

# FACULTY Q&A

## SHARING PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL PATHS

WHILE THE PENN DENTAL Medicine community may know the School's faculty by the courses they teach or the research they conduct, this Q&A faculty spotlight aims to get a bit more personal glimpse of them as individuals

For this issue, we talked with Dr. Joan Gluch, Division Chief and Professor of Clinical Community Oral Health and Associate Dean for Academic Policy. Dr. Gluch has been part of the School's faculty for 25 years.

### **What have you found most rewarding about being a member of the Penn faculty?**

I feel privileged to collaborate with compassionate faculty, staff, and students who help me do my best work in meeting personal and professional challenges. I enjoy the variety of my professional assignments, which include teaching, clinical supervision, and community program development, as well as administrative and leadership positions within the dental school. Every day is different and brings new challenges, and I am proud that I have been able to contribute to Penn Dental Medicine's achievements in the past several years.

### **What do you view as your greatest professional accomplishment?**

Working to increase access to oral health care for many of our neighbors in West and Southwest Philadelphia. Since 1992, I have worked with a great team of professionals at Penn to help expand care for children, families, older adults, and those with medically complex conditions in the Philadelphia region. Together, we have now built two dental mobile vehicles, several dental clinics at health centers, and have included oral health and dental care as an integral part of several health care clinics in the Philadelphia region. Clearly, more work needs to be done, and I am proud to continue to lead the team that has developed and expanded Penn Dental's community oral health outreach efforts.



## Q&A with Dr. Joan I. Gluch *Division Chief and Professor of Clinical Community Oral Health*

### **What drew your interest to your particular field and what do you enjoy most about it?**

When we treated some of the first HIV/AIDS patients at Thomas Jefferson University in the early 1980s, I was influenced by many of our patients' complaints about their difficulties in accessing even basic dental services. This inequity violated my sense of fairness and justice and spurred my interest in community and public health to understand best practices in expanding access to oral health education and dental care. I enjoy the continual professional challenges of developing and implementing community health programs to equalize access to dental care, and I am happiest when I am able to teach and empower new dental professionals to work with patients not traditionally served by dentistry.

### **What advice from a mentor have you carried with you in your career?**

Say yes, and don't be afraid to volunteer for new assignments to expand your skills and interests beyond your expectations.

### **What excites you most about Penn Dental today?**

The renewal of the School's facilities as well as our world class faculty have allowed us to attract and enroll top students for the DMD, advanced dental education, and DScD programs. There is a real sense of energy in achievement and success here at Penn Dental that keeps me busy every day.

### **Schools/degrees?**

PhD from University of Pennsylvania, EdM from Temple University, and BS from Columbia University

### **If you could have dinner with anyone who would it be? And why?**

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, because I would like to hear their insights about their commitment to peace and social justice, especially in their work with the Carter Center since their time in the White House ended. I have read many of the Carters' books and have lots of practical questions and theoretical issues that I would love to discuss with them.

### **Hobbies?**

Reading, dance, and exercise classes, and spending time with our grandchildren

### **Favorite vacation destination?**

Ocean City NJ, and traveling to visit our six children who live throughout the world

### **Best book you've read recently?**

"Teeth" by Mary Otto. Subtitled, "The story of beauty, inequality and the struggle for oral health in America," this book clearly showcases the differential access to dental care based on socioeconomic factors. My wish is that this book will provoke a new level of understanding and activism in consumers and professionals alike to advocate for greater funding and equity in national and state oral health policy. If you haven't read it, I recommend it highly! ■