



Alumni profile: Alan Atlas, D’86

Inspired to Deliver and Teach Exceptional Dentistry

FOR A MAN ACCUSTOMED to international recognition, a recent handwritten letter has become a treasured reminder for Dr. Alan Atlas (D’86) that all the time, effort, and passion he puts in to inspire others in dentistry is well worth the sacrifice.

The letter was from a veteran dentist of more than 40 years who attended one of Dr. Atlas’ lectures. It was addressed to Dr. Atlas’ family, thanking them for their sacrifices that allowed Dr. Atlas to share his message that each patient’s best interest is every dentist’s first priority.

“The opportunity to affect the lives of my patients, my students, my colleagues, and their patients is not something I take lightly. My career has gone way beyond my expectations and I realize that it is because I have chosen to make exceptional patient care and service a huge part of my personal mission,” he says.

Putting patients first has been a lifelong focus for Dr. Atlas. That focus has helped establish him as a trusted expert with patients, students, and colleagues. His private practice in comprehensive restorative and esthetic dentistry has helped thousands of people live healthier, more confident lives. As Clinical Professor of Preventive & Restorative

Sciences and Endodontics with joint appointments in the Department of Preventive & Restorative Sciences and the Department of Endodontics at Penn Dental Medicine, he has inspired countless students in the practice of dentistry. And as an in-demand lecturer at professional meetings and conferences, he has enhanced the knowledge and acumen of colleagues nationwide.

“Truthfully, I love what I do, and that has been my recipe for happiness and meaningful fulfillment and the reason I dedicate much of my time to teaching and lecturing,” he says.

INSPIRED BY HIS TIME LEARNING AT PENN DENTAL MEDICINE

Sharing his passion for dentistry has deep roots in Dr. Atlas’ days as a student at Penn Dental Medicine.

“As a dental student, I remember the day I obtained unexpected encouragement from one of my most demanding teachers — Dr. Bal Goyal. He demanded so much from all of us and drove home the imperative that details are important. The day that sticks in my mind is when he let me know that I had the clinical and communicative skills to make an impact on people’s lives through this profession,” he says.

That defining moment was brought to mind the first time he saw one of his students light up when they realized they could make that same impact.

“Students absorb so much. It’s a true pleasure to work with them and help motivate them to be the very best they can be. That’s one of the reasons I teach,” he says. “When the knowledge dawns on them that they can make a true difference to each patient they work with, it’s energizing.”

Lately, Dr. Atlas has seen a lot of those aha moments for students in the Endodontic-Restorative Microscopy and Technology Clinic, where he is co-director. This new clinical instruction initiative was recently launched to provide DMD students experience in using the dental microscope as a precision tool in restorative care along with digital technologies.

“This is truly a unique training initiative that our students have enthusiastically embraced,” he says.

Key to using technology for better patient outcomes are what Dr. Atlas calls his three pillars for success: doing dentistry well, motivating patients to higher levels of health, and using the right materials and equipment. “Easier and faster is not always better. It’s all in the detail and the precision of the practice,” Dr. Atlas says.

.....

“Students absorb so much. It’s a true pleasure to work with them and help motivate them to be the very best they can be. That’s one of the reasons I teach.”

.....

— DR. ALAN ATLAS (D’86)

LOOKING AHEAD TO A NEW ERA IN DENTISTRY

Since graduating from Penn Dental Medicine, Dr. Atlas (the 2006 Alumni Award of Merit winner) has witnessed a vast change in the practice of dentistry.

“Penn Dental Medicine is highly involved in ushering in this new era [digital dentistry] with many leaders coming from and teaching at Penn.”

“I graduated at the start of a tremendous renaissance in dentistry,” he explains. “At that time, adhesive, esthetic, and implant dentistry became a global phenomenon, with tremendous research that initiated a major shift in treatment planning and delivery of dental care.”

Today, new digital technologies are bringing forward another era in dentistry, with exciting potential to help practitioners

improve their ability to diagnose, plan treatment, and deliver optimal care.

“Penn Dental Medicine is highly involved in ushering in this new era, with many leaders coming from and teaching at Penn,” he says. “I’m proud to be among these

outstanding colleagues and am continuously inspired by those who are fully committed to teaching the next generation of dentists.” ■

Dr. Atlas hopes to connect with other alumni when he’ll be speaking at the 2018 American Dental Association annual session, as well as the Yankee Dental Conference, the Hinman Dental Meeting, and Chicago Mid-Winter meeting, all in 2019.

RETIRED FROM DENTAL PRACTICE? WHAT ARE YOU UP TO NOW?

We would love to hear what you are up to after retirement from dental practice. Teaching? Mentoring? A second career? Share a bit of your story with us so we can share it with fellow alumni in future Penn Dental Medicine publications. Write to us at alumni@dental.upenn.edu.



THE
POWER
OF
PENN
DENTAL
MEDICINE

The Right Asset Can Make Your Giving Better!

Nurturing a great school like Penn Dental Medicine is a partnership between the School and the alumni who support it. Identifying the right asset can make the benefits of charitable giving even better.

Retirement plan assets make some of the best charitable gifts because they may be highly taxed when left to a non-spouse, non-charitable beneficiary. But Penn Dental Medicine can receive these gifts free of taxes—and put more of your hard-earned dollars to work to advance excellence in dental education, research, and clinical care.

To learn more, contact:

Elizabeth Ketterlinus | Sr. Associate Dean
Development & Alumni Relations
Penn Dental Medicine
240 S. 40th Street | Philadelphia, PA 19104
215.898.3328 | ekett@upenn.edu
www.powerofpenn.upenn.edu/gift-planning