T
he impressive career path of Dr. Cecile Feldman (C’80, D’84, GD ’85, W’85), Dean of the New Jersey Dental School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), spans nearly 30 years, and has been marked by extraordinary opportunities that guided her educational choices and propelled her to the top post at a prestigious dental school.

As a chemistry and economics major at Penn in the late ’70s, Dr. Feldman, a Clifton, N.J. native and the daughter of an orthodontist, had a keen interest in health care and was considering dentistry. She also had a fascination with business and planning. Although still an undergraduate, she applied for and was hired as a programmer in Penn’s Planning Office (now the Office of Strategic Planning), eventually becoming a research fellow at the University’s Higher Education Research Institute. There, she learned firsthand the complexities of strategic planning for a university, and her interest in higher education blossomed. That early chance for her, as a student, to prove her worth in a professional setting is what the University of Pennsylvania is all about, she says: “Penn excels at creating opportunity.”

COMBINING INTERESTS AND SKILLS: Building on her interests in dentistry and business, Dr. Feldman pursued a joint DMD/MBA degree in conjunction with the Wharton School, which is now officially one of the dual-degree options for dental students, preparing them for careers in administration and industry. She completed both degrees, along with her postdoctoral dental residency in general dentistry, over the next five years. During this time, her unique blend of educational experiences was further strengthened through another key opportunity: working with Penn Dental Medicine’s Dean at the time, Dr. D. Walter Cohen, and the Associate Dean, Dr. James Galbally, in her position at the Higher Education Research Institute, she helped build financial models for the dental school.

For three years after her graduation in 1985, she stayed on at Penn Dental Medicine, teaching in the Department of Dental Care Systems, and she is still a member of the School’s adjunct faculty. In the Dental Auxiliary Utilization Clinic, she taught operative dentistry, as well as practice management, and other business-related courses. She had been at Penn for 11 years when she heard about an opening on the faculty at UMDNJ, the nation’s largest free-standing health science university, which will soon become a part of Rutgers, The State University, under the recently enacted New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Higher Education Restructuring Act. That position led to a post as Associate Dean for Planning and Assessment.

To Dr. Feldman, it was a perfect marriage of health care and business — and a major learning experience. She helped develop the University’s new comprehensive care program, managing information systems and quality assurance. Then, in 1999, yet another milestone opportunity arose: She was asked to serve as acting dean, and then, when it was clear that the Dean was not going to return to the dental school, she applied for the permanent position. ►
ALUMNI CURRENTLY SERVING AS DENTAL SCHOOL DEANS

Richard Buchanan (D’69),
College of Dental Medicine at
Roseman University of Health
Sciences

Cecile Feldman (C’80, D’84, G’85,
WG’83),
New Jersey Dental School, UMDNJ

Michael Glick (G’88, HOM’94),
University of Buffalo School of
Dental Medicine

Jeffrey Hutter (D’75),
Boston University Henry M.
Goldman School of Dental
Medicine

Mark Latta (D’83),
Creighton University School of
Dentistry

Col. Thomas R. Schneid (D’79),
US Air Force Dental Service
Dean

ALUMNI AT SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE

A sampling of Penn Dental Medicine alumni currently working in academic teaching, research, and clinical roles at schools nationwide.

Columbia University College of Dental Medicine
Stephen J. Chu, D’84
Clinical Associate Professor,
Periodontology & Implant Dentistry
Director, Esthetic Education

Madeline Susan Ginzburg, D’79, G’D’80
Assistant Clinical Professor
Assistant Attending, Oral Surgery

Joseph McManus, D’72, G’D’76
Associate Clinical Professor, Dental Medicine Section of Social & Behavioral Sciences Division of Community Health

Maria Velasco, D’10, G’D’10
Instructor of Dental Medicine

East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine
Nancy Jacobson, D’89
Clinical Associate Professor, AEGD Residency Program

Francis G. Serio, D’80
Interim Vice Dean and Professor
Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs

Georgia Health Sciences University COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE
Katharine Carrozza, D’96, G’D’98, GED’98
Assistant Professor & Director of Geriatrics

Scott S. De Rossi, D’95, G’D’97
Associate Professor & Chair, Oral Health & Diagnostic Sciences

J. Kobi Stern, G’D’08
Director, Advanced Education of Periodontics
Assistant Professor, Periodontics

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA
Jack C. Yu, D’82, GED’84, M’85
Milford B. Hatcher Chair, Professor, & Chief, Section of Plastic Surgery
Chief, Pediatric Plastic Surgery, Children’s Medical Center

Harvard School of Dental Medicine
Katherine Klein, D’05
Instructor
Clinical Associate in Dentistry, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Mass General Hospital

Nathaniel Simon Treister, D’00
Assistant Professor of Oral Medicine
Director of Postgraduate Oral Medicine
Associate Surgeon, Division of Oral Medicine & Dentistry,
Brigham and Women’s Hospital

Jefferson Medical College
George Feldman, D’83
Associate Professor, Orthopaedic Research

Mount Sinai Medical Center, Dept. of Dentistry & Oral Surgery
James H. Doundoulakis, D’82, GED’82
Director of Implant Prosthetics

New Jersey Dental School, UMDNJ
Pamela Alberto, D’80
Clinical Associate Professor, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

Larry Gorzelnik, D’87
Clinical Assistant Professor, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

Howard Pomeranz, D’62
Clinical Professor, Endodontology

Reena Varghese, D’02, G’D’02
Assistant Professor, Restorative Dentistry

New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center & Weill Cornell Medical College
Abhinav Sinha, D’05
Director, Pediatric Dental Clinic, New York Presbyterian Hospital
Assistant Attending, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery/Dentistry
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Weill Cornell Medical College

NOVA Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine
Abby J. Brodie, D’83
Associate Dean, Curriculum & Educational Affairs
Associate Professor

Steven Haas, D’83, G’D’84
Assistant Professor, Restorative Dentistry
Assistant Dean, Predoctoral Clinics

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CHALLENGES AND REWARDS: “I love what I do,” she says. “It is fun and exciting, and there is a great deal of collegiality among the faculty, students, and administration here.” Dr. Feldman’s days are filled with creating budgets, developing programs, and working to advance the school. “Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the job is dealing with the financial challenges,” she says. “Over the last decade, there have been significant cuts in support to public schools. These cuts are occurring at the same time that costs are increasing, there is a greater need for access to care by underserved populations, and an economic recession is making it more difficult for people to pay for their care. Trying to balance the school’s tri-part mission of education, service, and research is becoming more and more difficult.”

One of the accomplishments of which she is most proud is forming the New Jersey Dental School’s first Department of Oral Biology. The department achieved top-10 status in less than 10 years since its creation. She also is proud of UMDNJ’s community-oriented dental education program, which allows fourth-year students to spend their entire senior year at one of several community sites where residents have limited access to dental care. “I believe we are the only dental school that has created a program where students live for a year in the community where they are working,” she says.

Over the last several years, Dr. Feldman has had the opportunity to serve in leadership roles at both the state and national level. This year, Dr. Feldman is Chair of the ADEA Council of Deans. For four years, she served on the NIH NIDCR Advisory Council and on the NIH Council of Councils. And several years ago, she held posts on the Commission on Dental Accreditation and New Jersey Commission on Higher Education. The experiences she gained at Penn, she says, have been critical to these and other professional successes. “The people I had the good fortune to work with were so open to mentoring me,” she says. “Because of them, I was able to experience all aspects of the academic world.”

“Penn’s outstanding people are always looking to push forward the frontier and break boundaries,” she adds. “That attitude helped set my outlook for my whole career, and it has become a part of my vision.”