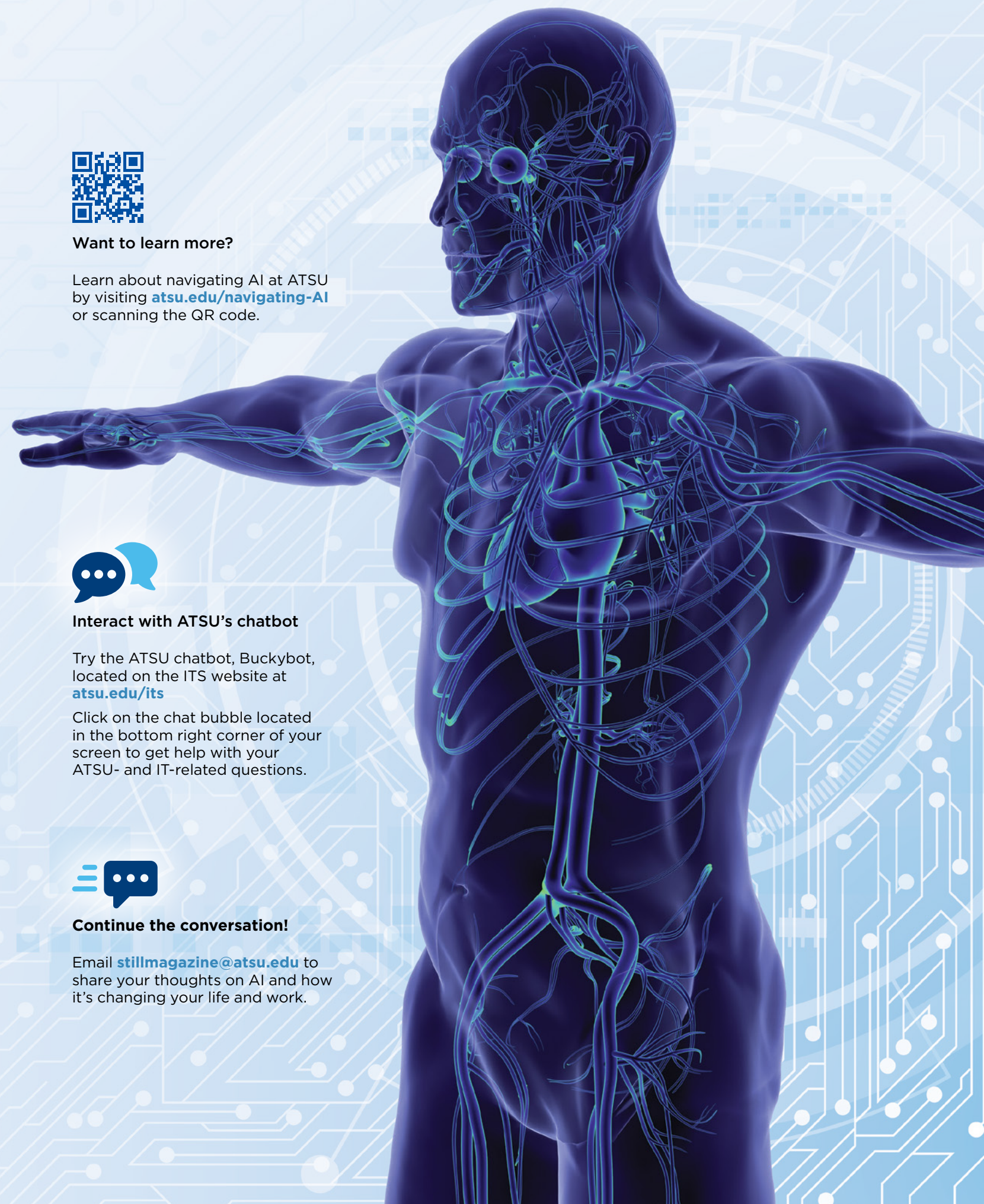
Try the ATSU chatbot, Buckybot, located on the ITS website at [atsu.edu/its](https://atsu.edu/its)

Click on the chat bubble located in the bottom right corner of your screen to get help with your ATSU- and IT-related questions.



### Continue the conversation!

Email [stillmagazine@atsu.edu](mailto:stillmagazine@atsu.edu) to share your thoughts on AI and how it's changing your life and work.



# Don't be out of touch

As told by Linnette Sells, DO, FAOASM, '82

The physical exam has been the gold standard of diagnostic tools used to evaluate and treat a patient. However, with the challenges of today's healthcare system, including time constraints and reliance on technology, use of the physical exam in patient care has declined. Here, an osteopathic physician shares her personal account of the importance of touching patients and the need to bring the physical exam back to the forefront of patient care.



Dr. Linnette Sells serves as a member of ATSU's Board of Trustees. She is a former emergency room and urgent care physician and former team physician for Georgia Tech. An Operation Desert Storm veteran, Dr. Sells served in the U.S. Air Force as chief of the emergency department at MacDill Air Force Base. Dr. Sells also served as ATSU-Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine's (ATSU-KCOM) family medicine clinic director and faculty member from 1986-90.

As a DO, I was taught the skills of physical exam with emphasis on touch and palpation. I learned the importance of subtle changes in the musculoskeletal and lymph systems affecting a patient's health. I learned every human system affects the whole person. During my years in practice, I have witnessed the deterioration of these valuable skills in lieu of ordered testing based on history and chief complaints.

I have recently retired after 40 years in practice. Lab tests, X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs are now being ordered on patient complaints, often prior to the patient being seen by the doctor or provider. Artificial intelligence (AI) programs may be used to diagnose and work up patients again without physically touching the patient. In the past, we didn't have this technology readily available, and we used physical exam findings to guide our diagnosis and treatment. So, should the physical exam be negated? I do not believe this valuable tool should be eliminated from our arsenal in caring for our patients.

An example of a patient who needed a physical exam was a 10-year-old male with ankle pain and inability to bear weight. His mother wasn't happy with him because he was seen for an ankle sprain six months prior and had not been doing his prescribed exercises. He complained the night before of a possible re-injury but had no significant trauma. He was

seen by his pediatrician and had an X-ray taken, which was negative. An ACE wrap was applied, and he was told to do activity to tolerance.

I saw the young man later that day because he was complaining of increased pain and his mother wanted him to get pain medication. On my physical exam, the skin of the ankle joint was warm, and he was tender to palpation along the entire ankle mortise with no ecchymosis or ligamentous laxity. His pain markedly increased on checking the joint's range of motion. Due to the joint exam findings, I ordered labs, which showed elevated white blood cell count and erythrocyte sedimentation rate, and later, the C-reactive protein (CRP) was markedly elevated. This young patient had a septic joint and osteomyelitis, not an ankle sprain. He had emergency surgery.

Another example of the need for a full physical exam was in the follow-up of a 72-year-old male who complained of an uncontrolled cough, which had been worse at night for a month. He was seen in two prior office visits by other providers who treated him for bronchitis with steroids, antibiotics, and cough medication. The electronic medical record (EMR) for the prior visits stated the lungs were clear and heart had a normal rhythm.

On my physical exam, I noted the patient had decreased breath sounds in lung bases, a third heart sound, and irregular heart rate, which was not picked up by the medical technologist who used an automated cuff. He also had +2 edema of his legs bilaterally. His thorax had tightness and somatic changes. This man had early congestive heart failure due to atrial fibrillation, not bronchitis.

The efficiency of EMR with templates simplifies the documentation of physical findings, but it is so easy to click the necessary categories without really doing the entire exam of that system. An example of an incomplete exam was with an 18-year-old male I saw for severe abdominal pain and fever. He was seen 24 hours prior in a local emergency room and told he had acute gastroenteritis, which was going around his school at the time. He said they asked about his symptoms, which were fever, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain, and he had vital signs taken, blood drawn, and IV hydration, along with anti-nausea medicine. He was told he had a reactive high white blood cell count, and the rest of his labs were normal.

My exam exhibited a young man in distress trying to maintain a “quiet position” with tachycardia, a rigid abdomen, decreased bowel sounds, and a temperature of 102. Deep palpation elicited rebound and guarding. My diagnosis without labs was acute appendicitis with probable rupture/peritonitis. His ER records were a five-page EMR document showing a very thorough exam had been completed, including head, ears, eyes, nose, throat, lungs, heart, abdomen, and neurological exam with muscle and deep tendon reflex testing. According to the document, all findings were normal. However, the patient stated no one performed a physical exam; they just ordered labs and an IV.

Before the mandatory male genital exam was removed from the pre-participation physical, I found several testicular masses, which were early cancer, inguinal hernias, and a syphilis lesion. During those pre-participation exams, also finding a heart murmur or enlarged lymph node could be life-saving. My staff asked why it took me longer to do the exam than other providers who only took a few minutes to sign the athlete’s form.

My first day on a student rotation at an Air Force base clinic, I awaited my first patient who was late. He shuffled in and told me he wanted to start an exercise program because he had become a couch potato following his military retirement. He was mid-40s, seemed to have a very slow gait, and struggled with muscle weakness. I proceeded to do a complete physical exam. He had a positive Babinski

sign and ankle clonus – I had never seen positives! He also had poor muscle tone and weakness with testing. I had to take this information to my attending physician who was already unhappy because I was so slow. I told him my findings and suspected my patient had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. He laughed and shook his head, muttering about medical students always looking for zebras. On examining the patient, he reluctantly agreed, and later, the neurologist confirmed the diagnosis.

When I was running the ATSU-KCOM family practice clinic, we admitted a 10-year-old female with vague abdominal pain and dehydration due to nausea and vomiting. I tasked our family medicine resident to do a full physical exam to see if we could make a more specific diagnosis. Surprisingly, the patient had hypertensive changes on examination of her eye grounds and cardiomegaly with high blood pressure. She also had somatic dysfunction of thoracic and lumbar areas. Based on these unusual findings, we checked her norepinephrine level. This led us to look for a paraganglioma, which was found in her abdomen and surgically removed.

A 45-year-old female CrossFit athlete went to the ER with 10 out of 10 pain in her left pelvis. Labs and an abdominal and pelvis CT scan were ordered. She stated the ER provider did not touch her hip. The scan was negative, and the only positive lab was plus 1 leukocytes in her urine. She was treated with an antibiotic and told to follow up with a urologist.

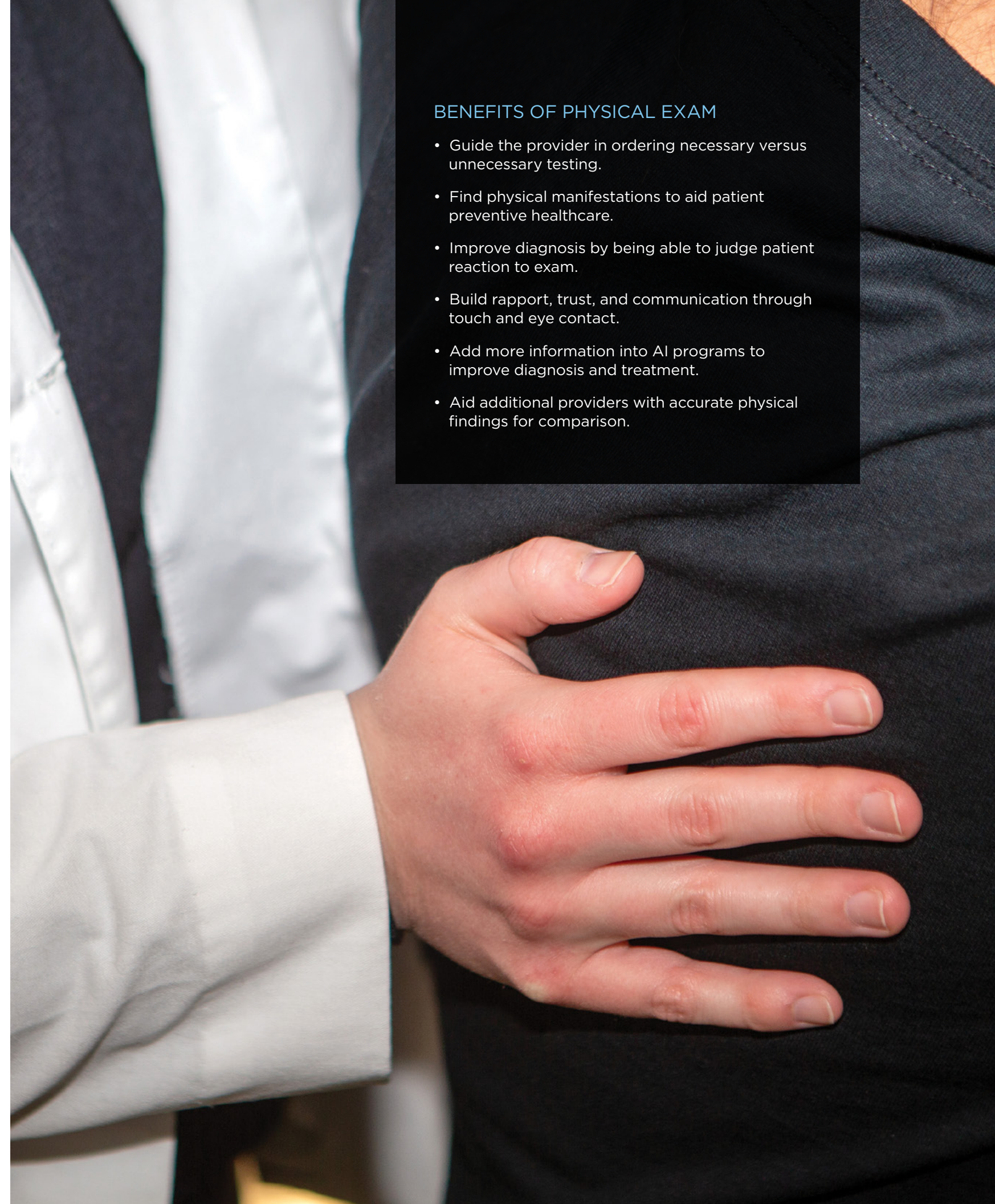
**“My cancer diagnosis would have been markedly delayed if Dr. Sells had not immediately examined and pinpointed the source of my pain.”**

**– A 45-year-old female patient and CrossFit athlete**

I saw the patient in the urgent care clinic afterward – she entered using her grandmother’s walker. On physical exam, she had severe palpable pain in her left pelvic innominate. The X-ray was negative, but because of her pain level, I ordered a CT scan and labs looking for markers of bone inflammation. Her CRP and erythrocyte sedimentation rate were markedly elevated, and the CT scan was read as inflammatory changes in the bone marrow. A bone biopsy showed acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

## BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL EXAM

- Guide the provider in ordering necessary versus unnecessary testing.
- Find physical manifestations to aid patient preventive healthcare.
- Improve diagnosis by being able to judge patient reaction to exam.
- Build rapport, trust, and communication through touch and eye contact.
- Add more information into AI programs to improve diagnosis and treatment.
- Aid additional providers with accurate physical findings for comparison.



## PHYSICAL EXAM EDUCATION AT ATSU

“The physical exam is essential to the development of the doctor-patient relationship, which is central to the practice of medicine. The physical exam is also a cost-effective way to evaluate and guide the use of necessary technology. Technology offers another tool in providing care, but it will never replace the doctor at the bedside who touches and converses with the patient to build a connection and alleviate human suffering.

ATSU-KCOM continues to teach the clinical skills needed to be the best bedside physician and, at the same time, incorporates the use of current technology to augment care. This high-tech/high-touch approach to medical education is part of what makes our graduates stand out.”

- Margaret Wilson, DO, '82  
ATSU-KCOM Dean

“ATSU-School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona (ATSU-SOMA) takes tremendous pride in training our students to excel in their osteopathic physical examination techniques as we prepare them to become osteopathic physician leaders in our nation's most vulnerable communities. Our students' current and future patients deserve the healing touch of human kindness that osteopathic medicine provides.”

- Sharon J. Obadia, DO, FNAOME, '97  
ATSU-SOMA Dean

“Teaching our students to provide hands-on, whole person healthcare is a hallmark of ATSU. A few years ago, a former classmate, who is an orthopedic physician and uses his hands to help patients daily, shared how he and all the other providers at a Florida health system were asked to attend a lecture on the importance of touching patients. This health system was getting so many negative comments from patients saying the doctor never touched them during their visit, experts were asked to come in and encourage the providers to perform physical exams – and this was before COVID.”

- Craig M. Phelps, DO, '84  
ATSU Chancellor

Recently, I moved and went to a new provider. I asked for an annual physical exam. My vital signs were taken, and I filled out a medical history and review of symptoms. I happen to be a 70-year-old CrossFit athlete, so I don't look my age. My provider looked in my ears and listened quickly to my lungs and heart. That was it! The provider then ordered a few basic labs and asked if I was up to date on my health maintenance testing: colonoscopy, mammogram, etc. I'm sure I'm not the exception. Essentially, I could've had a televisit for this exam.

Telemedicine is now being offered in many clinical settings, and it has its uses. However, as a “hands-on” DO, I have found this very difficult because of the possibility of a missed or erroneous diagnosis. Even a simple complaint of a sore throat without being able to visualize or palpate makes for a tentative diagnosis. I tended too often to recommend the patient be seen in the clinic.

One of the common complaints against doctors in Google reviews from patients is the fact they were never touched, which means they had no physical exam. My husband is also a DO and specialized in physical medicine and rehabilitation. He always did a thorough neurological and musculoskeletal exam. His patients were amazed and often stated they'd never had that extensive of an exam, even though they had multiple surgeries for their complaint.

I can cite many more examples of this medical trend. While the cases I highlighted in this story had some unusual diagnoses, they could have been any typical patient visit. As providers, we all tend to succumb to the pressures of clinical practice. With the number of patients we must see in a day, the ease of possible false documentation in EMR, and the notion testing can replace the need for physical exam, we are now on a downward spiral that could shortchange our patients and delay or miss diagnoses impacting their medical care and health. What role will AI play in the healthcare of our patients? Can we use these great technologies as tools to improve each patient's care without sacrificing the patient-doctor relationship and provide compassionate healthcare?

As DOs and ATSU-educated healthcare providers, we have been tasked with a mission statement to provide whole person healthcare. The tenets of osteopathic medicine say structure and function are reciprocally related. I believe we should be leaders in bringing back the physical exam as it is a strong and vital component of a patient's healthcare.

I entreat and challenge every one of my colleagues and future healthcare providers to re-examine their mindset on office visits and the physical exam. Let us not lose the skills we learned at ATSU and bring back the physical exam. ■



# In good hands

When ATSU-MOSDOH faculty face a complex patient case at the St. Louis Dental Center, they combine clinical expertise with an innovative treatment plan to deliver high-quality oral healthcare.

By Katie Hubbard

When Derrion Smith walks into the St. Louis Dental Center, he is greeted as if he's family. From reception to the clinic floor, everyone smiles and says hello, calling him by name. The dental center staff know him well. They've watched him grow up.

As a patient, Derrion knows his way around the clinic – he's been there dozens of times over the last five years. He is now 18 and a recent high school graduate, college-bound in the fall. These days, he only comes in periodically. His dental visits are mostly cleanings and follow-up appointments for what started as a serious oral health issue.

## A RARE, COMPLEX PATIENT CASE

Derrion first noticed the problem when he was about 10 years old. He remembers a foul taste coming from his gums. The left side of his jaw was slowly swelling, a cyst quietly forming below his teeth.

Because of the cyst's location and Derrion's lack of additional symptoms, the problem was not immediately noticeable. However, by age 13, this cyst had grown so large, it caught the attention of a teacher who thought Derrion had been eating

candy in class, which was not allowed. After Derrion explained it wasn't candy in his cheek and showed his gums to her, the teacher called Derrion's mother, T'Sheka Smith, to discuss the issue.

T'Sheka then took Derrion to a general dentist who referred them to the nearby St. Louis Dental Center for further evaluation. This visit began a long series of appointments where T'Sheka would be by his side, every step of the way.

At the dental center, which is a partnership of ATSU's Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-MOSDOH) and Affinia Healthcare, the Smiths met their care team, including Prashanth K. Haribabu, DDS, MDS, BDS, MSD, and Akshay Vij, BDS, ACT, FAGD. Dr. Haribabu is an assistant professor and specialty care unit director for oral & maxillofacial surgery, and Dr. Vij is an associate professor and specialty care unit director of esthetic & digital dentistry.

To begin, Dr. Haribabu performed a thorough inner and outer evaluation of Derrion's jaw. Then, the team took a 2D X-ray, which showed something alarming – a large lesion measuring 7 centimeters by 4 centimeters, extending deep into the jawbone.



Derrion Smith regularly visits Drs. Prashanth Haribabu (left) and Akshay Vij (right) at the St. Louis Dental Center.

To get a better view of the lesion under the surface, Dr. Vij used cone-beam CT technology to take a 3D X-ray of the jaw, which provided advanced imaging of the lesion and showed where the dental roots and nerves had shifted. This 3D scan would later become a key element in Derrion's treatment plan.

After a biopsy, Dr. Haribabu diagnosed the lesion as an odontogenic keratocyst (OKC), an aggressive type of jaw cyst with a high recurrence rate. While OKCs are common in older age groups, Derrion was the first patient at the dental center with an OKC of that size for his age group.

As Dr. Haribabu told the Smiths about the cyst, he explained the severity of Derrion's case. At that point, the jawbone was "paper thin" because the cyst had destroyed so much hard tissue. Left untreated, the cyst would continue to grow and further destroy the jawbone, leading to a broken jaw, reconstructive surgery, and possible facial disfigurement, a situation with devastating effects on such a young patient.

"It is not uncommon for a patient to lose part of the jaw. Essentially, you have to cut out an entire section," Dr. Vij says. "This is a 13-year-old kid who would have to have his jaw rebuilt prosthetically."

An urgent plan was needed to keep the cyst from growing – and coming back. However, Dr. Haribabu wanted to take a conservative treatment approach, for Derrion's sake and because of his mother's request to keep as much of his jaw intact as possible, including all of his teeth.

"I was very nervous," T'Sheka says. "I was more nervous for my son because of all he had to go through."

Dr. Haribabu and the team decided the best course of action was through marsupialization and enucleation of the cyst. These techniques involve two surgeries: one to shrink the cyst to a manageable size, and the second to completely remove the cyst, which is critical to prevent recurrence.

The Smiths recall feeling overwhelmed when they learned about the surgeries Derrion would need, and the steps for recovery. As reality set in, they knew it would be a long process.

"At the time, I didn't know what to think. I was nervous," Derrion says. "Of course, once I realized they were good and knew what they were doing, I was in good hands."

### CONSERVATIVE TREATMENT with INNOVATIVE PLANNING

Surgical removal of cysts requires careful planning to avoid vital nerves and arteries, particularly in the complex anatomy of the head and neck. To better visualize and plan his surgical approach, Dr. Haribabu collaborated with Dr. Vij to print a 3D model of Derrion's jaw.

"3D printing helps bring the X-ray into the physical world," Dr. Vij says. "This was necessary from a surgical planning perspective and a patient education perspective. Showing a patient a screen with an X-ray doesn't mean much to them, but showing them a 3D model with the extent of the disease is really powerful."

Using advanced imaging software and his digital dentistry expertise, Dr. Vij produced a 3D model from the original 3D cone-beam CT scan. These types of models are often printed in one color, but for this complex case, Dr. Vij used a special 3D printer, a Stratasys J750,

to print a 1-to-1 scale replica of the jaw with multiple colors delineating the different structures. The result was a clinical masterpiece.

"That was the key; I could hold his jaw in my hand," Dr. Haribabu says. "It was exactly like a blueprint."

The importance of a surgeon being able to visualize and touch the structures they will be handling cannot be overstated. 3D models, including the model used in Derrion's treatment plan, allow clinicians to plan their approach, anticipate challenges, and prepare solutions, possibly reducing operating time, minimizing errors, and alleviating mental fatigue.

Leading up to the surgery, Dr. Haribabu still felt a bit anxious, not only because of the pressure to perform this procedure successfully, but also because he was unsure of how Derrion would tolerate such a procedure in an outpatient clinic setting. At the time, the dental center staff did not have access to a hospital operating room.

"These kinds of procedures are typically done in an operating room," Dr. Haribabu says. "Because the bone was so thin, the pressure from doing the procedure could fracture the jaw. Then, we wouldn't have the option of fixing the jaw in the clinic. That is another reason we had to take a conservative approach."

On the day of the first surgery, Dr. Haribabu conducted the procedure according to plan without any complications. He says Derrion was a "real trooper" for enduring the surgery with only local anesthesia.

During the procedure, the team modified a nasal trumpet, a flexible silicone tube normally used for

giving anesthesia, and placed it as an irrigation device into his jaw. This trumpet reduced pressure on the cyst, allowing it to drain slowly while allowing the jawbone to regrow. With this device sutured in place, Derrion had strict instructions to not eat anything hard on that side of his mouth and to keep the cyst clean by flushing it often with salt water.

"We had to be innovative," Dr. Haribabu says. "Usually, a tooth would be removed first in a situation like this. However, I didn't want to disappoint his mother, and I attempted to save as many teeth as possible."

Following surgery, Derrion was re-evaluated multiple times a month for three months, ensuring the nasal trumpet was staying in place and the cyst was decompressing properly. Then, he was evaluated once every three months until the cyst had decompressed enough and new, healthy bone was beginning to form.

"Dr. Haribabu's treatment approach in an outpatient setting is an example of how we are providing access to care," Dr. Vij says, speaking to the St. Louis Dental Center's mission to serve the community and improve community health. "If you add the time and money associated with being in a hospital, that's a big reason why many patients don't end up getting care. We are able to provide high-quality care at a minimal cost."

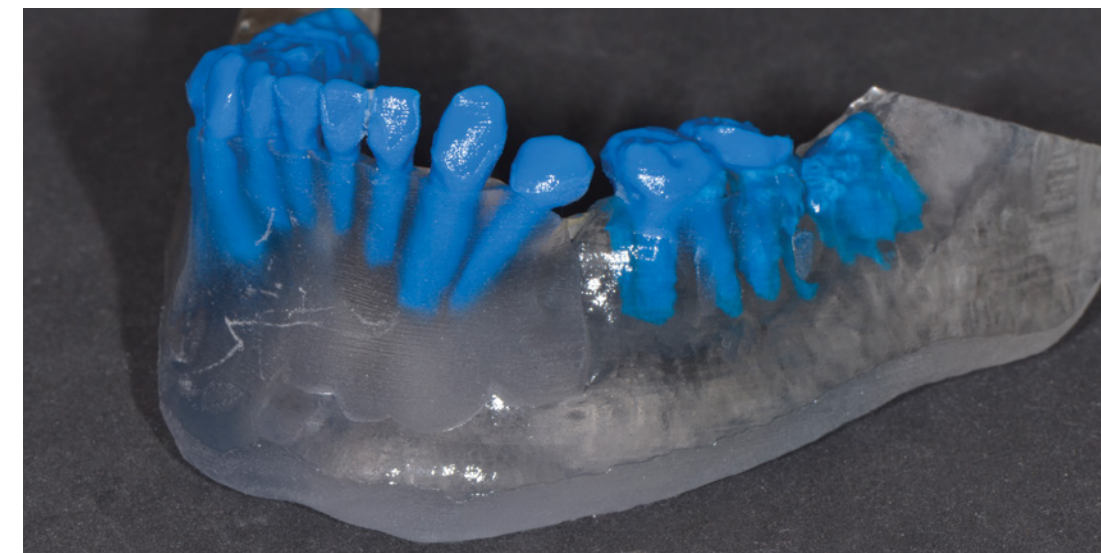
Almost one year after his initial surgery, Derrion had his second surgery to completely remove the cyst. Because the cyst had shrunk and there was still a lack of supporting bone, one of Derrion's teeth also had to be removed. However, that tooth had cystic fragments attached to its roots, so removal helped ensure the cyst would not grow back.



The 3D cone-beam CT scan shows different angles of the cyst in Derrion's jaw.



The 3D-printed model of Derrion's jaw, printed by Dr. Vij, allowed Dr. Haribabu to better prepare for surgically removing the cyst. The yellow represents healthy bone, and the red represents infected bone.



This 3D-printed model of Derrion's jaw was produced after his second surgery, showing the location of teeth and roots after the cyst was removed.



The Smiths visit their care team at the St. Louis Dental Center: (left to right) Victoria Wilson, Minerva “Mimi” Gonzales, Melissa Hill, T’Sheka Smith, Derrion Smith, Dr. Prashanth Haribabu, and Dr. Akshay Vij.

“It wasn’t the most comfortable time,” Derrion says. “It was a process. I’m glad they got it done.”

Eighteen months after the second surgery, updated 3D imaging showed Derrion’s jaw had healed successfully. Today, there is still no sign of recurrence, and Derrion’s jaw looks as if he never had a cyst at all.

### SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME and IMPROVED EDUCATION

Surgical intervention is clearly necessary for a successful outcome in a case like Derrion’s, but so are the follow-up appointments and following the dentist’s instructions. Everyone involved in his case played an important role, including his mother. The dental center staff credit T’Sheka for ensuring Derrion received the care he needed – he did not miss a single appointment throughout the entire process.

As for the gap where the one tooth was removed, Dr. Haribabu had a plan for that, too. When Derrion’s wisdom tooth grows in, it will push the remaining teeth on that side of his mouth forward, filling the gap and giving the appearance of a full set of teeth.

Throughout his arduous treatment and recovery, Derrion and his mother have become advocates for seeing a dentist regularly and have even brought other family members to the clinic for care. Dental checkups, and X-rays taken as appropriate, are critical for good oral health, Dr. Haribabu says. Current guidelines recommend visiting a dentist as early as age 1.

As clinicians who are also teachers, Drs. Haribabu and Vij use every opportunity to educate their patients, as well as ATSU-MOSDOH students, who spend much of their clinical education at the dental center. In fact, many students who rotated through the oral surgery unit in the last five years have been involved in Derrion’s case.

Furthermore, his case is helping educate new classes of students. Following Derrion’s second surgery, Dr. Vij used the updated 3D cone-beam CT scan to print another multicolored 3D model. This postoperative model and the original pre-operative model serve as visual aids for students to gain a better understanding of the oral structures and treatment approach.

“Our goal is always to teach the next generation of dentists,” Dr. Vij says. “This case is now part of our case reports. It’s part of our lectures. It helps every subsequent class.”

Advanced technology and 3D printing proved to be valuable elements of this patient case, although Drs. Haribabu and Vij emphasize the success of this treatment, or any treatment, depends on the knowledge and experience of the surgeon and care team. Dental treatments have many pros and cons, and clinicians must communicate these pros and cons to their patients to determine the best care option. They also must rely on their judgment and skill, while considering the whole patient.

“Technology is a tool to visualize, it’s a tool to plan, it’s having a model in your hand,” Dr. Vij says. “But the skill and experience a surgeon brings to the table is huge to execute any treatment. That’s a human element.” ■



To learn more about Derrion’s case, please read the online case report at [atsu.edu/case-report](https://atsu.edu/case-report)

# ATSU's evolving legacies

A term once holding a singular meaning has grown along with ATSU's programs, allowing family legacies to cross a diverse range of disciplines.

By Jason Hunsicker

For more than a century, the term "ATSU legacy family" was rightfully associated with a single thing – multiple generations of ATSU-Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (ATSU-KCOM) graduates from the same family.

With more than 130 years of history as the world's founding school of osteopathic medicine, it made sense children seeking to become physicians would follow their parent's footsteps to Kirksville, Missouri. But as ATSU continues to grow, the definition of "legacy family" must grow, as well. The University's addition of programs across health sciences, educational, and administrative disciplines has allowed diverse options for new generations of students whose interests may have been sparked by a parent's journey, but whose passions lie along a slightly different path.

They may not always complete the same program as their parents, but proudly attend the same university, one in which whole person healthcare and service to the underserved are woven into the blue and white threads binding all of ATSU together.



Drs. Mary (second from right) and Russ Kennedy (far right) with (left to right) son-in-law Keaton Taber, OMS III, daughter Madeline Taber, OMS III, and son Nick Kennedy, D2, at Nick's white coat ceremony in Kirksville, Missouri.

## The KENNEDYS

They were introduced to each other in 1994 by Lori Haxton, MA, vice president for student affairs, who was then in admissions, and, by alphabetical order, their last names – Kennedy and Keller – put them next to each other in the anatomy lab.

That's how Russ Kennedy, DO, '98, and Mary Kennedy, DO, '98, first got to know each other, with Mary succinctly summing up what happened next.

"We started dating, fell in love, and started a family," she says.

Russ, from Rapid City, South Dakota, did his undergraduate studies at the University of South Dakota and intended to go to medical school there before he learned about osteopathic medicine. In nearby Sturgis, South Dakota, he met ATSU-KCOM alumnus George Jenter, DO, '72, who suggested he apply to the founding school of osteopathic medicine.

Russ applied to two schools. One never seemed to call him back. The other answered his call every time.

"I ended up talking to Lori Haxton," he says. "Any time I called ATSU-KCOM, they answered, they talked to me and asked how they could help."

Originally from Rolla, Missouri, Mary did her undergraduate studies at University of Missouri, where she shadowed DOs and MDs to help her determine a course.

“I really had been on the track of pursuing an allopathic degree. Once I shadowed, I was very, very impressed with the DO I followed,” she says. “After my interview at ATSU-KCOM, I felt as though that was the place I needed to be. I was so impressed with the physicians I interviewed with, the students I visited with, and it was such a positive experience.”

They completed their clinical rotations in Rolla and residency in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and returned to Kirksville in 2001, when both taught at ATSU-KCOM and practiced in the area. They’ve maintained the relationships established in northeast Missouri, and when their daughter, Madeline, was married in Texas, several former classmates and the family’s babysitter from Kirksville made the trip. One of their classmates even performed the ceremony.

The Kennedys ultimately ended up in Joplin, Missouri, where Russ and Mary practice family medicine. Two of their children – Madeline and Nick – seemed inclined to follow them in some way.

“Medicine is a huge part of who we’ve become as professionals and people. It’s a vocation. It’s part of who we are. Being able to practice and take care of families is really very rewarding,” Mary says. “I think our kids saw that growing up. They were raised throughout our training and in practice, and they spent a lot of time in clinic with us. I think it’s a natural progression.”

Natural, too, was a desire to extend the family’s legacy at ATSU.

“Madeline was always going to be a physician. It always seemed to be in her heart,” Russ says. “There was always an inclination to go to ATSU-KCOM. This is going to sound hokey or corny or whatever, but I’ve worked with a lot of allopathic students, and I’ve worked with a lot of osteopathic students from different schools, and I would hold our training up to anybody’s. Bring on Harvard. Bring on Stanford. I think you get a wonderful education at ATSU-KCOM. Madeline had always heard that, so I think that was always a place she anticipated she would apply to go to medical school.”

Madeline and her husband, Keaton Taber, are now third-year students at ATSU-KCOM. She attended the University of Kansas for her undergraduate studies and credits Dave Koenecke, DC, MEd, assistant vice president, admissions, for helping them along the way.

“He helped me bolster my application to be the best applicant I could be,” Madeline says. “He was so helpful,

really making sure I was on track to be successful, and then we got our interviews, and we were able to come here to Kirksville.”

Nick followed his sister to Kirksville a year later, though not at ATSU-KCOM. His interests steered him toward ATSU’s Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-MOSDOH).

“When he told us he wanted to be a dentist, I could have fainted,” Mary says. “I would never have thought he would want to be a dentist, but I love it. He became so passionate about dental health, and I’m just so proud of him.”

Nick, too, did his undergraduate studies at the University of Kansas but tried a few different career paths after graduating. He worked in an emergency room and in construction before turning back toward health sciences, shadowing a dentist, and discovering his passion.

With that settled, and with so many ties to Kirksville already, ATSU-MOSDOH was a logical fit.

“There are a number of people who I call ‘aunt’ and ‘uncle’ who helped take care of me growing up. They’re not blood relatives but my parents’ friends from ATSU-KCOM. Pieces of the school have always been around me,” Nick says. “Lori Haxton, she’s a very special person, and I had talked to her quite a bit. She helped me get my application in order. Having that type of support and someone like that to talk to, people who advocated for the school, I felt being in Kirksville was advantageous.”

Madeline and Nick enjoy having a sibling nearby as they navigate the challenges of their respective programs. It’s not unusual for Nick to visit Madeline and Keaton for dinner, or for the couple to watch Nick’s puppy while he competes in intramural sports.

It’s not lost on either of them what Kirksville represents, not only in the present, but for their family’s entire story.

“ATSU-KCOM is the reason that I’m here in the first place, not just as a future physician, but even just as a person. This is where my parents met, fell in love, decided to start a family,” Madeline says. “And then, obviously, Nicholas, me, and my husband all going into healthcare and giving us a great education, just grateful.”

It’s a sentiment they share across generations.

“Kirksville really is just a special place,” Russ says. “It’s been critical in the structure and development of our family. It’s a comfortable place. You always feel welcome in Kirksville.”

Dr. Talmage Lewis and his son, Wilson Lewis, OMS III, at Wilson’s white coat ceremony in Mesa, Arizona.

## The LEWISES

Though Talmage Lewis, DO, ’98, didn’t have any physicians in his family, his osteopathic connection had been strong since before he was born.

“I grew up in Mesa, Arizona, and was delivered by a DO, Dr. Levitt,” he says. “He did everything back in the day when I was a kid. Delivered 14,000 babies, saw patients in the emergency room, did night calls, all of that stuff. I was impressed by him and he was a good example of an osteopathic physician.”

Talmage went to Arizona State University and, with his wife’s blessing, began taking pre-med courses with a goal to pursue a career in medicine. A high school friend – whose father was also a DO – had been accepted to ATSU-KCOM a few years earlier and had great things to say about Kirksville. Combined with having seen his family doctor’s impact in their community, Talmage decided to apply and was accepted at ATSU-KCOM.

“I had a great time there. Phenomenal teachers, educators, and great friends,” he says. “I remember failing a test one time and being able to go to meet with the professor and get tutoring. It ended up being one of my best subjects. The people out in Missouri cared for you and were there to help you succeed.”

He was able to complete his third- and fourth-year rotations in Phoenix and residency at Phoenix Baptist Hospital. His friend’s father was retiring around the same time, and Talmage joined their medical group, where he has been in family practice for the last 24 years.



His son, Wilson Lewis, a third-year osteopathic medical student, grew up with a close perspective on the life and career of a doctor and was immediately intrigued.

“Dad would take me to the office on Saturdays, and I loved going and playing in the rooms, playing doctor,” Wilson says. “My dad was a role model. Seeing him help other people, family and friends calling him for help, he was relied on to do that, and he was focused on helping others and caring for people. That envelops the whole osteopathic way of doing things.”

Wilson went to Arizona State University for his undergraduate degree and had his sights set on ATSU’s School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona (ATSU-SOMA), wanting to extend the family legacy at ATSU while also staying close to family, as he and his wife had a child on the way.

It didn’t seem like those plans would work out. He was waitlisted at ATSU-SOMA and had been accepted into Rocky Vista University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine in Utah. Wilson and his wife were ready to move when, two months before school started, their daughter was born prematurely.

“She was a micro preemie at 25 weeks,” Wilson says. “Now what do we do? Our baby couldn’t leave the hospital, and once she got out, she would need extra help.”

Talmage contacted ATSU and told the admissions office about the situation. Soon after, a spot opened, and Wilson was offered a seat in ATSU-SOMA’s class of 2026.

More than two years later, his daughter is doing great, and so is Wilson.

“I’ve loved ATSU-SOMA. It’s been amazing. It’s definitely hard, but I knew coming into medical school that it wasn’t going to be a cakewalk. Having a dad who went through the process helped me somewhat in understanding it’s not going to be like any school you’ve done before. It’s a whole step above,” Wilson says.

And while not the same program he attended, Talmage knows the body, mind, spirit tenets of osteopathic medicine permeate all ATSU programs, providing a rich educational experience for his son and others, whether in Kirksville, Mesa, or Santa Maria, California.

“You hear about osteopathic principles from other schools, but it’s taught better than anybody at ATSU,” he says.



Dr. Rhett Rainey (center) with his family (left to right) Dr. Dan Winokur, Morgan Rainey Winokur, Dr. Beau Rainey, and Dr. Margo Rainey at the 2023 ATSU-KCOM graduation ceremony in Kirksville, Missouri.

### The RAINEYS

Rhett Rainey, DO, '79, grew up in St. Louis and developed an interest in sports medicine over time, but it wasn't until his cousin, Debbie, married an ATSU-KCOM alumnus, George Thomas, DO, '72, that he became interested in osteopathic medicine. Dr. Thomas was an influential figure in Rhett's life, someone he credits with his decision and acceptance into medical school.

“To this day, I know he had his hand in helping me attend school in Kirksville,” Rhett says. “I had a fantastic experience at ATSU-KCOM and have been forever grateful for the opportunity to be educated there. It was an incredible place.”

Rhett attended ATSU-KCOM on the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) and, after graduation, completed his required year of transitional internship at Letterman Army Medical Center in San Francisco. He then was selected for an Army orthopedic surgical residency at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu. Following his active duty service, he started private practice in Colorado, and remained in the U.S. Army Reserves to complete 22 years of service, including a call to active duty during Operation Desert Storm in 1990. Now in Gainesville, Georgia, Rhett has been practicing orthopedics for more than four decades. He currently

is associate clinical professor of orthopedic surgery at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine Georgia and has mentored more than 75 third- and fourth-year medical students.

“I just can't say enough good about ATSU,” he says. “It changed my life. It gave me this immense opportunity to become an orthopedic surgeon, and I couldn't have asked for more.” Rhett's oldest daughter, Margo, said she was interested in healthcare from an early age, but her focus was on dentistry. She grew up in Gilbert, Arizona, with her mother, also a physician, and had her sights set on ATSU's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-ASDOH).

“I wanted to go to the same school as my dad,” says Margo Rainey, DMD, '12. “I just thought that would be really cool.”

It also wound up being the same campus chosen by her sister, Morgan Rainey, PA, '11, who was accepted into ATSU-Arizona School of Health Sciences' (ATSU-ASHS) Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program the following year.

“Our parents always told us we could be whatever we wanted to be,” Morgan says. “We all leaned toward medicine. We saw the impact our parents had, and the good they did for the community.”

Morgan wanted a career in health sciences but decided becoming a physician assistant would allow her the kind of flexibility she wanted with her future family. ATSU-ASHS had everything she wanted, from program of choice to family history.

“Living in Arizona, we had seen the campus, and knowing my father went to ATSU, it was a dream come true that there was a sister campus right down the road,” Morgan says. “It's super fun to be part of a legacy like that.”

Margo and Morgan spoke glowingly about their educational experiences, saying ATSU-ASDOH and ATSU-ASHS, respectively, provided them opportunities and challenges, setting a foundation for exceptional futures as healthcare providers.

The Mesa, Arizona, campus also happened to be where each met their future husbands. Margo met Shane Clark, DMD, '12, and the couple and their two children now reside in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where Margo works in a private dental practice and Shane in endodontics.

Margo had also become friends with a classmate, Jenna Winokur, DMD, '11, who had a brother, Dan Winokur, DMD, '12, she thought would get along with her sister.

“They set us up on a blind date,” Morgan says. “Both of us met our husbands there at ATSU. It's really fun to have a whole family connected to the same educational background.”

Morgan, Dan, and their daughter reside in Naples, Florida, where Morgan works in an urgent care center and Dan as an oral surgeon.

Rhett's youngest daughter, Annika, graduated from the anesthesia assistant program at Nova Southeastern University in Tampa, Florida, and his son, Beau, believed he wanted to become a veterinarian.

Rhett encouraged his son to keep his options open and invited Beau to shadow him and his colleagues during the summer after his sophomore year.

“I did a complete 180,” says Beau Rainey, DO, '23. “I thought it was the coolest thing in the world to walk around the hospital, meet all of these people from different backgrounds, and apply the science I'd loved so much. After that summer, I was dead set on medicine.”

Exactly 40 years after his father graduated from ATSU-KCOM, Beau received his white coat in Kirksville. Also like his father, Beau earned the HPSP. He matched into a transition year at William Beaumont Army Medical Center at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, and then matched into the general surgery residency he began there in July. He lives in El Paso with his girlfriend, Gabrielle Menendez, DO, '23, an ATSU-KCOM alumna who is an emergency medicine resident at Texas Tech University Medical Center.

The Rainey family's commitment to ATSU is ongoing, in the form of the Rainey Family General Operations Endowment gift, and possibly future generations of health sciences students.

“I would love it if my daughter (named Rainey) wanted to choose a career in healthcare and ended up at ATSU,” Morgan says. “It would be fantastic to continue the legacy on and on to another generation.”

After what the family has already accomplished, and with the University continuing to grow to meet the nation's evolving healthcare needs, it's not difficult to imagine that kind of outcome.

“It's kind of incredible how we all managed to attend all of these different programs at ATSU,” Beau says. “That's a really neat thing about the University. Each one of us graduated from a different program, but we all found our niche. It is really special that we share that bond and ATSU is this unifying factor.” ■



# A return to campus and a love for service

How two ATSU alumni are exemplifying the University's mission in their careers

By Haley Lorenzen



Dr. Caitlin Lee

Across the hall from ATSU's Clinical Performance Center in Mesa, Arizona, where many students first begin their journey into patient care, is the Wesley Community & Health Center Recker campus.

Embodying the center's mantra, "Together We Empower Positive Change," and embracing the mission of their alma mater, ATSU-Kirkville College of Osteopathic Medicine alumna Caitlin Lee, DO, '14, and ATSU-Arizona School of Health Sciences alumna Alexandra Hopun, MS, PA-C, '23, are continuing their patient care journey as practitioners at the center.

"My first day I was here, there was a weird sense of déjà vu that I was there to do more testing when I was not," says Hopun, laughing.

As a brand-new practitioner still learning the ropes, Hopun has loved her experience so far at Wesley.

"It's been awesome," Hopun says. "I see about 80%-90% Spanish-speaking patients, so I'm always learning. But I'm really lucky to work with Dr. Lee. She's so knowledgeable; she's just amazing. The rest of the providers there know so much, and they really care about the community. I think that really shows in their work."

Hopun and Dr. Lee's passion for serving the underserved and interest in working at community health centers significantly influenced their decisions to pursue their medical education at ATSU.

"I knew I wanted to be in community health, in some sort of federally qualified health center working with underserved patients," Dr. Lee says. "That's really what drew me to medicine is working with underserved populations."

As a medical student and during residency, Dr. Lee had the opportunity to do her rotations at Wesley and was familiar with

the patient population it serves, of which 60% are uninsured and uninsurable.

In addition to her work as a provider, Dr. Lee serves as Wesley's medical director of health equity and quality. She develops partnerships with outside organizations to provide free medications and expands specialty and in-house services for their uninsured patients.

She credits her pre-med schoolwork with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and her time at ATSU for preparing her to become a strong patient advocate, not just a practitioner.

"I felt very prepared coming out of school and into residency. ATSU-KCOM provided a strong training with a focus on whole person, patient-centered care, always prioritizing opportunities to give back to the community," Dr. Lee says. "My classmates and I were supported in our efforts to expand service experiences for ourselves and other students, providing a foundation we were able to carry forward into our careers."

This sentiment also resonates with Hopun, who additionally serves as an advocate and practitioner at Wesley's west Phoenix campus.

"Especially learning about ways you can make medicine more accessible for people who might have barriers, that was something that really carried forward through to my clinical year, and then also where I'm working now," Hopun says. "I'm able to utilize a lot of what we learned."

"It's such a great field to work in, and you're able to really do so much, especially if you work at a place like I do."

As Hopun and Dr. Lee are continuing to work toward delivering equitable care to some of Arizona's most vulnerable populations and meeting a critical need within the community, they are demonstrating the commitment they made when they first began their journey at ATSU. ■



Alexandra Hopun





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\*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.

# CONNECTIONS



ATSU hosted its third annual Spring Expo on Saturday, April 6, on the Mesa, Arizona, campus. Featuring more than 100 exhibitors from the local medical community, this event allowed current and future clinicians to establish connections and discover cutting-edge products and services. Attendees were able to view demonstrations from wheelchair specialists, adaptive sports experts, equipment providers, and more.

"The third annual ATSU Spring Expo brought the medical community together in a big way. There is no event like it, and ATSU will continue to showcase this event for years to come," says ATSU Spring Expo Chair Adam Story, OTD, OTR/L, PT, DPT, MTC, assistant professor, ATSU's Arizona School of Health Sciences.

### IN THIS SECTION

- Reconnect
- Class notes
- Donor recognition
- Faculty & staff news
- In memoriam
- Parting shot

## 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 Boston to Colorado Springs 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.

### WINTER 2023



ATSU-MOSDOH 10th Anniversary Celebration  
**ATSU-MOSDOH 10th Anniversary Celebration**  
 ATSU Missouri campus | Kirksville, Missouri



DO Alumni, Students & Friends Reception  
**Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Academy of Osteopathy (AAO) Convocation**  
 The Broadmoor | Colorado Springs, Colorado

### SPRING 2024

**Physical Therapy (PT) Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Conference**  
 Seaport Hotel | Boston, Massachusetts

**Occupational Therapy (OT) Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Conference**  
 Rosen Centre, Orlando, Florida



ATSU-ASDOH Alumni Reunion Weekend  
**Give Kids A Smile and ATSU-ASDOH Alumni Reunion Weekend**  
 ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona

**DO Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOF) Annual Convention & Scientific Seminars**  
 Hilton New Orleans Riverside | New Orleans, Louisiana



ATSU-ASHS Alumni Reunion Celebration  
**ATSU-ASHS Alumni Reunion Celebration and third annual ATSU Spring Expo**  
 ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona



ATSU-SOMA Reunion  
**ATSU-SOMA Reunion Informal Dinner and Social Gathering**  
 ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona

**ATSU-KCOM Words of Wisdom Alumni-Student Engagement Event**  
 ATSU Missouri campus | Kirksville, Missouri

**Audiology Alumni, Students & Friends Reception and 25-year Program Celebration | American Academy of Audiology (AAA) Conference + HearTECH Expo**  
 Omni Atlanta Hotel | Atlanta, Georgia

**American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) ATSU exhibit booth**  
 Loews Hotel | Kansas City, Missouri

**Graduate Health Professions Scholarship (GPS) Golf Tournament and Arizona Alumni & Friends Luncheon**  
 Superstition Springs Golf Club | Mesa, Arizona



Orthodontic Program Alumni, Students & Friends Reception  
**Orthodontic Program Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) Annual Session**  
 Hilton New Orleans Riverside | New Orleans, Louisiana

**Physician Assistant (PA) Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Association of Physician Associates (AAPA) Annual Conference**  
 Marriott Marquis Houston | Houston, Texas

## UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS

**ATSU-CGHS Alumni & Students Reception | Kinesiology Summer Institute**  
 Mesa, Arizona  
 July 25

**ATSU Founder's Day 2024**  
 ATSU Missouri campus | Kirksville, Missouri  
 Oct. 17-19  
 ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona  
 Oct. 24

**Alumni & Friends Reception | National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) Community Health Institute (CHI) & Expo**  
 Hyatt Regency Atlanta | Atlanta, Georgia  
 Aug. 25

**DO Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American College of Osteopathic Internists (ACOI) Convention & Scientific Sessions**  
 Scottsdale, Arizona  
 Oct. 30

**DO Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Osteopathic Association Osteopathic Medical Education (AOA OMED) Conference**  
 San Antonio, Texas  
 Sept. 21



## 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](mailto:alumni@atsu.edu) with any questions.



[atsu.edu/alumni-jobs](https://atsu.edu/alumni-jobs)

**ATSU** | ALUMNI  
RELATIONS



Left to right: Andrew Larkin, DMD, MPH, '19, celebrates completion of the Postgraduate Orthodontic Program at A.T. Still University-Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health with his clinic teammates, Alice Choi, DMD, '20, second-year orthodontic resident, and Eric Phan, DDS, first-year orthodontic resident.

# Finding connection

Bertha Thomas

More than three decades after moving to Kirksville, Bertha Thomas reflects on career in education, service to ATSU

By Jason Hunsicker

Being in Kirksville, Missouri, in 2024 was never part of the plan for ATSU Board of Trustees member Bertha Thomas. She moved to Kirksville with her husband, a professor of French, in 1992 when he got a position at what is now Truman State University. Like their previous stops to that point, they figured their stint in northeast Missouri would span three, maybe four years.

More than three decades later, Thomas looks back upon an incredibly successful career here, including 15 years as assistant dean for multicultural affairs at Truman and nearly nine as a member of ATSU's Board of Trustees.

"I've found meaning and connections in Kirksville," she says.

Throughout her career at Truman, Thomas interacted with ATSU faculty, staff, and students, both through her work and in community organizations, and she developed great respect for the University and its mission. When the opportunity arose to become a member of the Board of Trustees, Thomas was thrilled.

"It has been such an honor and privilege to serve on the board," she says. "I have the utmost respect for our fellow board members and Craig M. Phelps, DO, '84."

Thomas, who will conclude her service to the board this year, helped guide ATSU during a time of growth and unprecedented challenge. She praises the work of University leadership, faculty, staff, and students in navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. She celebrates the efforts of ATSU Chief Diversity Officer Clinton Normore, MBA, and his staff in developing and growing initiatives like the Graduate Health Professions Scholarship and Dreamline Pathways programs. And she looks proudly upon ATSU establishing its third campus, the College for Healthy Communities, in Santa Maria, California, where students become physician assistants who will fill critical needs in the healthcare workforce.

This is the core of ATSU's mission - bringing whole person healthcare to the underserved - and something deeply personal to Thomas.

**"Bertha has greatly assisted the growth and success of ATSU. From putting on a hard hat to helping us imagine and visit new program facilities to helping our students understand the power of cultural proficiency, Bertha has always been there to help."**

**- Dr. Craig M. Phelps, ATSU chancellor**

"I remember going to the first graduation for MOSDOH (ATSU's Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health) and thinking how critically important it was for ATSU to have started a dental school in Missouri, partner with Affinia Healthcare, and bring dental care to such an underserved community," she says. "I grew up very poor and didn't have access to dental care growing up. For our institution to be in a community where people who may not have had dental care are now able to receive dental care has been such a wonderful thing to see."

It's what sets ATSU apart.

"One of the reasons I was so attracted to being a part of ATSU is because of all of the health disparities and all of the need. So many institutions, even osteopathic ones, do not put a concerted effort into helping students understand why they might want to spend their professional careers working in underserved areas, rural areas, inner cities, those areas with a dearth of healthcare professionals," Thomas says. "A lot of schools say they might care, but we really believe it. The faculty and staff believe it. The deans and the board believe it. The chancellor believes it. I think we train highly compassionate, dedicated health professionals, who live our mission."

"There will always be challenges, but what I see at this moment, we have a great legacy, more than 130 years, and we're the mothership for the osteopathic tradition. As long as we can be flexible, and innovative, and stay true to our mission, ATSU has a bright future ahead."

# A lifetime of service

ATSU Board of Trustees member Rosie Allen-Herring reflects on nine-year tenure

By Arselia Gales

When Rosie Allen-Herring, MBA, looks back on her nine years as a member of ATSU's Board of Trustees, she is nothing but grateful.

"Being a trustee at ATSU has been one of the greatest joys of my life and also one of my greatest professional accomplishments. It's all about bringing who you are to the table with like-minded professionals and leaders who care about an institution teaching others to save lives every day," she says. "I'm very proud of the work that's been accomplished with Craig M. Phelps, DO, '84, and his leadership. I'm even more proud of how we've been able to expand that work to new campuses – not just in Kirksville, not just in Mesa, but also now in Central California."

The youngest of 10 children, Allen-Herring is from Greenville, Mississippi, and describes her parents as being "pro-education." She left the Mississippi Delta for Washington, D.C., and earned a bachelor of arts degree in economics from Howard University, followed by an MBA from Strayer University. Now, she's president and CEO of United Way of the National Capital Area, a role she's held for a decade. Previously, she spent 21 years at Fannie Mae as the managing director of the Community Investment and Engagement division.

Allen-Herring was approached to join the board by former Board Chair G. Scott Drew, DO, FAOCD, '87, and she said he would not take no for an answer. Dr. Drew learned of Allen-Herring through a mutual connection.

**"As president and CEO of United Way of the National Capital Area, Rosie brought a tremendously helpful set of leadership skills and experiences to our Board of Trustees and ATSU. We will be forever grateful for the time and wisdom she shared with us."**

**– Dr. Craig M. Phelps, ATSU chancellor**

"He felt so passionately about ATSU and thought I could contribute, even though I don't have a clinician or medical background. My background is in business," she says.

Allen-Herring has more than 30 years' experience in corporate finance, strategic leadership, public and private partnership, corporate philanthropy, and community investment. Because of this, Allen-Herring says she's been able to contribute positively to the board, and she's also learned a lot about medicine and academia.

"I would like to believe I've brought that business acumen to the board, along with my philanthropy knowledge and governance, another area of focus for me," she says. "When we look at how well organizations are run, that's governance. It's not just whether or not we like what we're doing, or we believe in what we're doing. It's how we go about earning the trust of those in the community around us. You do your best to serve and bring all of that to table. This has been a well-rounded experience for me, and I also like to believe I've grown as well. I think it's a two-way street."

Outside of work and her many other commitments, Allen-Herring enjoys spending time with her husband and two daughters. She also loves to travel, for business and for pleasure. She recently traveled to Dubai, London, Vancouver, and Germany, to name a few. She also enjoys being by the water and finds a trip to the beach, whether it's the Caribbean or close to home in the D.C. area, to be extremely enjoyable.

"I love to travel because I believe it opens up the world to you," she says.

Although her time on the board is coming to an end, Allen-Herring's connection to ATSU is not dissolving anytime soon.

"I've had the privilege of serving on a lot of boards – probably sometimes too many – and I will simply say this is one of the most fulfilling boards I've been on," she says. "I'm super proud of my affiliation with ATSU – it's one I will treasure and a connection that will never end even when I leave the board."



Rosie Allen-Herring

# 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](mailto:atce@atsu.edu) for more information.**

## Dental

Exploring New Ways to Conserve Tooth Structure  
Aug. 13, 2024

Oral Health Care Considerations for Victims of Human Trafficking  
Aug. 14, 2024

Dental Sports Medicine: Managing Your Patient "Who is an Athlete"  
Aug. 20, 2024

Anterior Composite Restorations - The Perfect Recipe  
Aug. 24, 2024

Dental Pain: How Does It Happen?  
Aug. 27, 2024

Vital Pulp Therapy Using Direct Pulp Caps in Permanent Teeth: An Alternative to Root Canals?  
Sept. 6, 2024

The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Dentistry  
Sept. 9, 2024

Preparation for Dental Trauma Management  
Sept. 13, 2024

Diagnosis and Management of Athletic-related Traumatic Dental Injuries  
Sept. 16, 2024

Quick and Easy Update in Operative Dentistry  
Sept. 19, 2024

Management of Traumatic Crown Fractures with and without Pulpal Exposures in Children and Adults  
Sept. 24, 2024

"Digital" Complete Removable Prosthesis: Part 1  
Sept. 30, 2024

Esthetic Implant Prosthodontic Solutions: Part 1  
Oct. 2, 2024

Latest Trends in Root Canal Irrigation  
Oct. 7, 2024

Lingualized Occlusion for Complete Dentures  
Oct. 11, 2024

"Digital" Complete Removable Prosthesis: Part 2  
Oct. 15, 2024

Esthetic Implant Prosthodontic Solutions Part 2  
Oct. 23, 2024

An Evidence-based Perspective on the Efficacy, Applications, and Clinicians' Perception of Clear Aligners' Therapy  
Oct. 29, 2024

"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

**ATSU-MOSDOH is ADA CERP and AGD PACE approved.**

**All opportunities are held virtually. For more information, [mosdohce@atsu.edu](mailto:mosdohce@atsu.edu) or call 314.685.3557.**

## Medical

Founder's Day  
Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine Update  
Oct. 17-19, 2024  
Missouri campus | Kirksville, Missouri

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

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

**For more information, email [continuingeducation@atsu.edu](mailto:continuingeducation@atsu.edu) or call 660.626.2232.**

## Physical Therapy

Mary Massery's "I Survived, Now What? Treating the Musculoskeletal Consequences of Maturing with a Chronic Health Condition"  
Sept. 27-29, 2024  
Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona

**For more information, contact [ptceu@atsu.edu](mailto:ptceu@atsu.edu) or call 480.265.8035.**

To register for courses online or learn about upcoming activities, please visit [atsu.edu/ce](https://atsu.edu/ce) or call 866.626.2878, ext. 2232.

## CLASS NOTES



Michael Nelson, DHSc, DMSc, MPAS, PA-C, '05



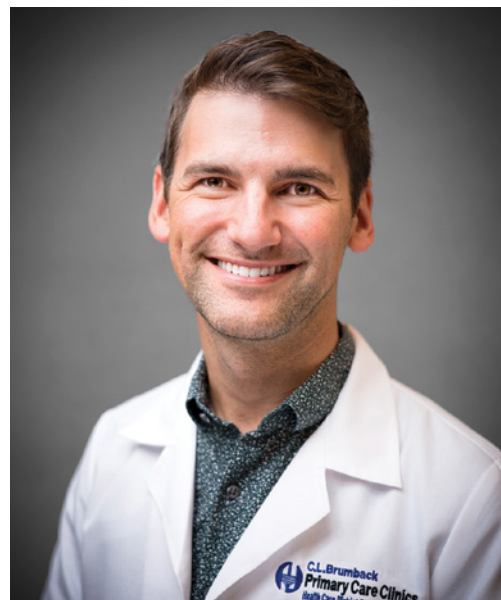
Darah Regal, AuD, '05



Karysse J. (Trandem) Hutson, DO, FACOOG, '08



John Thurman, DO, '12 (right), with wife Audrey



Joshua Adametz, DMD, '19, MPH, '22



Kalena Jones, DHSc, '19

## 1980s

**Lori Kemper, DO, '81**, was named chair of the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners. She previously served as vice chair and secretary-treasurer of the board of directors. In addition, Dr. Kemper is an osteopathic family physician and dean of Midwestern University, Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine in Glendale, Arizona.

**Michael R. Jaff, DO, '85**, was named the 2023 Pulse-Setter Crusader by the Cardiovascular Research Foundation, which has helped pioneer innovations and educated doctors on the latest treatments for heart disease for over 25 years. Dr. Jaff received the award for demonstrating leadership, effecting positive change, adopting innovative methods to improve access to care, and making an exceptional impact on healthcare delivery and patient quality of life. Dr. Jaff is founder of VasCore and Healthcare Inroads LLC, as well as chief medical officer and vice president for Peripheral Interventions at Boston Scientific.

## 2000s

**Michael Nelson, DHSc, DMSc, MPAS, PA-C, '05**, was appointed to Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions' Board of Trustees. He previously served as program director of the university's Master of Physician Assistant Studies program and dean of the College of Medicine. A graduate of ATSU-CGHS' Doctor of Health Sciences program, he is a practicing physician assistant who specializes in sports medicine.

**Darah Regal, AuD, '05**, an audiologist who specializes in central auditory processing, joined Goshen Physicians ENT, Speech & Audiology in Goshen, Indiana.

**Karysse J. (Trandem) Hutson, DO, FACOOG, '08**, recently got married and founded a nonprofit healthcare organization, Canopy Global Foundation, which stops human trafficking and supports women with unplanned pregnancies to receive excellent healthcare from conception to childbirth nationally and internationally.

## 2010s

**John Thurman, DO, '12**, was named the 2023-24 Iowa Family Physician of the Year by the Iowa Academy of Family Physicians at the installation and awards banquet held Nov. 17, 2023. The Iowa Family Physician of the Year award is presented to one outstanding physician in Iowa who best exemplifies the tradition of the family doctor and epitomizes the finest standards of family medicine.

Dr. Thurman graduated from ATSU-KCOM and completed his residency at MacNeal Family Medicine Residency in Berwyn, Illinois. He currently practices in Fort Madison.

**Nakayla J. Gallegos, DO, '13**, an emergency medicine physician and graduate of ATSU-KCOM, published her debut novel, "The Broken Heart," a medical thriller available through Amazon.

**Addison Roberts, DO, '16**, a board-certified general surgeon, joined Share Medical Center in Alva, Oklahoma. At Share Medical, Dr. Roberts performs general surgery with an emphasis in hernias, endocrine, colorectal, and foregut surgery.

**Delmas Lee Abbott, DMSc, MS, PA-C, '17**, opened a new practice, Ageless Living Institute, in Prescott, Arizona. A graduate of ATSU-ASHS' Advanced Physician Assistant Studies program, he provides acute and chronic pain management, including intra-articular injections, trigger point injections, and visco-supplementation. He also provides consults and referrals for interventional pain management and neurosurgery.

**Kalie Swain, MS, '17**, joined the Texas A&M baseball staff as senior associate athletic trainer in September 2023. Swain previously worked with the University of Missouri's baseball team and as the trainer for the baseball and men's and women's golf teams at Elon University. She also worked in the Los Angeles Dodgers' minor league system for six years.

**Joshua Adametz, DMD, '19, MPH, '22**, joined the Health Care District of Palm Beach County as dental director of the C.L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics. A graduate of ATSU-ASDOH and ATSU-CGHS, Dr. Adametz oversees dental

providers and services, establishes protocols and procedures, and treats adult and pediatric patients.

**Brian Jankowski, DMD, '19**, a graduate of ATSU-ASDOH, published a book, "Achieving Success in Dentistry: A Comprehensive Guide for New and Seasoned Practitioners," which is available through Amazon.

**Kalena Jones, DHSc, '19**, was named system director of Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me, a health program through the Arkansas Department of Human Services focusing on improving the lives of at-risk populations.

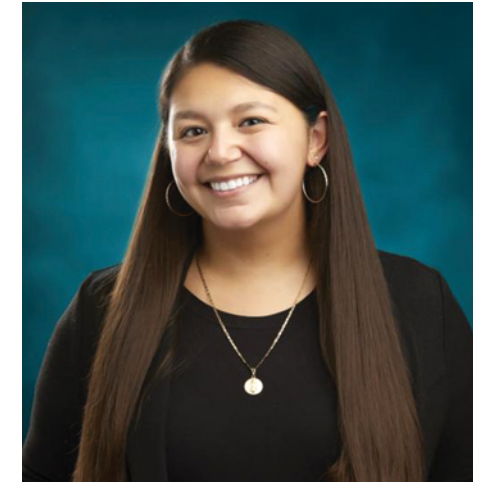
## 2020s

**Deseray Aguirre, DO, '20**, joined the Southern Illinois University Center for Family Medicine in Quincy, Illinois, in December 2023. A graduate of ATSU-KCOM, she is board certified in family medicine and osteopathic manipulation treatment and cares for patients of all ages.

**Grace Kim, DO, '21**, a graduate of ATSU-SOMA, was recognized by the American Osteopathic Foundation (AOF) and Cleveland Clinic as the 2023 Outstanding Resident of the Year in General Surgery. AOF partnered with 10 osteopathic specialty associations and hospital programs to highlight outstanding physician residents across the country.

**Rhianna Freiburger, DAT, MS, LAT, ATC, '22**, received the National Athletic Trainers' Association Career Advancement Committee's National Distinction Award for 2023-24. This award is the committee's highest honor and recognizes a career-advancing athletic trainer who is making an impact on the profession at the national, district, state, or community level. Dr. Freiburger currently serves as head athletic trainer at Williamsburg Junior/Senior High School in Williamsburg, Iowa, where she is active in numerous service and leadership activities.

**Reginald Jones, DHSc, '22**, was chosen for the 2024 Presidential Management Fellowship, a two-year leadership development program offered by the federal government. Dr. Jones currently serves as an Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education fellow with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Global Health Center.



Deseray Aguirre, DO, '20



Grace Kim, DO, '21



Rhianna Freiburger, DAT, MS, LAT, ATC, '22

# FOUNDER'S DAY

2024 | A.T. STILL UNIVERSITY



## SAVE the DATES

MISSOURI CAMPUS

Oct. 17-19

ARIZONA CAMPUS

Oct. 24

COME JOIN  
the FUN!

## CLASS NOTES



Julie Kasperski, DMSc, '22

**Julie Kasperski, DMSc, '22**, was named assistant professor and director of student success in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies at Mississippi College. Dr. Kasperski is a physician assistant at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Ontario.

**Morgan Leichtenberger, MS, '22**, joined the Fort Myers Mighty Mussels, a Minor League Baseball team of the Florida State League, as the team's assistant athletic trainer. A graduate of ATSU-ASHS, Leichtenberger previously worked with the Los Angeles Dodgers and Arizona Diamondbacks organizations.

**Candis Miller, DHA, '22**, was appointed as assistant professor of internal medicine at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles.

**Christine (Doty) Sanford, EdD, '23**, is a curriculum developer for U.S. Army Aviation. Additionally, she will begin a doctorate in psychology soon.

Submit class notes to  
[stillmagazine@atsu.edu](mailto:stillmagazine@atsu.edu)

## President's Circle

July 1, 2023, through March 1, 2024

The University's loyal supporters help pave the way for the next generation of leaders in whole person healthcare. President's Circle members provide foundational support for ATSU and its programs. By contributing \$1,000 or more annually to any University fund or initiative, you automatically become a member of this prominent group and will be recognized as a leading supporter. Your annual support at this level has a powerful impact. Please consider joining other President's Circle members and ensuring ATSU remains first in whole person healthcare.

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Don Altman, DDS, EdD, DHSc, '12  
American Endowment Foundation  
American Orthodontics  
Sue Andersen  
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Israel Armijo, DMD, '10, MPH, '10  
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Michele M. Howe, DO, '81 & Mr. Patrick T. O'Malley  
Dr. Milena & Mr. Michael Howell

*Continued on next page*



# President's Circle

July 1, 2023, through March 1, 2024

*Continued from previous page*

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Trisha L. Perry, DPT, '07  
Craig, '84, Stacy & Zach Phelps  
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Quad Cities Community Foundation

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## FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

### ATSU

**Robert Behnen, MBA**, was named chief advancement officer, effective June 1. Behnen has served ATSU for more than 17 years, including the past year as interim vice president.

**Lindsey Blake**, executive assistant, president's office, received the Employee Excellence Award for the Missouri campus for the third quarter of 2023.

**Brian Castillo-Murillo**, coordinator, diversity & inclusion, received the Employee Excellence Award for Arizona and California campuses for the first quarter of 2024.

**Sonya Clark**, coordinator, student accounts, finance, received the Employee Excellence Award for the Missouri campus for the fourth quarter of 2024.

**Gary Cloud, PhD, MBA**, vice president, strategic university partnerships, retired from ATSU on April 30.

**Carrie Gaines**, specialist, human resources, earned a master of public health degree from ATSU-CGHS.

**John Gardner, PhD, MEd**, director of policy & employee education, Title IX & civil rights coordinator, human resources, received the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. State Celebration Commission of Missouri 2024 Distinguished Community Service Award.

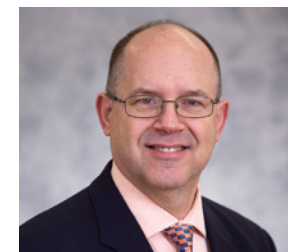
**Lee Ann Glowzenski, PhD**, assistant director, university writing center, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**Sara Grgurich**, manager, sponsored programs, earned a master of public health degree from ATSU-CGHS.

**Andrew Fresh** joined ATSU as director of campus safety, effective March 18. Fresh is located on the Kirksville, Missouri, campus and oversees safety and security for all ATSU campuses and locations.

**Gabe Hettinger**, supervisor, boiler room, earned an undergraduate degree from Northwest Missouri State University.

**MaKay Hettinger**, assistant director, alumni relations, received her master of business administration degree in healthcare management from William Woods University.



Robert Behnen, ATSU



Dr. Gary Cloud, ATSU



Dr. John Gardner, ATSU



Sara Grgurich, ATSU



Gaylah Sublette, ATSU



Dr. Ted Wendel, ATSU

**Stephanie Hettinger**, assistant controller, finance, earned a master of business administration degree from Northwest Missouri State University.

**Nick Higginson**, multimedia specialist, academic technologies, received the Employee Excellence Award for the Arizona and California campuses for the third quarter of 2023.

**Rosemary Kuilan**, administrative support, enrollment services, received the Missouri campus Employee Excellence Award for the first quarter of 2024.

**Emily Magruder**, director, budget & planning, finance, earned a master of business administration degree from Northwest Missouri State University.

**Clinton Normore, MBA**, chief diversity officer, was named a recipient of the 2024 Diamond Awards on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Not Alone Foundation Inc. and Academy of the Diamond Awards. He was honored in the category of Excellence in Higher Education Leadership [VP | Diversity & Inclusion], Philanthropy, Humanitarian & Community Engagement.

**Oscar Overley** joined ATSU as campus safety manager on the Mesa, Arizona, campus.

**Gaylah Sublette, MBA**, was named interim president of ATSU's Missouri campus, effective July 1, overseeing ATSU-CGHS, ATSU-KCOM, ATSU-MOSDOH, and the St. Louis Dental Center.

**Andrew Thompson** was promoted to controller, budgets & financial reporting, in the Finance Office.

**Dougherty Tsalabutie, MS**, director, National Center for American Indian Health Professions, diversity & inclusion, earned a doctor of education in health professions degree from ATSU-CGHS.

**Ted Wendel, PhD**, was named president of ATSU's Arizona and California campuses, effective July 1, overseeing ATSU-ASDOH, ATSU-ASHS, ATSU-SOMA, and ATSU-CHC.

### ATSU-ASDOH

**Andrea Baca Morales** was promoted to dental assistant for orthodontics.

**Jeffrey Cohen, DDS**, assistant professor, was appointed comprehensive care unit faculty director.

**Pauline Esparza** was promoted to sterilization team lead.

**Brenda Hernandez** was promoted to dental assistant for orthodontics.

**Noemi Kershner** was promoted to education specialist.

**Satish Kumar, DMD, MDSc, MS**, professor and director, periodontics, was nominated and inducted as a fellow of the American College of Dentists.

**Jeremy Sant, DDS**, assistant professor, was promoted to director for advanced education in general dentistry.

**Kirsten Voak**, project coordinator, integrated community service partnerships, received the Employee Excellence Award for the Arizona and California campuses for the fourth quarter of 2023.



Brenda Hernandez, ASDOH



Dr. Jeremy Sant, ASDOH

## ATSU-ASHS

**Shelley Baltodano, AuD**, assistant professor, audiology, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**Michael DePalma, DMSc, MHS, PA-C, DFAAPA**, associate professor and director, biomedical sciences, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**David Doublestein, PT, PhD, CLT, Cert MDT, LLCC**, assistant professor, physical therapy, was appointed director of progress.

**Jessica Hayes, PT, DPT**, assistant professor, physical therapy, received the ATSU Innovation in Teaching for Learning award for her innovation "Canvas Learning Pathways."

**Tiffany Hines, PhD, MEd**, assistant professor, speech-language pathology, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**Kellie Huxel Bliven, PhD, ATC**, professor and chair, interdisciplinary health sciences, received the Tony A. Mobley International Distinguished Alumni award from her alma mater, Indiana University School of Public Health-Bloomington. This award honors graduates who have demonstrated outstanding personal and professional achievements in fostering the broad missions of public health. In addition, she graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

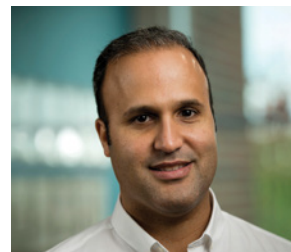
**Ivonne Maldonado De la Rosa, PhD, CCC-SLP**, assistant professor, speech-language pathology, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's (TLC) 2023 Educational Research Course. She also became an ATSU-



Dr. Kellie Huxel Bliven, ASHS



Ashley White, ASHS



Dr. Angel Baez Vega, CGHS



Dr. Lihua Dishman, CGHS

certified health sciences educator through the TLC's Level Up! certificate program.

**Lulu Martinez Nieto, PhD**, associate professor, speech-language pathology, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2023 Educational Research Course.

**Michele Tourné, PT, DPT, PCS**, adjunct professor, physical therapy, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**Tamara Valovich McLeod, PhD, ATC, FNATA, FNAK, FNAP**, professor and chair, athletic training, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**Malathy Venkatesh, PhD, CCC-SLP**, assistant professor, speech-language pathology, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2023 Educational Research Course and 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**Ashley White** was promoted to program manager for the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program.

## ATSU-CGHS

**Angel Baez Vega, PhD**, adjunct faculty, health administration, earned a doctor of health sciences degree from ATSU-CGHS.

**Erin Breitenbach, PhD, MEd**, professor and chair, health professions education, authored a chapter in a new education textbook, Factors Influencing Doctoral Program Completion.

**Bethany Clatt**, academic advisor, public health, completed her master of science in education degree from Purdue Global.

**Lihua Dishman, DBA, MBA, FACHE**, associate professor, health administration, is the recipient of ATSU-CGHS' 2024 Faculty Scholarship & Research/TOL Committee Technology Grant award. The funding will be used for Techsmith's Camtasia and Snagit software to enhance Dr. Dishman's teaching. In addition, Dr. Dishman was elected to a third one-year term as chair of Michigan Academy of Sciences Arts and Letters' Health and Human Services section.

**John Fick, EdD, FACHE**, associate professor, health administration, was appointed to the 2024 Annual Meeting Planning Committee of the Association of University Programs in Health Administration. In addition, Dr. Fick was elected to a one-year term as vice chair of Michigan Academy of Sciences Arts and Letters' Health and Human Services section.

**Nazgol Gharbi, DDS, MPH, '19**, adjunct faculty, public health, was awarded fellowships from the Pierre Fauchard Academy and International College of Dentists.

**Mary-Katherine McNatt, DrPH, MPH, MCHES, CPH, COI**, professor and chair, public health; **Marsha Presley, PhD, MPH**, research associate, public health; **Louise Smith, MA**, instructional designer; **Susan Thomas, MSED**, instructional designer; and **Sue McDaniel, MS**, instructional designer, received the ATSU Innovation in Teaching for Learning first runner-up award for their innovation "Outbreak Odyssey." In addition, Dr. McNatt received the 2024 National Rural Health Association's President's Award.

**Presley Melvin-Dean, MA**, academic advisor, earned a master of public health degree from ATSU-CGHS.

**Patrick Palmieri, DHSc, EdS, MBA, MSN, ACNP, RN, '12**, adjunct faculty, health sciences, was appointed to the Scopus Content Selection and Advisory Board as subject chair for nursing and health professions.

**Michael Ryan, PhD, MS**, adjunct faculty, kinesiology, earned a master of science in kinesiology degree from ATSU-CGHS.

**Kathleen Thomas, DHA**, adjunct faculty, health administration, was promoted to national director of registry research, analytics & measurement for the American Heart Association.

**Susan Thomas, MEd**, instructional designer, earned a doctor of education in health professions degree from ATSU-CGHS.

## ATSU-CHC

**Jennifer Harrington, DMSc, PA-C, DFAAPA**, professor, was appointed department chair and director of the Central Coast Physician Assistant program, effective Jan. 2. Dr. Harrington previously served as director of didactic education.

**Cristina Tipei, PA-C**, assistant professor, physician assistant studies, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.



Dr. Nazgol Gharbi, CGHS



Dr. Shanu Markand (right), KCOM



Kimberly Petre, KCOM



Grace Cason, MOSDOH



Dr. Osariemen Okhuaihesuyi, MOSDOH



Dr. Maurice Lee, SOMA

## ATSU-KCOM

**Donna Hettinger** was promoted to project coordinator for Clinical Affairs.

**Patricia Lodato, PhD**, assistant professor, microbiology, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**Shanu Markand, PhD**, assistant professor, anatomy, was awarded the 2023-24 A.T. Still Staff Award for Excellence in Teaching.

**Sumitra Miriyala, PhD, MBA, MPH, FAHA**, associate professor, anatomy, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**Kimberly Petre** was promoted to assistant instruction coordinator for Medical Education.

## ATSU-MOSDOH

**Keely Carter** was promoted to senior administrative assistant.

**Grace Cason** was promoted to student success coordinator.

**Osariemen Okhuaihesuyi, BDS, FMCDS**, assistant professor and director, integrated human sciences, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

## ATSU-SOMA

**Anna Campbell, PhD**, associate professor and chair, anatomy, and **John Olson, PhD**, professor, anatomy, received the ATSU Innovation in Teaching for Learning second runner-up award for their innovation "The HoloCompanion App."

**Maurice Lee, MD, MPH, FAAFP**, assistant professor, clinical science education, graduated from the Teaching & Learning Center's 2024 Asynchronous Course Design Institute.

**Erin McFadden, MD**, assistant professor and co-regional director of medical education, received the Dr. Ann Preston Women in Medicine Award from the Pennsylvania Eastern Region Chapter of the American College of Physicians. Dr. McFadden serves as deputy chief medical officer of The Wright Center for Community Health and the medical director of The Wright Center's Scranton Practice.

Submit faculty & staff news to  
stillmagazine@atsu.edu

*Still Magazine* remembers those who have passed away and extends deepest sympathies to their families and friends. Visit [stillmagazine.atsu.edu](http://stillmagazine.atsu.edu) to read full-length obituaries.

### 1950s

**John E. Rauch, DO, '52**  
Dec. 7, 2022  
Columbus, Ohio

**Donald D. Dunayer, DO, '55**  
Sept. 4, 2023  
New Port Richey, Florida

### 1960s

**James E. Gardner, DO, '62**  
Dec. 21, 2023  
Kirksville, Missouri

**David Perkel, DO, '63**  
Nov. 2, 2023  
Macon, Georgia

**Harry P. Kornhiser Jr., DO, '65**  
Feb. 2, 2023  
Covington, Virginia

**Russell M. Broadwell, DO, '67**  
Oct. 6, 2023  
Fort Myers, Florida

**W. Hadley Hoyt III, DO, '68**  
Feb. 12, 2024  
Osage Beach, Missouri

**John P. Scancarella, DO, '68**  
Oct. 13, 2023  
Martinsville, New Jersey

### 1970s

**Richard J. Mischia, DO, '70**  
Sept. 15, 2023  
Land O'Lakes, Florida

**David L. Zonderman, DO, '72**  
Feb. 14, 2024  
Mount Arlington, New Jersey

**Matthew L. Rounseville, DO, '73**  
Oct. 3, 2023  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Donald P. Robertson, DO, '75**  
Feb. 14, 2024  
Medford, Oregon

**Jimmy L. Yowell, DO, '76**  
Nov. 23, 2023  
Kirksville, Missouri

**David P. Myers, DO, '77**  
Dec. 31, 2023  
Tucson, Arizona

**Ray H. VanWyngarden, DO, '77**  
Aug. 10, 2022  
Des Moines, Washington

**Jeffrey S. Stern, DO, '79**  
Dec. 14, 2022  
Macomb, Michigan

### 1980s

**Donald T. Lee, DO, '81**  
Feb. 22, 2024  
Fremont, California

**Herbert E. "Gene" Childress, DO, '83**  
Jan. 20, 2024  
Lewistown, Missouri

### 1990s

**James Cannon, DHA, MBA, MS, PA-C, DFAAPA, '97**  
March 31, 2024  
Chesapeake, Virginia

### 2000s

**Ernest C. Edwards, AuD, '01**  
Sept. 12, 2022  
Burkeville, Virginia

**Susan J. Burge, DO, '05**  
Oct. 3, 2023  
North Las Vegas, Nevada

**Debra D. Severson, AuD, '05**  
March 10, 2023  
Arnolds Park, Iowa

**Barbara A. Harrington, AuD, '07**  
July 2023  
San Mateo, California

### 2010s

**Lillie M. Pitman, DMD, '11**  
Nov. 21, 2023  
Fredericksburg, Virginia

**Bonni L. Kinne, DHSc, '15**  
Oct. 16, 2023  
Grand Ledge, Michigan

**Amanda Isham, DHSc, '16**  
May 10, 2024  
Clarkston, Michigan

**George M. Magnus, DMD, '19, MPH, '12**  
May 4, 2024  
Union, New Jersey

### 2020s

**Jeni Rogers, MHA, '20**  
Dec. 22, 2023  
San Tan Valley, Arizona

### Faculty, staff & friends

**Gary P. Brigham, DDS**  
Dec. 25, 2023  
Phoenix, Arizona

**Michael F. French**  
Dec. 24, 2023  
Lenexa, Kansas

**John H. George, PhD**  
Dec. 20, 2023  
Lincoln, Nebraska

**Anita K. Kalousek, DO**  
Dec. 3, 2023  
Upland, California

**Robert J. Price, DDS**  
Feb. 2, 2024  
Vineyard, Utah

# Remembering a former president

James McGovern, PhD

ATSU's 10th president, James McGovern, PhD, passed away in January 2024. He served as president from 1997-2008.

A New York native, Dr. McGovern earned his bachelor's degree from Iona College and master's degree from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, both in New York. He earned his doctorate from the Department of Administrative and Organizational Studies at New York University.

Dr. McGovern was a physics professor and served in many administrative positions, including Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio; Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia; the Illinois and Connecticut Boards of Higher Education; and the State University of New York. He was also director of health finance for the state of Illinois and director of the Issues Analysis Institute, part of the State University of New York.

In 1997, Dr. McGovern was appointed president of Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine and, in 2001, oversaw the transition to a university structure and the new name, A.T. Still University of Health Sciences. During his tenure, he also saw the addition of three more graduate schools: ATSU's School of Health Management in 1999 (now ATSU's College of Graduate Health Studies), ATSU's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health in 2003, and ATSU's School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona in 2006.

In 2003, he co-authored the book "Your Healer Within: A Unified Field Theory for Healthcare" with his wife, Rene McGovern, a former ATSU professor of neurobehavioral sciences.

"ATSU would not be the successful comprehensive health sciences institution it is today without the innovative ideas and leadership of Dr. James McGovern," says Craig M. Phelps, DO, '84, chancellor, ATSU. "He believed deeply in ATSU's mission and the osteopathic philosophy. I had the privilege of visiting with Dr. McGovern several times over the last year. I was deeply touched as I witnessed Dr. Rene McGovern and family members by Jim's side providing endless love, care, and comfort during his final days."



Top: Dr. James McGovern, bottom: Drs. Rene and James McGovern



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# Golfing for a good cause

ATSU Diversity & Inclusion holds its third annual Graduate Health Professions Scholarship Golf Tournament

By Arselia Gales





ATSU Diversity & Inclusion held its third annual Graduate Health Professions Scholarship (GPS) Golf Tournament on Saturday, April 20, at Superstition Springs Golf Club in Mesa, Arizona. The tournament, which drew in 130 guests and volunteers, coincided with ATSU's Board of Trustees meeting, allowing trustees to attend along with students, alumni, and community members.

Serving as a focused initiative to educate individuals whose life experiences and endeavors align with ATSU's mission, the GPS Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to students from historically underrepresented groups who are pursuing careers in healthcare. All tournament proceeds go toward ATSU's GPS Scholarship Fund.

**2023-24 GPS scholars**

- Akosua Afriyie, ATSU-ASDOH
- Marlinda Begaye, ATSU-ASDOH
- Drina Cooper, ATSU-ASHS Physician Assistant
- Roy Epuna, ATSU-ASDOH
- Nina German, ATSU-ASHS Physical Therapy
- Manzi Kadoma, ATSU-KCOM
- Tajinee Porter, ATSU-ASHS Physician Assistant
- Nicole Rogers, ATSU-ASHS Physical Therapy
- Mariah Taylor, ATSU-SOMA
- James Whitfield, ATSU-ASDOH



Clockwise from top left: Mariah Taylor, GPS scholar; golfers from sponsor team Mahogany Xan; Dr. Travis Lam, Tabitha Cleaver, Dr. Jonathan Cleaver, Dr. Linnette Sells, Dr. Danielle Barnett-Trapp, and Robert Behnen enjoy the tournament; a team celebrates with high fives; ATSU Diversity & Inclusion's Dr. Dougherty Tsalabutie and Brian Castillo-Murillo share a golf cart; and Nina German and Nicole Rogers, GPS scholars.





To donate to the GPS Scholarship Fund, please visit [atsu.edu/donate-gps](https://atsu.edu/donate-gps)



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