A Lasting Legacy to Advanced Training, Care in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Louis Schoenleber (C’42, D’43) $17.3 Million Estate Gift Endows Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

By Jennifer Baldino Bonett

Chief Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Resident Eric J. Granquist (M’07, GD’10) leans in close to his patient. The patient needs a CAT scan and so he turns to a new i-CAT scanner, a 3D craniofacial imaging system that provides real-time visualization of the problem, to help determine diagnosis, treatment and surgical prognosis. Indeed, the patient does require surgery, and Dr. Granquist plans to use the department’s new state-of-the-art Piezosurgery® device for a minimally invasive procedure. The device employs 3D ultrasound vibrations to better enable micrometric and selective cuts through bone without harming underlying soft tissue and nerves.

In residents like Dr. Granquist and the advanced care and pioneering research conducted by Penn Dental Medicine’s Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, alumnus Louis Schoenleber (C’42, D’43) saw the future of his profession, making a landmark commitment — through an extraordinary gift — to the department and the residency program he wished had existed for him as a young oral surgeon. Dr. Schoenleber, who died in 2005 at the age of 84, left the majority of his estate to the School of Dental Medicine’s Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. At the final settlement of the estate in late 2009, the bequest totaled $17.3 million. The gift is the largest ever to a department of oral and maxillofacial surgery and one of the largest gifts to a dental school nationally.

“This gift is the culmination of a 12-year relationship between Dr. Schoenleber and the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, which he adopted shortly after his 50th reunion,” says Dr. Peter Quinn (D’74, GD’78), the founding chairman of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and the first Louis Schoenleber Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. (Dr. Schoenleber had established the trust to endow this professorship in 1993.) “Dr. Schoenleber loved oral surgery, and he had a great interest in our dual-degree program at Penn. Our program seemed to fulfill his dreams of what should happen in this specialty, which he entered at its very beginnings. He was fascinated by the work we did and always wanted to know more.”

In 1993, the year of his retirement, Dr. Schoenleber returned to Penn Dental Medicine for his 50th reunion. During that visit, Dr. Schoenleber met with Dr. Quinn for the first time, a meeting that inspired a great admiration for the work of the department and a deep friendship with Dr. Quinn who, in addition to his ongoing professorship at Penn Dental Medicine, now serves as Senior Vice President for Clinical Practices at the University of Pennsylvania Health System and Vice Dean for Professional Services at the School of Medicine.

“Peter Quinn built the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Department at Penn into the finest in the country,” says Dr. Denis F. Kinane, the Morton Amsterdam Dean of Penn
Dr. Schoenleber intended his gift to enable the department to continue to be a leader in advanced clinical care, like that provided with the TMJ prosthesis developed by Dr. Peter Quinn (opposite), and to support the ongoing strength of the dual-degree residency program with new technologies and resources for faculty, research, and residents. Above right: Chief Resident Dr. Eric Granquist (M’07, GD’10) with Dr. David Stanton (D’88, M’92, GD’95), Director of the Oral & Maxillofacial Residency Program. Above left: Interim Department Chair Dr. Lawrence Levin (D’87, GD’92).

Dental Medicine. “The department is home to an immensely accomplished faculty and draws the most talented residents. The trust and respect that Dr. Schoenleber developed for Dr. Quinn and his accomplishments led to this historic gift to the department.”

Already, the gift is advancing the field of oral surgery — Dr. Schoenleber’s prescient intention — by supporting the work of the highly competitive and demanding Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery residency program. In the six-year program, students complete the requirements at Penn Medicine for their MD, and finish with a two-year certificate in general surgery and a certificate at Penn Dental Medicine in oral and maxillofacial surgery. The program annually draws at least 80–100 applicants for three residency spots. “Dr. Schoenleber believed strongly that to be an oral surgeon in this day and age, you need both dental and medical training,” says Dr. Quinn. “He wanted to ensure that the specialty training as it is here would continue and grow.”

Established in 1986 as one of only a handful of programs in the country to offer a combined MD and Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery certificate, the residency draws students like Chief Resident Dr. Granquist. With plans to stay in academe and pursue clinical research, Dr. Granquist notes he came to Penn Dental Medicine for the opportunity to study under faculty with “a wide breadth of expertise,” including innovations in treating temporomandibular joint disorder, approaches to sleep apnea, and orthognathic surgery to correct congenital deformities. In the dual-degree program, Dr. Granquist has enjoyed exposure to medical specialties and learning to apply technologies from those areas. Of particular interest to Dr. Granquist has been his trauma rotation, which has aided his research on facial lacerations (conducted with Dr. Joli Chou, Assistant Professor of Oral Surgery/Pharmacology–Clinician Educator, and Dr. Carrie Sims, Assistant Professor of Surgery at Penn Medicine) funded by Dr. Schoenleber’s gift.

Residents like Dr. Granquist invest a decade to earn their DMD/MD degrees, so financial support for the residency program is particularly important, explains Interim Department Chair Dr. Lawrence Levin (D’87, GD’92). “This gift will allow us to continue to maintain our spot as one of the premier programs in the country,” says Dr. Levin, who trained under Dr. Quinn. “In today’s financial climate in medicine, it’s a resource that I know will help us continue to grow.”
From an original complement of two full-time faculty, the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery has grown to include eight full-time and 16 part-time members, covering multiple sites. Faculty and residents treat patients at the School of Dental Medicine, the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Penn- Presbyterian Medical Center, the Veterans Administration Hospital, and Penn’s outpatient sites at Radnor and Plymouth Meeting.

This spectrum of clinical experiences appealed to Chief Resident Dr. Sotirios Diamantis (D’04, M’07, GD’10). “Penn’s Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery residency is superior to other programs due to its immense volume of major operative cases, its affiliation with Children’s Hospital, as well as the large number of highly skilled, full-time faculty,” says Dr. Diamantis. “The quality of training and multitude of experiences allows residents to obtain faculty positions immediately out of residency, go on to any fellowship opportunity, or pursue a career in private practice, while providing full-scope oral and maxillofacial surgery.”

Dr. Louis Schoenleber (C’42, D’43)

Dr. Louis Schoenleber (C’42, D’43) graduated from Penn Dental Medicine as part of a class that was accelerated to move graduates quickly into the armed forces during World War II. Dr. Schoenleber gained much of his surgical experience during his World War II service in the Navy, where he achieved the rank of Commander. He was on active duty until 1946 and fulfilled the remainder of his naval service commitment on the staff of the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. Dr. Schoenleber then practiced oral surgery in Ridgewood, N.J., for 35 years. He also served on the staff of St. Michael’s Hospital in Newark, Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, Bergen Pines Hospital in Paramus, and Hackensack University Medical Center and had affiliations with the Fairleigh Dickinson University and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He was also an Adjunct Clinical Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Penn Dental Medicine.

As Dr. Schoenleber intended, graduates of the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery program will bring with them experience with top-of-the-line procedures and technology. The department is the largest center nationally for jaw joint replacement and Dr. Quinn developed the only FDA-approved stock temporomandibular joint (TMJ) prosthesis at Penn Dental Medicine.

“We developed the prosthesis and guidelines for its use and people come here from all over country and world for this unique approach,” says Dr. Quinn. “This is one of the things, early on, that Dr. Schoenleber wanted to support—these types of advances that can be developed and perfected in an academic center by professionals with dual-degree training.”

Already, the Schoenleber gift has enabled the department to hire two new faculty members. The gift also funded Drs. Granquist and Diamantis to present this past fall at the Annual American Association of OMFS meeting in Toronto. “The Schoenleber bequest will provide that layer of support for the things we need to be doing to keep the department at the top of the field,” says Dr. Quinn.

“Dr. Schoenleber took a special interest in our residents,” says David C. Stanton (D’88, M’92, GD’95) Associate Professor of Oral Surgery- Clinician Educator and Director of the Oral and Maxillofacial Residency Program. “He wanted to know how we taught them, what they were doing, and where they were going from here. Even in a time of government funding cuts for Medicare and education, this gift is enabling many things to occur that benefit our residents, our department, and ultimately our field.”

Already being used to fund continuing education opportunities, new technology and equipment, and faculty positions, the Schoenleber bequest also is intended to fund research, facility construction and renovation, and endowed professorships. “Dr. Schoenleber’s foresight ensures the vitality of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery,” says Dr. Quinn. “Through his gift to the School, he will have the lasting legacy of helping our department realize even more.”

— DR. PETER QUINN, LOUIS Schoenleber PROFESSOR OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

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