

Still

MAGAZINE

Forward progress

Exoskeleton
technology
helps restore
form and function



A.T. Still University's alumni publication



Dr. Adam Story assists occupational therapy student Taylor Au as she demonstrates moving from sitting to standing in an exoskeleton.



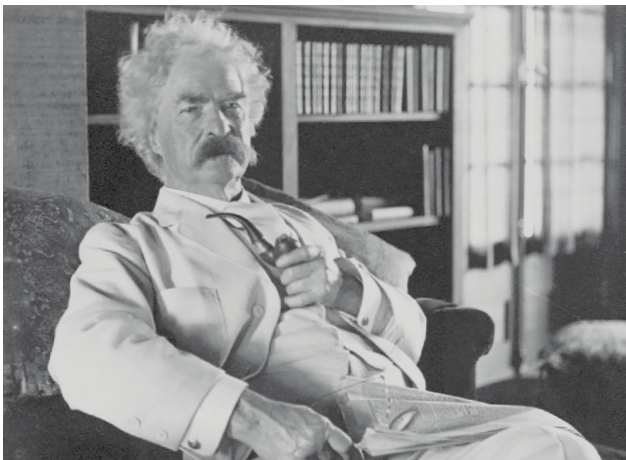
To watch the exoskeleton in action, visit atsu.edu/exo-1



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Powered progress

What began as a showcased robotic device at ATSU's annual healthcare expo has become a catalyst for change across the University's classrooms, clinics, and communities. The device, a wearable exoskeleton, now plays a pivotal role in patient care and student education.
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30 years and counting

ATSU-ASHS alumni, faculty, and students gathered to celebrate the School's 30th anniversary, marking a time of reflection on its rich history and reaffirmation of its commitment to preparing highly skilled and compassionate healthcare leaders.

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Preserving a piece of history

When the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine discovered an opportunity to obtain a letter handwritten by Mark Twain to A.T. Still, DO, the Wilson family chose to preserve a rare piece of history while giving back to their osteopathic profession.
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Special Olympics Missouri

For the first time in its history, the Special Olympics Missouri State Summer Games took place in Kirksville, bringing together approximately 1,000 athletes, coaches, families, volunteers, and supporters from across the state.

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In memoriam

ON THE COVER

Second-year occupational therapy student Taylor Au with ATSU-ASHS faculty member Dr. Adam Story





From the CHANCELLOR



The power of community

Across ATSU's campuses and programs, the power of community continues to shape the experiences of our students and the education they receive. Guided by a mission to serve the underserved and improve health, ATSU remains deeply committed to preparing compassionate, whole person healthcare professionals who are ready to meet the needs of a changing world.

Summer Games highlighting what is possible when a community comes together in service.

Additionally, this issue celebrates people throughout ATSU's history, including early osteopathic supporter Mark Twain; alumna-turned-board member Linnette Sells, DO, FAOASM, '82, who completed her term of service; and recently retired Lori Haxton, MA, who dedicated her career to the University. By giving their time and talents to ATSU, each one has played a pivotal role in educating and inspiring the next generation of healthcare providers.

Through the past and present efforts of the broader ATSU community, our students are supported, our university is strengthened, and our mission is carried forward. Thank you for being a part of this community and your ongoing support.

Yours in service,
Craig M. Phelps DO
Craig M. Phelps, DO, '84
ATSU Chancellor



Far left, clockwise: ATSU-MOSDOH graduates at commencement; Dr. Craig Phelps with ATSU-CHC graduates; Dr. Adam Story with exoskeleton user Billy Moyle; and Joseph Novinger, DO, '89, at Special Olympics Missouri State Summer Games



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Still Magazine is published by
Communication & Marketing,
A.T. Still University (ATSU).

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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.

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Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health
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College for Healthy Communities
College of Graduate Health Studies
Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine
Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health
School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona



A spoonful of sugar

Former Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Lori Haxton, MA, reflects on her decades-long career at ATSU and her relentless pursuit of helping others

By Katie Hubbard

As a second grader, Lori Haxton dreamed of growing up to be like Mary Poppins – someone who helped others and made the world a little brighter wherever she went. And for the past 36 years at ATSU, she did just that.

Lori has touched thousands of students' lives in her roles at the University, beginning in 1988 as director of admissions & enrollment services when ATSU's Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine was still a single-school institution. Since that time and as the University has grown, she has been involved in every aspect of admissions and enrollment, including recruiting and selecting students for Missouri-based programs and establishing new programs across ATSU's campuses. As she progressed in her career, she eventually led the Student Affairs department for the entire university, including the areas of admissions, financial services, registrar, learning resources, counseling, student wellness, student housing, and student life. Retiring in the position of vice chancellor of student affairs, her years of oversight, guidance, and wisdom have shaped the educational experiences and careers of all who enter ATSU's academic programs.

"It was never a job," Lori says. "It was a lifestyle – even better than a career."

Originally from Cedarburg, Wisconsin, Lori first came to Kirksville, Missouri, as a graduate student at Truman State University. That's where she earned her master of arts degree with plans to become a high school geography teacher. That's also where she met fellow graduate student Jason Haxton, MA, director of ATSU's Museum of Osteopathic Medicine, who would become her husband, travel companion, and best friend.

The couple got married, moved to Arizona, and worked in undergraduate residential life. Lori also spent time working as a substitute teacher on the Navajo Reservation. A few years later, when Truman State University offered positions to both of them, they jumped at the chance to come back to Kirksville.

Shortly after returning to Kirksville, Lori was recruited to ATSU to develop its admissions program. She remembers the campus atmosphere as always being very friendly and welcoming and deeply committed to the osteopathic philosophy. When she joined ATSU, that collaborative, passionate environment shaped her own professional philosophy. She observed and learned from the doctors of osteopathic medicine around her, including the revered Max Gutensohn, DO, '41, who taught her to listen to her applicants, just like he taught students to listen to their patients.





Lori Haxton celebrates with 2025 ATSU-KCOM graduates.

“

It was never a job.
It was a lifestyle.”

Lori Haxton on her retirement

After a few years working in Admissions, Lori came to a turning point in her career. She had been visiting a private undergraduate university to serve as a panelist for its premed visit days, and she was the only person representing osteopathic medicine among several medical schools. That particular university was highly competitive and had a strong premed program. After one of the events, the university president offered her a job to lead their admissions program.

She was taken aback, although intrigued by the opportunity. Alone, on her long drive home, she had time to think it through and came to a realization.

“I just said, I can’t leave. I love my job. I can’t leave osteopathic medicine. I can’t leave ATSU. I can’t leave ... I don’t want to,” she says. “At that point, I realized my heart was with the institution here.”

Throughout the years, Lori’s fondest memories have come from her engagement with students.

She has listened to their stories, their aspirations, and their reasons for wanting to care for others. As she transitioned from Admissions to Student Affairs, she was able to spend more time with enrolled students, supporting them through the ups and downs of life and keeping them whole while keeping them on track to meet their goals.

“They’ve shared so much with me, their thoughts, their lives, their goals – sometimes their kids,” Lori says. “They’ve also shared their weaknesses. Some have shared their vulnerabilities with me, which for people who are Type A and very perfect, that’s very difficult. Yet it’s important to respect they are human, too, and to respect them for their vulnerabilities.”

Lori is extremely proud of her department’s efforts over the past 13 years to reduce the stigma of asking and going for behavioral health help. Those efforts are now visible through various initiatives, including the green bandanas students wear signifying Mental Health First Aid ambassadors.

“These are highly qualified, highly motivated people who sometimes need some extra elements in their life to get them to their goals,” Lori says. “We also instill in them that they can ask for help, they aren’t alone.”

Across the decades of challenges and achievements, Lori learned the importance of ethics, grit, and being open and trustworthy. Every decision and endeavor was for the benefit of students. She made it her priority to truly know people and call them by name. She wanted students to have someone at ATSU who knew them, who would be there for them, and who would remember them after they graduated.



Lori Haxton leads new students across Truman State University's campus for their white coat ceremony.

“I’ve always tried to learn people’s names and know who they are, even beyond their name,” Lori says. “Hopefully that is something I’ve contributed, along with my staff, for them to feel they are part of this institution.”

Even for alumni who graduated years ago, Lori still remembers their names and something about them. To this day, she recalls some alumni whom she advocated for with the admissions committee or in her write-up because they were “diamonds in the rough.” She says they may have been a little shaky in their interviews, but she had a gut feeling they were going to make fantastic osteopathic physicians.

“There are a few of them that I thank for giving me the opportunity to be in their lifetime,” she says. “What if we wouldn’t have accepted them? They are spectacular!”

Lori’s influence extends beyond students and alumni to her colleagues across the University, as well as to the larger healthcare community. Her years of dedication and service to the University

and the osteopathic profession earned her many honors, including Kirksville Osteopathic Alumni Association (KOAA) Honorary Membership, Missouri campus Distinguished Service Award, KOAA Distinguished Service Award, Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (MAOPS) Service Award, KOAA Living Tribute Award, George Windsor Award, MAOPS’ Wilbur T. Hill, DO, FACOFD dist., Distinguished Service Award, and most recently, serving as grand marshal for ATSU-KCOM’s 2025 Commencement Ceremony. Above all, Lori believes her greatest reward was being in a work environment where she was able to make life better for people doing amazing things.

“I got to meet interesting people. I got to help people when they were down, when they were ecstatic,” Lori says. “I got to do that with employees, with our students and alumni.

“When I look back, it has been a spoonful of sugar.”



WALL OF HONOR

Museum of Osteopathic Medicine celebrates legacies, preserves history

Would you or someone you know like to be recognized on the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine’s Wall of Honor?

Located in Kirksville, Missouri, the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine serves as the world’s repository for the history, archives, and artifacts of osteopathic medicine. Beginning in 1934, the museum consisted of two glass display cases containing the personal effects of A.T. Still, DO, and early osteopathic items. Today, the museum’s collection has grown to include more than 100,000 artifacts representing Dr. Still and the osteopathic profession.

The Wall of Honor offers a unique opportunity to recognize DOs, friends of the profession, and organizations and institutions supporting osteopathic medicine while contributing to the museum’s mission. Each namesake plaque on the Wall of Honor represents a lasting tribute to those who have advanced the osteopathic profession, preserved its rich history, or supported the education of future physicians.

With a contribution of \$1,000 or more, you have the opportunity to honor a colleague, mentor, loved one, or organization with a place among others who share a commitment to osteopathic values. Gifts to the Wall of Honor directly support the museum’s efforts to preserve history and educate future healthcare providers.



I chose to make this gift to the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine in honor of my daughter, Dr. Dawn Bodell, and in loving memory of my husband, Dr. John Bodell, because osteopathic medicine has been such a meaningful part of our family’s life. This recognition on the Wall of Honor is a tribute to their dedication to healing and to the values they both carried with them as osteopathic physicians.”

Mrs. Janet Bodell

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FEATURES

IN THIS SECTION

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Special Olympics Missouri

The University hosted its annual ATSU Healthcare Expo on the Mesa, Arizona, campus, bringing together students, educators, healthcare professionals, and community members to explore the latest advancements in healthcare. This year's expo featured over 110 vendors and exhibitors, including healthcare providers, nonprofits, and manufacturers, along with program directors, entrepreneurs, and suppliers of products and services.

Reflecting ATSU's dedication to community health and innovation, the expo provides an opportunity for attendees to engage in hands-on demonstrations of cutting-edge healthcare equipment and programs, as well as get an up-close view of an Air Evac helicopter and talk with the flight crew. Learn more about the expo and one of its featured devices on the next page.

Students and faculty empower patients with next-generation mobility technology

By Arselia Gales and Katie Hubbard

As technology advances faster than ever, ATSU stands at the forefront of preparing healthcare providers of the future. What started as a showcased robotic device at the University's annual healthcare expo has become a catalyst for change across the University in classrooms, clinics, and communities. The device, a wearable exoskeleton, now plays a pivotal role in the lives of patients and the education of students. For patients, it provides renewed confidence and independence; for students, it provides a deeper understanding of their profession and the people they will serve.

Left: Dr. Adam Story showcases the exoskeleton's capabilities to a classroom of ATSU students.

To watch a video of Dr. Story and students, visit atsu.edu/exo-2



POWERED PROGRESS



The annual ATSU Healthcare Expo features Bucky (above) and local emergency responders, including a Mesa Fire & Medical Department truck (right) and Air Evac helicopter (below).



ATSU HEALTHCARE EXPO

Since its debut on the University's Mesa, Arizona, campus in 2022, the ATSU Healthcare Expo has become an annual event, bringing together students, educators, healthcare professionals, and community members to learn about and explore the latest advancements in healthcare. The expo was established by Adam Story, PT, DPT, OTR/L, OTD, MTC, FNAP, an assistant professor of occupational therapy at ATSU's Arizona School of Health Sciences (ATSU-ASHS).

Dr. Story started the expo to promote interprofessional collaboration across the University and health professions. Over the last four years, he has worked to build a network of community resources and knowledge, all for the benefit of current and future healthcare professionals.

Today, the expo features more than 110 exhibitors from 14 states and four countries and has even expanded to ATSU's Kirksville, Missouri, campus. The event showcases everything from Air Evac helicopters to therapy demonstrations with horses. Attendees engage in hands-on demonstrations of brand-new healthcare innovations, including prosthetics, mobility equipment, adaptive sports programs, and exoskeletons.

"It's one thing to be able to talk about products and services, but it's another thing to actually see it with your eyes," Dr. Story says. "It's much easier to have an understanding of what a product is and how it's going to help your patient."



THE EXOSKELETON

"It's like a walking business card for A.T. Still University."

That's how Dr. Story describes the exoskeleton – a cutting-edge robotic device helping patients with spinal cord injuries walk again. And, thanks to Dr. Story, ATSU is one of just three universities that has the device.

Soon after the ATSU Healthcare Expo in 2023, Dr. Story received a call from a manufacturer letting him know a hospital in California wanted to donate an exoskeleton to a major university or clinic.

"I put my name in the hat for ATSU, and we won the bid," he says.

Acquired in July 2023, the University's exoskeleton is nicknamed Ironman,

in honor of its donor, a person with an incomplete spinal cord injury who ultimately regained some of his function and could walk without the robotic legs.

"He said the exoskeleton training was harder than training for the Ironman," Dr. Story recalls.

Now, ATSU joins an elite group of institutions in the U.S. using the device for research, including the University of Southern California and Langston University. Additionally, ATSU is one of three major organizations in Arizona educating people on the exoskeleton, along with Barrow Neurological Institute and Touchstone Rehabilitation.

"It's an honor to be put in with those big names across the country," Dr. Story says.



WHAT IS AN EXOSKELETON?

A wearable, robotic suit enabling individuals with spinal cord injuries to stand, walk, and climb steps. It involves an orthosis worn on the lower limbs and trunk, a battery and control system, and forearm crutches for support and control.

THREE TEAMS, ONE MISSION

Once Dr. Story acquired the exoskeleton, he carefully considered how he was going to use this technology and incorporate it into the campus and curriculum.

Rather than limit its use to a single department, Dr. Story saw an opportunity to turn Ironman into a cross-campus effort. He formed three teams comprised of ATSU-ASHS faculty across different departments: a clinical team, a technical build-out team, and a research team. Dr. Story is a member of all three teams.

“Any time I do something big, I like to bring as many people up with me as possible,” Dr. Story says. “I wanted to go down that interprofessional collaboration route because I see the importance of having a team with different perspectives working together to better someone’s life.”

The clinical team integrates the exoskeleton into the ATSU Center for Occupational and Physical Therapy, a pro bono clinic offering opportunities for those from underserved populations, those without insurance, and even those who don’t quite fit the criteria to try the device.

An exoskeleton costs anywhere from \$130,000-\$150,000, with some of the newer models costing nearly \$200,000. Medicare has started to approve exoskeleton use for those with certain spinal cord injuries; however, without exposure and knowledge of the device, clinicians are less likely to refer or advocate for the use of exoskeletons. People may struggle to secure a device, and uninsured or underserved populations may not get an opportunity to see if an exoskeleton is right for them. With the ATSU Center for Occupational and Physical Therapy, patients who fit the inclusion criteria to use an exoskeleton reap the benefits of this technology for free.

“The first year was a good training year for us to understand what our capabilities were and what we could help people with,” Dr. Story says.

Jennifer Radziak, OTD, OTR/L, CHT, assistant professor, program director, occupational therapy, and J.A. Graves, PT,

DPT, assistant professor, co-director of clinical education, physical therapy, are on the clinical team.

“Working with the exoskeleton has allowed me the opportunity to work on an interdisciplinary team of professionals who believe in the exoskeleton and the impact it can have on its users,” Dr. Graves says. “I have had the opportunity to meet and work with clients that I otherwise wouldn’t have, which has resulted in new friendships.”

In addition to faculty members, physical therapy (PT) and occupational therapy (OT) students work with patients to see and understand how the exoskeleton works, something Dr. Story believes will be beneficial to them in their professional careers.

The technical build-out team customizes the device for each exoskeleton user, adjusting stride length, speed, and structural fit. Thomas Hartman, DMSc, PA-C, assistant professor, director of progression & retention, physician assistant studies, and Dr. Graves serve on this team. The company who manufactures the exoskeleton, ReWalk, recommended Dr. Story and his team take on one patient at a time. However, the team decided to work with two patients per week. One patient was 5’2” and the other was 6’4”, which meant the team had to adjust the exoskeleton for each user weekly.

And finally, the research team explores the exoskeleton’s broader effects. The team is comprised of junior faculty and seasoned researchers with physician assistant, athletic training, PT, and OT backgrounds. Dr. Story notes much of the current research focuses on the exoskeleton from a physical therapist’s point of view and not from an occupational therapist’s point of view.

“I built this team to look at this research from different angles and different perspectives, which has really paid off,” Dr. Story says.

The research team includes Drs. Radziak, Graves, and Hartman from the other



Dr. Adam Story assembles the exoskeleton.

two teams in addition to Kellie C. Huxel Bliven, PhD, ATC, professor and chair, interdisciplinary health sciences; Sue Dahl-Popolizio, DBH, OTR/L, professor, director of research, occupational therapy;

and Lacee Andrews, OTD, OTR/L, CNS, CSRP, assistant professor, director of clinical education, academic fieldwork coordinator, occupational therapy.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

The first major study took the research team across the U.S. to visit 12 participants in their homes and see firsthand how patients use their exoskeleton.

“We got to see a lot of different regions of the country and different demographics using the product,” Dr. Story says. “This opened a lot of doors for us to discover new things and hopefully fill some gaps in the research.”

Dr. Story and his team have discovered patients using the exoskeleton are reporting decreased pain and reduced reliance on medications since they’re able to get up and move around, performing simple tasks like doing laundry or cooking a meal.

“Working with the exoskeleton has provided me with a different perspective and allowed me to see the impact that



advancing medical technology can have on people’s lives,” says Dr. Graves. “It has also provided opportunities for me to advance my knowledge and contributions to the field, which have had a positive impact on my career trajectory.”

In addition to seeing how patients use their exoskeletons, Dr. Story and his team are contributing to the latest knowledge

A PATIENT’S EXPERIENCE

For patients who have the opportunity to use an exoskeleton, the experience may be life changing. Jeff DeWeese, a current patient at the ATSU Center for Occupational and Physical Therapy, has been using Ironman since November 2023. Not only has his experience with this technology given him a renewed sense of confidence, but it has also given him hope.

In April 2019, DeWeese was struck by a drunk driver while on his motorcycle, resulting in an incomplete spinal cord injury that left him paralyzed from the chest down. Although his road to recovery has been slow and painful, he has made significant progress toward improving his mobility.

by presenting their findings at national and state conferences. He brings the exoskeleton with him wherever he can, starting conversations about the technology and looking for additional collaborators. In doing so, he’s brought more recognition to the University, which is why he refers to Ironman as a “walking business card.”

Multiple days a week, DeWeese is at a gym, doing calisthenics and improving his core strength, and at Touchstone Rehabilitation, walking with a reciprocating gait orthosis. It was through Touchstone where a ReWalk representative referred him to Dr. Story. Since then, DeWeese and Drs. Story and Graves have been working together to make Ironman more accessible, which in turn has helped DeWeese physically and mentally.

“For me, it was exciting,” DeWeese says. “I was excited to try the exoskeleton to find out what improvements could be made for myself, and I was excited to help in the research development for ATSU, for the school itself and for future patients so that other people can benefit from it.”

Patients of the ATSU Center for Occupational and Physical Therapy use the exoskeleton for a variety of everyday tasks.



Dr. Adam Story helps patient Billy Moyle navigate different environments.

To watch Billy Moyle use the device, visit the URLs below.



atsu.edu/exo-3



atsu.edu/exo-4

The exoskeleton has greatly improved his strength, endurance, and ability to do everyday tasks. DeWeese can now walk long distances with no rest breaks. He’s used it in a kitchen setting where he’s able to stand while opening cabinets and grabbing dishes. He’s been able to walk through varying terrain like grass and dirt, as well as stop at an elevator, push the button, and walk through the door. His latest development, though, is being able to take multiple steps without using the crutches.

“It’s given me more hope and confidence in the sense that there are lots of people out there trying to help others such as myself have a more fulfilled, healthy, and independent life after suffering a spinal cord injury,” DeWeese says.

These milestones also have a profound effect on Dr. Story and his team. They have enjoyed seeing the patients’ progress and witnessing the positive change in their lives.

“I really wish more people had access to these devices as I truly do think they can change people’s lives,” Dr. Graves says. “I am most impressed, and maybe surprised, at the technology behind these devices and how well they hold up. We have been using ours rigorously with our users to help them achieve their goals, and these devices have stood the test of time and use!”



Second-year occupational therapy student Taylor Au wears Ironman, the University's exoskeleton.

THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

At the ATSU Center for Occupational and Physical Therapy, students have the opportunity to observe or lead treatment sessions for patients under the direct supervision of faculty, including Dr. Story. When Dr. Story acquired Ironman, he secured a rare, innovative learning experience for students.

Each session using the exoskeleton focuses on helping patients complete everyday activities. Students are encouraged to be creative in designing their activities while providing meaningful therapy. The students use what is available to them while considering what tasks the patients are interested in completing. Some of these activities range from household chores, including washing dishes, putting away groceries, folding laundry, and picking up clothes off the ground, to activities like playing foosball or walking through different environments.

"Providing occupation-based activities helped the patients comprehend their abilities in navigating daily activities," says Kady Davis, a third-year student in ATSU-ASHS' Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program. "They were able to see their capabilities beyond their limitations."

Davis, who served as student coordinator for the 2025 ATSU Healthcare Expo, has enjoyed working with the patients, learning about their stories and their goals. He says it is inspiring to see how they keep pushing forward to overcome the challenges they face on a daily basis.

For Gian Canonizado, also a third-year OTD student, the experience of working with a patient in an exoskeleton was empowering and rewarding.

He was surprised by the amount of coordination required between the patient and therapist when navigating an environment, including the constant verbal communication and physical demands to guide and stabilize the device.

"It opened my eyes to how technology can support function in everyday tasks - things many of us take for granted, like reaching overhead to grab a cup from a cabinet," Canonizado says. "It also helped me recognize how aspects of our environment, even something as basic as a living space, can become inaccessible."

By designing their own simulated activities and obstacle courses reflecting real-life tasks, students have gained insight and meaning from the exoskeleton experience. They have seen firsthand how impactful the sessions are for patients, and the experience has deepened their understanding of the OT field.

"Thanks to my professors at ATSU, I have seen OT being used in schools, memory care facilities, a community reentry program, and even on a ranch where horses are used as part of the therapy treatment," Davis says. "Being an OT student at ATSU has helped me understand what the profession is capable of and who can benefit from it."

The University's innovative, interdisciplinary efforts with Ironman are just the beginning. Dr. Story recently acquired a second exoskeleton to increase the University's opportunities for education and research. These opportunities further position ATSU as a leader in patient-centered care and prepare students to be a step ahead as future healthcare providers. ■

30 years and counting



ATSU-ASHS celebrates a landmark anniversary

By Arselia Gales

On Saturday, April 12, 2025, alumni, faculty, and students gathered to celebrate ATSU-Arizona School of Health Sciences' (ATSU-ASHS) 30th anniversary.

Originally named Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine Southwest Center for Osteopathic Medical Education and Health Sciences, ATSU-ASHS opened Sept. 9, 1995. At that time, the School offered programs in occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant studies, and sports healthcare.

"I remember those pivotal early days with crystal clarity," says Randy Danielsen, PhD, PA-C emeritus, DFAAPA, former dean of ATSU-ASHS and current professor and director of ATSU-ASHS' Doctor of Medical Science program. "In late 1994, I received a call from Rick Davis, who had just been hired to establish a physician assistant program for the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine. His invitation to join this adventure changed the trajectory

of my life – and as it turns out, the lives of thousands of healthcare professionals who would eventually call these halls their alma mater."

In 1997, the School changed its name to ATSU-ASHS and, in 2001, moved to its current Mesa, Arizona, campus.

Today, with over 12,000 alumni, the School offers 12 degree programs residually and online, including entry-level programs and postprofessional programs. ATSU-ASHS prepares students to become audiologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, physician assistants, and speech-language pathologists through entry-level doctoral and master's level programs. The School also offers online master's and doctoral postprofessional degree programs for licensed providers in athletic training, audiology, medical sciences, and physical therapy to advance their clinical, leadership, writing, research, and teaching skills.



Dr. Ann Lee Burch addresses the crowd at ATSU-ASHS' 30th anniversary celebration.



Dr. Randy Danielsen and his wife, Kendra, celebrate 30 years of ATSU-ASHS.



FACULTY IMPACT
From Deanne Fay, PT, DPT, PhD
Professor, Department of Physical Therapy

“As I reflect on the last 30 years of ATSU-ASHS, it feels like celebrating an anniversary with extended family. Over these three decades, not only has ATSU-ASHS grown into an exceptional institution, but I’ve also grown – both professionally and personally. ATSU-ASHS was my first full-time faculty position, and it has been a wonderful place to learn and evolve in my career.

When I joined in 1995, I had just found out I was expecting my first child. Since then, I’ve raised three children, one of whom returned to ATSU-ASHS as a physician assistant student. The School provided

a supportive environment for balancing work and family. I remain especially grateful for the support I received when my husband was deployed to Iraq with the Army, leaving me to care for our three young children on my own. The people I’ve worked with over the years have always been more than just colleagues.

This anniversary is not only a celebration of ATSU-ASHS as an institution and its programs but also of the meaningful relationships formed along the way. ATSU-ASHS will always be an important part of my story, and I am honored to be part of its story as well.”



Shira James

ALUMNI IMPACT

2025 ATSU-ASHS alumni award honorees

Community Service Award
Shira James, MS, OTR/L, '14
Through her commitment to pediatric occupational therapy, James has brought care and hope to countless children and families, while honorably serving her community, including its most vulnerable populations. Her service-centered approach embodies the ATSU-ASHS mission to build healthier, stronger communities.

Healthcare Innovation Award
Rhianna Freiburger, DAT, '22, MS, '19, LAT, ATC
A leader in athletic training, Dr. Freiburger is transforming the future of sports medicine with her innovative clinical practices and dedication to athlete wellness.

Emerging Scholar Award
Nikki Harris, EdS, DAT, LAT, ATC, CSCS, '17
With a dynamic research portfolio and a passion for innovation, Dr. Harris is guiding the next generation of healthcare professionals while contributing meaningful scholarship to the field.

Distinguished Scholar Award
Barton Anderson, DHSc, MS, ATC, '03
Dr. Anderson’s career reflects a profound commitment to advancing athletic training through education and research. His leadership continues to elevate the profession nationally.



Dr. Rhianna Freiburger

Dr. Nikki Harris

Dr. Barton Anderson



Local families and children participate in annual E.A.R. Day activities.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Over the last 30 years, ATSU-ASHS students, faculty, and alumni across all departments have given back to the community in meaningful ways. Through the School’s initiatives, including E.A.R. Day led by the Audiology department, the Physician Assistant Studies program’s outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness, the Athletic Training program’s collaboration with local sports teams, the Speech-Language Pathology program’s oral cancer screening events, the ATSU Center for Occupational and Physical Therapy’s patient care, and the Center for Resilience in Aging’s Still Standing Falls Prevention Outreach, ATSU-ASHS has consistently demonstrated a commitment to service, health education, and community empowerment.

E.A.R. DAY

First organized in 2015 by ATSU-ASHS alumna Lisa Bell, AuD, '16, after receiving a grant from the National Student Academy of Audiology, E.A.R. (Education and Recreation) Day brings together Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children, along with their parents and friends, to enjoy a fun-filled day of games, activities, and educational sessions. ATSU students from most residential programs volunteer to host stations in this interactive and interprofessional community event. Attendees have the opportunity to learn more about hearing, hearing protection, communication strategies, and resources available from students, faculty, and guest speakers.



ATSU students across programs volunteer to assist with E.A.R. Day.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES PROGRAM OUTREACH

In alignment with ATSU’s mission to serve the underserved, the Physician Assistant Studies program has led a growing initiative focused on skin cancer prevention among Mesa’s unsheltered population. What began as a faculty-led effort has evolved into a student-driven outreach project addressing a critical health disparity.

“Our PA program is proud to uphold ATSU’s mission by actively serving underserved and vulnerable communities,” says Brittney Hulsey, DMSc, MSPAS, MS, PA-C, program director and associate professor, physician assistant studies.

Through this outreach program, physician assistant students educate individuals experiencing homelessness about the risks of skin cancer and distribute essential resources, including sunblock, hats, and healthy snacks.

“With skin cancer rates continuing to rise across the U.S. and the unsheltered population facing increased exposure and limited access to care, this outreach project plays a vital role in bridging the gap in prevention knowledge,” says Dr. Hulsey. “This past year, some of our students expanded the effort as part of their master’s capstone project, conducting further outreach and reinforcing our commitment to community health, education, and service.”



Dr. Brittney Hulsey and physician assistant students Joe Brady, Lindsay Grover, and Ashley Martin provide skin cancer education to those experiencing homelessness.



PARTNERSHIPS IN SPORTS HEALTH

Over the past 30 years, the Athletic Training (formerly named Sports Health Care) program has significantly impacted the local sports community. Through a partnership with the Dwight Patterson Youth Sports Academy, the Athletic Training program has developed a youth sports curriculum for coaches and parents. In addition, the ATSU Concussion Program has partnered with local schools and youth sports organizations to provide concussion education, preseason assessments, and postinjury referrals.

As a member of the Barrow Concussion Network, the department has contributed to the education and assessment of more than 200,000 high school athletes. Additional partnerships with Dignity Health Sports Medicine and Athletic Training include providing professional development for athletic trainers and assisting with annual sports physicals, offering important screenings for youth and high school athletes.

A young athlete participates in a sports screening.

STILL STANDING FALLS PREVENTION OUTREACH

The Center for Resilience in Aging introduced Still Standing Falls Prevention Outreach in the 2008-09 academic year. Working alongside more than 70 community partner organizations, the program has reached a wide audience. To date, classes have been offered at more than 125 locations across Maricopa County, Arizona.

Falls are one of the most common causes of injury, hospitalization, and loss of independence for older adults. Through Still Standing Falls Prevention Outreach, participants engage in “A Matter of Balance,” an evidence-based, nationally recognized program shown to reduce fall risk and support active living. The curriculum helps older adults address fears about falling, build confidence through increased physical activity, and adopt practical strategies for creating safer home and community environments.

“Through the Still Standing Falls Prevention Outreach, our students have impacted many thousands of lives over

the past 17 years, and it is because of them that the outreach is going as strong as ever,” says Elton Bordenave, PhD, MEd, associate professor of audiology and director of ATSU Center for Resilience in Aging.

The program involves students from ATSU’s Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Audiology, and Physician Assistant Studies programs. These students are educated and certified as Matter of Balance coaches. Under the guidance of licensed faculty master trainers, these students deliver the eight-week program in community settings, including senior centers, retirement communities, and healthcare clinics and churches.

“I have never seen myself working with the geriatric population, but after this experience, it has shifted my point of view,” says Makayla Hunter, OT, '26. “I really enjoyed learning stories about these clients’ life experiences.”



ATSU-ASHS students help community members earn “A Matter of Balance” program certificates.



ATSU-ASHS students and faculty celebrate white coat and commencement ceremonies.

LOOKING FORWARD

As ATSU-ASHS enters its fourth decade of educating students, the School continues to uphold the values that have shaped it from the start – academic excellence, service to others, and innovation in healthcare. Its 30th anniversary celebration was a time to reflect on its rich history and a reaffirmation of its enduring commitment to preparing highly competent healthcare leaders.

“The Arizona School of Health Sciences is a vibrant, dynamic school where there is never a shortage of new ideas,” says Ann Lee Burch, PT, EdD, MPH, FNAP, dean of ATSU-ASHS. “With over 1,260 active students and a committed faculty and staff, we are busy every single day preparing the next generation of healthcare providers who will bring health and wellness to communities in need across the country and around the world for years to come.” ■

Please visit atsu.edu/ashs to learn more about ATSU-ASHS and its program offerings.

In honor of ATSU-ASHS’ 30-year anniversary, please visit giving.atstu.edu/ashs-30 to support the School and its initiatives.



Make your mark in healthcare

Graduates of A.T. Still University’s Arizona School of Health Sciences (ATSU-ASHS) are highly skilled in evidence-based practice and committed to reducing health disparities for individuals and communities.

Take the next step — with educational options for every stage of your career, ATSU-ASHS offers online programs that respect your time and experience.

ATSU alum? Receive a **20% tuition discount**.*

877.469.2878 | onlineinquiry@atsu.edu

ONLINE ADVANCED DEGREE PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- Doctor of Athletic Training
- Post-Professional Doctor of Audiology
- Doctor of Medical Science
- Postprofessional Doctor of Physical Therapy
- Master of Science in Athletic Training
- Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences
- 7 graduate certificates also available



To learn more, visit atsu.edu/online

*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.

Preserving a piece of history

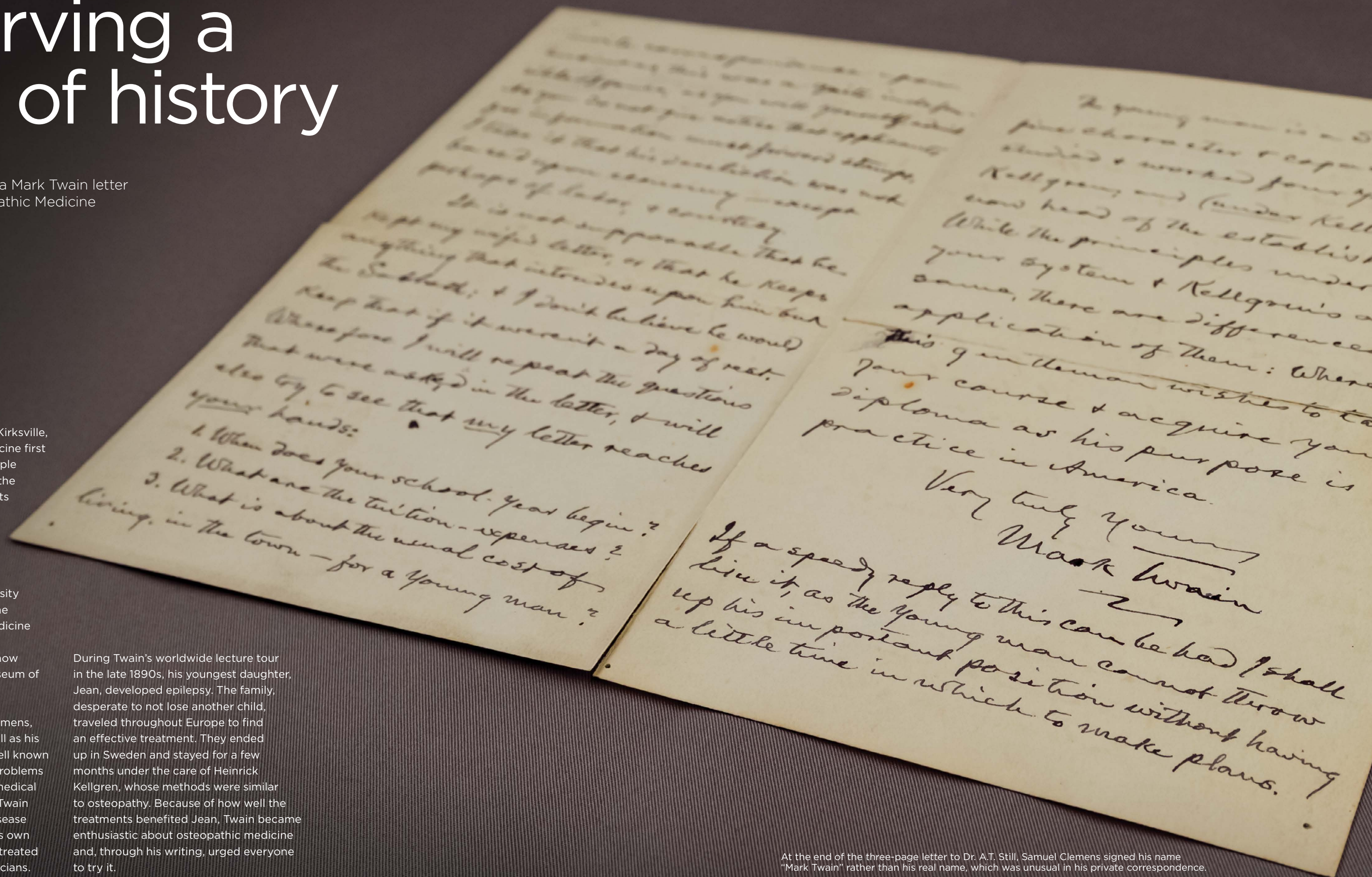
The Wilson family secures a Mark Twain letter for the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine

By Katie Hubbard

On ATSU's campus in Kirksville, Missouri, where osteopathic medicine first took root, stories of visionary people and bold ideas still echo through the halls. One of these stories connects the worlds of literature and osteopathic medicine and highlights a friendship with the famous American writer and humorist, Mark Twain. Thanks to the generosity of the Wilson family – alumni of the original school of osteopathic medicine founded by A.T. Still, DO – a letter written by Mark Twain to Dr. Still now has a permanent home at the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine.

Twain, a pen name for Samuel Clemens, is well known for his writing as well as his wit. However, he may not be as well known for his family's persistent health problems and his critical comments of the medical establishment. Much like Dr. Still, Twain lost several family members to disease throughout his life. He also had his own health issues, which he said were treated unsuccessfully by allopathic physicians.

During Twain's worldwide lecture tour in the late 1890s, his youngest daughter, Jean, developed epilepsy. The family, desperate to not lose another child, traveled throughout Europe to find an effective treatment. They ended up in Sweden and stayed for a few months under the care of Heinrich Kellgren, whose methods were similar to osteopathy. Because of how well the treatments benefited Jean, Twain became enthusiastic about osteopathic medicine and, through his writing, urged everyone to try it.



At the end of the three-page letter to Dr. A.T. Still, Samuel Clemens signed his name "Mark Twain" rather than his real name, which was unusual in his private correspondence.

2024.35.01

30, Wellington Court,
Albert Gate.

London, Feb. 23, 1900.

Dear Sir:

By argument of two experiences of mine I suspect that your secretary is afflicted with the several infirmities usual to his guild: indifference, unfaithfulness, incapacity, discourtesy, & chronic fatigue. To one letter which was written to you by my desire he returned an answer whose curtness, vagidity & inadequacy would have discredited the house-cat. To another, which was signed by my wife (Mrs. Olivia L. Clemens) he has furnished no answer at all. As you distinctly

About a year later, in 1900, Twain wrote a letter to Dr. Still asking him to admit a young Swede who had studied under Kellgren for four years and wanted to earn an osteopathic degree to practice in the U.S. An excerpt from the letter reads as follows:

... Wherefore I will repeat the questions that were asked in the letter, & will also try to see that my letter reaches your hands:

1. *When does your school-year begin?*
2. *What are the tuition-expenses?*
3. *What is about the usual cost of living, in the town - for a young man?*

The young man is a Swede; is of fine character & capacities; has studied & worked four years with Kellgren; and (under Kellgren) is now head of the establishment. While the principles underlying your system & Kellgren's are the same, there are differences in the application of them: Wherefore this gentleman wishes to take your course & acquire your diploma as his purpose is to practice in America.

Very truly yours,
Mark Twain

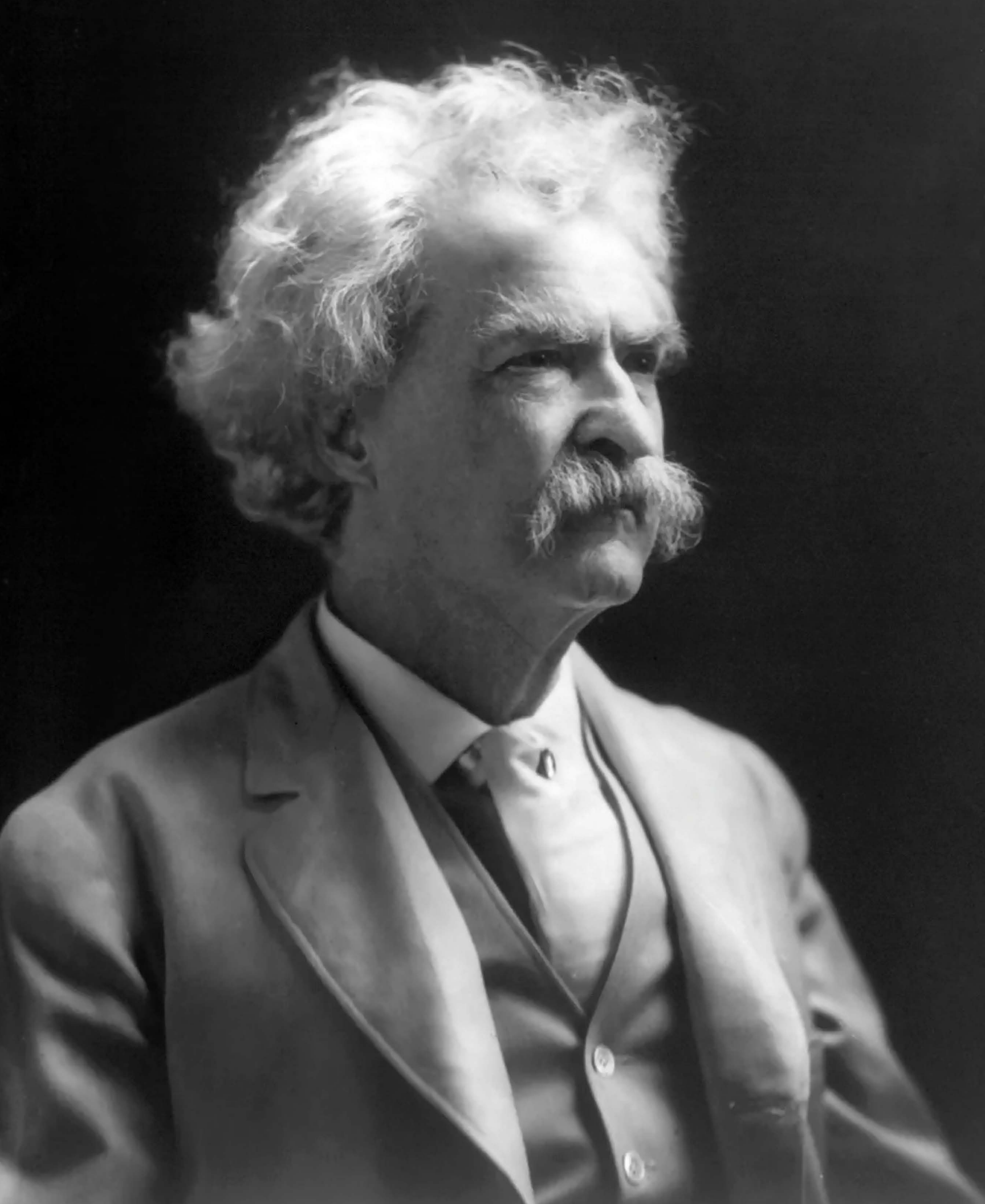
At the time the letter was sent, the American School of Osteopathy (ASO) was a private institution owned by the Still family, and the letter belonged to them rather than the institution. After the School became a nonprofit, the Still family donated many personal items to the museum, but this letter was one item they wanted to keep. When the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine came across the opportunity to obtain the letter, the Wilson family saw it not only as a rare piece of

history but also as a way to give back to their profession and community.

The Wilson family members who contributed to the donation were Michael Wilson, DO, '72; Philip Wilson II, DO, '78; Wanda Wilson, DO, '77; Philip Wilson III, DO, '13; Christine Wilson, DO, '14; and Margaret Wilson, DO, '82, who is also dean and professor of the founding school, known today as ATSU's Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine.

The first page of Mark Twain's letter (left) and corresponding envelope (below) have a black border, suggesting Twain's family was in mourning at that time. The top right corner of the envelope was cut out, most likely because people from that era collected stamps.





Left to right:
 Drs. Michael Wilson,
 Margaret Wilson,
 Phillip Wilson II, Wanda
 Wilson, Phillip Wilson
 III, and Christine Wilson

“Our family was delighted to be able to help bring this remarkable letter to the museum and highlight the relationship between Mark Twain and Dr. Still,” Dr. Margaret Wilson says. “To have the connection between a historic Missouri author and our profession preserved locally is significant.”

The Wilson family was a natural fit for such a donation. Hailing from Kirksville, not far from Mark Twain’s hometown, the family spans generations of osteopathic physicians. In addition, the family’s matriarch was an educator and taught literature, Twain being one of her favorite authors. When the family donated the letter to the museum, they did so in her name, Jeanne Daily Wilson.

“It has special meaning as my mother taught the works of Samuel Clemens for many years and we were all avid readers of his stories,” Dr. Margaret Wilson says.

“It was very generous of the Wilson family to want to do this,” says Jason Haxton, MA, director, Museum of Osteopathic Medicine. “Some of the best pieces of our collection, like this letter, come as a result of our alumni stepping forward and helping us secure these artifacts.”

Now at the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine, the letter stands as a symbol of two intertwined legacies: Twain’s literary voice and Dr. Still’s osteopathic approach to health. Although Twain had hoped the young man he referenced in the letter would eventually become his family’s physician, the museum has no record of him ever attending ASO. This letter does, however, provide another piece of evidence indicating Dr. Still and Twain were friends and corresponded with each other on several occasions. Furthermore, it represents Twain’s favorable opinion of osteopathic medicine and his support for the growing profession.

Twain’s legacy as a supporter of osteopathic medicine was cemented in history in 1901 when he successfully advocated on behalf of the profession to the New York legislature to license osteopathic physicians in the state. Dr. Still’s son, Charles E. Still, DO, 1894, who was at the event, chronicled Twain’s speech.

In his speech, Twain said, “I have experimented with osteopathy and allopathy. I like osteopathy. It is quicker and you don’t have to take any medicine; so I want liberty to do as I choose with my physical body and experiment as much as possible.” ■

Special Olympics Missouri

2025 State Summer Games

ATSU volunteers share in the spirit of community and supporting athletes

By Katie Hubbard

For the first time in its history, the Special Olympics Missouri State Summer Games took place in Kirksville, bringing together approximately 1,000 athletes, coaches, families, volunteers, and supporters from across the state. Held on Truman State University's campus from May 30-June 1, the 2025 State Summer Games represented a weekend of competition, camaraderie, and community spirit.

Over the course of the multiday games, athletes competed in swimming, volleyball, powerlifting, and track and field, showcasing their determination

and sportsmanship. Athletes had to qualify through their regional and area competitions to participate in the State Summer Games.

As part of the broader mission of Special Olympics, the games provided essential health services and education through the Healthy Athletes program. Thanks to support from medical partners, including ATSU volunteers, 408 free health screenings were provided in health and fitness, hearing, oral health, and more – all aimed at improving athletes' overall well-being and performance.



Special Olympics athletes participate in track and field events.

Attendees make friendship bracelets in the Connection Zone.

More than 50 ATSU faculty, staff, students, alumni, and family members volunteered throughout the weekend. In addition to Healthy Athletes, ATSU volunteers helped with move-in crews, meal crews, and athletic events, as well as event planning and support.

“The Special Olympics, locally led and hosted by Truman State University, celebrated those who had the will and courage to compete, and those who had the heart and soul to volunteer,” says Gaylah Sublette, MBA, president of ATSU’s Missouri campus. “ATSU was proud to support these games in our historic hometown of Kirksville.”

The opening ceremony held Friday evening was emceed by comedian David Graham, whose high-energy humor and heartfelt support for the athletes set the tone for the weekend. Special guests and speakers included actor and comedian Bill Chott, a Missouri native, who greeted athletes and joined in the celebration. Local leaders, event sponsors, and statewide partners were recognized for their support in making the games possible. Law enforcement officers and mascots, including ATSU’s Bucky, were also there to welcome athletes.

One of the ceremony’s most moving moments came during the Parade of Athletes, as delegations from Missouri’s



regions marched in front of a cheering crowd. Another highlight of the evening was the law enforcement Torch Run leading to the lighting of the Flame of Hope, a symbol of the Special Olympics mission. To cap off the ceremony, the night sky lit up with a drone show, celebrating the athletes and spirit of the games.

The energy throughout the weekend was electric, as the Kirksville community and regional supporters turned out to cheer, volunteer, and share in the joy of the games. Planned to be held in Kirksville again in 2026 and 2027, the games’ success was not only a milestone for Truman State University and the city of Kirksville but also a meaningful example of what is possible when a community comes together. From the opening ceremony to the final medals awarded, the 2025 State Summer Games left a lasting impact on everyone involved.

“Beyond the competition in Kirksville, the Special Olympics ignited a flame of inclusion and empathy across many communities, near and far,” President Sublette says. “They proved true strength lies in celebrating every individual’s unique abilities.” ■



Far left, clockwise: During the opening ceremony, comedian David Graham serves as emcee, Patty Sutton gives high-fives to emergency responders and event volunteers, the delegation from north Missouri marches and waves to a cheering crowd, and Nicole Noblet and Carrie Melte light the Flame of Hope.



Jonathan Gabriel Roye, DMD, '25, hugs a friend after the ATSU-ASDOH Commencement Ceremony.



CONNECTIONS

IN THIS SECTION

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

U.S. News & World Reports' 2025 Best Medical Schools list found ATSU-School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona (ATSU-SOMA) graduates ranked No. 1 in practicing in primary care fields, while ATSU-Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (ATSU-KCOM) ranked No. 1 in graduates who go on to practice in rural areas. Additionally, ATSU-KCOM ranked No. 6 nationwide in graduates practicing in medically underserved areas and primary care fields. Please visit atsu.edu/news for additional information.

"This meets our mission and values to have graduates who serve in communities that need them most," says ATSU-KCOM Dean Margaret Wilson, DO, '82.

"I am confident that each of our graduates will go forth as compassionate osteopathic physicians and healthcare leaders who extend the healing touch of human kindness to our nation's patients and communities most in need," says ATSU-SOMA Dean Sharon Obadia, DO, FNAOME, '97.

RECONNECT



ATSU-ASHS 30-year celebration



Physical Therapy class of 1998 reunion



Orthodontic reception



AAPA reception



NATA reception



ATSU-ASDOH welcome lunch

When members of the ATSU family gather, a common thread emerges. Friends reconnect, new bonds develop, and students find inspiration. From coast to coast 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.

Spring-Summer 2025

ATSU-ASHS 30-year Anniversary Celebration
Superstition Springs Golf Club
Mesa, Arizona

ATSU-ASHS Physical Therapy program’s inaugural class of 1998 reunion
Mesa, Arizona

Orthodontic Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) Annual Session
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ATSU-KCOM Words of Wisdom Alumni-Student Engagement Event
ATSU Missouri campus
Kirkville, Missouri

Physician Assistant Alumni, Students & Friends Reception American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) Annual Conference
Hyatt Regency Denver
Denver, Colorado

Athletic Training (AT) Alumni, Students & Friends Reception National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) Clinical Symposia & AT Expo
Hyatt Regency Orlando
Orlando, Florida

ATSU-ASDOH Alumni Chapter Board Welcome Lunch for first-year students
ATSU Arizona campus
Mesa, Arizona

ATSU-CHC Founders & Friends Reception
Presqu’île
Santa Maria, California

Alumni & Friends Reception National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) Community Health Institute & Expo
Hyatt Regency Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

ATSU-MOSDOH Ask Me Anything Alumni Panel & Networking Event for first- and second-year students
ATSU Missouri campus
Kirkville, Missouri

ATSU-MOSDOH Dental Alumni Luncheon | Mid-Continent Dental Congress Greater St. Louis Dental Society Annual Meeting
Gothic Corridor, Union Station
St. Louis, Missouri

Upcoming alumni events

Dental Alumni Informal Meet-up | American Academy of Periodontology (AAP)
Toronto, Canada
October 2025

Dental Alumni Informal Meet-up | American College of Prosthodontists (ACP)
New Orleans, Louisiana
October 2025

ATSU Founder’s Day 2025
ATSU Missouri campus | Kirkville, Missouri
Oct. 23-25, 2025
ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona
Oct. 30, 2025

Dental Alumni Informal Meet-up | National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA)
San Antonio, Texas
November 2025

Speech-Language Pathology Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention
Washington, District of Columbia
November 2025

Physical Therapy Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Combined Sections Meeting
Anaheim, California
February 2026

ATSU-ASDOH Give Kids A Smile
ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona
February 2026

DO Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Academy of Osteopathy (AAO) Convocation
The Broadmoor | Colorado Springs, Colorado
March 2026

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) Congress
Houston, Texas
March 2026

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Academy of Audiology (AAA) +HearTECH Expo
San Antonio, Texas
April 2026

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFPP) Annual Convention and Scientific Seminars
Orlando, Florida
April 2026

Dental Alumni Informal Meet-up | American Association of Endodontists (AAE)
Salt Lake City, Utah
April 2026

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) INSPIRE Annual Conference & Expo
Anaheim, California
April 2026

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) Annual Session
Orlando, Florida
May 2026

Dental Alumni Informal Meet-up | American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD)
Las Vegas, Nevada
May 2026

Alumni, Students & Friends Reception | American Association of Physician Associates (AAPA) Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana
May 2026

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, 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 with any questions.



atsu.edu/alumni-jobs



A legacy of compassion and leadership

ATSU-KCOM alumna and departing board member Dr. Linnette Sells looks back on her 40-year career

By Arselia Gales

For Linnette Sells, DO, FAOASM, '82, serving on ATSU's Board of Trustees wasn't just another career milestone – it was a meaningful addition to a life spent leading and giving back.

"It's been both an honor and a privilege to serve on the board," she says. "We have a lot of highly respected, knowledgeable people in all different fields who I can learn so much from."

An accomplished physician, veteran, and Kirksville native, her path to ATSU's Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (ATSU-KCOM) was in no way traditional. After her first year of college, she got married and gave birth to her first child. Her husband was in the Air Force, and the family spent four years traveling. Unfortunately, the marriage didn't last, and she found herself back in Kirksville as a single mother. However, this did not deter her from pursuing a career in medicine. She took the MCAT, completed all the necessary prerequisites for ATSU-KCOM, and was accepted, despite not having her undergraduate degree.

"My dad was a professor at Truman State University, and he wasn't very happy that I didn't have a degree from there. So, he and I worked together while I was in medical school to transfer credits," Dr. Sells says.

She received enough credits to graduate from Truman State University with a bachelor of science degree in biology in 1981 and then graduated from ATSU-KCOM with a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree in 1982.

"The certificates would look really weird next to each other," she laughs.

During her time at ATSU-KCOM, Dr. Sells received a health professions scholarship from the Air Force to help with tuition and living expenses. After graduation, she served in the Air Force and was stationed at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. Dr. Sells initially worked in a general medical clinic, but she found her true calling in the emergency room. The hospital commander eventually appointed her chief of emergency medicine – a role she held for three years. During this time, she remarried and had her second son.

Emergency medicine wasn't Dr. Sells' sole interest; she was also interested in sports medicine, setting up a sports medicine clinic at MacDill. This led her, along with her colleagues, to help establish a primary care sports medicine certification within the osteopathic profession.

Life eventually brought Dr. Sells back to Kirksville, where she joined ATSU-KCOM's faculty in the late 1980s. She also served as the team physician for Truman State University. However, Dr. Sells and her family weren't done moving. Her husband got an internship in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and shortly thereafter, Dr. Sells got recalled for Desert Storm, where she ran the emergency room at Homestead Air Force Base in Miami, Florida. After Dr. Sells retired from the Air Force, she and her family moved again, first to

“

We are deeply grateful for Dr. Sells' dedicated service and outstanding contributions. Her experience and commitment have strengthened ATSU and the osteopathic profession."

Craig M. Phelps, DO, '84
ATSU Chancellor

Tulsa, Oklahoma, and then to Atlanta, Georgia, where she continued working in emergency medicine and urgent care. She then became a part-time team physician for Georgia Tech.

Despite frequently relocating, she served on the ATSU-KCOM Alumni Board, where former ATSU Board Chair G. Scott Drew, DO, FAOCD, '87, convinced her to also join ATSU's Board of Trustees.

"Sometimes it was a little tough because not only was I doing a full-time job, but I was also a team doctor," Dr. Sells says. "But I managed."

Her time on the board was marked by growth, strategic expansion, and, during her tenure as chair, the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was hard not being able to meet in person," she says. "But we stayed connected through weekly calls and Zooms. We made it work."

After 40 years of hard work and serving their communities, Dr. Sells and her husband made the decision to retire at the end of 2022 and move once more to Amelia Island, Florida. When she's not out enjoying her time at the beach (or just looking out her window at the beach), Dr. Sells is attending CrossFit classes and doing her best to stay active.

Reflecting on her nine years on the Board of Trustees, Dr. Sells is most proud of the University's evolution and its commitment to community-centered care, hoping her presence has made a positive impact.

"I always wonder, how many students have I touched? How many patients have I touched? And how many colleagues have I touched?" Dr. Sells asks. "Hopefully I've left a good impression on all of them because they've all touched my life as well. I want to be known for being hands-on and being the best possible doctor I could be. And, hopefully that's the tradition we continue to keep at ATSU."

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CLASS NOTES



Dr. Stefanacci '89

1980s

Richard G. Stefanacci, DO, MGH, MBA, AGSF, CMD, '89, was appointed medical director of Inspira Living Independently for Elders (LIFE). Dr. Stefanacci will oversee the medical aspects of care for the LIFE program, ensuring effective utilization management and clinical outcomes. He will also mentor medical residents and serve as a member of the Inspira LIFE executive leadership team. Dr. Stefanacci is also the founder of the Go4theGoal Foundation, a charity established in memory of his son. The foundation has raised millions of dollars to assist hundreds of children affected by cancer at nearly 100 children's hospitals nationwide, while also funding research to find a cure.

1990s

Victoria Damba, DO, '97, joined Mercy Convenient Care in Perryville, Missouri. She is a family medicine physician with experience in inpatient and outpatient primary care. Prior to her career as a physician, she provided care to patients across nearly all nursing specialties.



Dr. Riddle '04

2000s

Col. William F. Bimson, DO, '01, became the 59th commander of Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. Dr. Bimson previously served as command surgeon for U.S. Army Central, Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina. A graduate of Truman State University and ATSU-KCOM, he completed his internal medicine residency in 2004 and cardiology fellowship in 2007 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He graduated from the U.S. Army War College with a master's degree in strategic studies. He has served in various hospital leadership roles, including clinic chief, officer in charge, and deputy commander for clinical services, and in several operational medicine positions, including surgeon for the 82nd Airborne Division Sustainment Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, and XVIII Airborne Corps, as well as chief of clinical operations and professional services for the 44th Medical Brigade. He commanded the 531st Hospital Center at Fort Campbell.

Dr. Bimson's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with one oak



Dr. Tu '05

leaf cluster, Armed Forces Service Medal, Combat Medical Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, and Ranger Tab. He is also a member of the Order of Military Medical Merit.

Lori Riddle, DHA, '04, was named one of the Top 50 Women Leaders in Alaska for 2024 by Women We Admire. Dr. Riddle is executive director of operations and interim administrator at Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center.

Priscilla Tu, DO, FAAFP, FAOASM, FAAMA, FACOFP, dipABLM, '05, Roanoke, Virginia, was named Family Physician of the Year by the Virginia Academy of Family Physicians in July 2024 and selected for the Outstanding Female Leader Award by the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) in 2025. A graduate of ATSU-KCOM, Dr. Tu serves as an associate professor for Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and associate program director and director of osteopathic education for Virginia Tech Carilion Family Medicine Residency Program. She also serves as associate professor and regional director of student medical education for Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine. She is the immediate past president of the American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine, chair of the Procedural Committee for ACOFP, and a team physician for USA Volleyball.

2010s

Katie Davenport-Kabonic, DO, FAAP, FACOFP, '12, a graduate of ATSU-KCOM, was installed as the 2025-26 president of the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons' Board of Trustees.

Tara Sullivan, DPT, '12, launched her new company, Mind to Body Healing in March 2024. Dr. Sullivan aims to empower patients and healthcare providers by promoting awareness, education, and integrated care solutions in pelvic health. In 2024, she also cofounded PelviEd, a virtual residency program designed to mentor upcoming pelvic health providers to treat patients with the utmost quality of care.

Brian W. Jones, DHSc, '13, was named vice chancellor for regional campuses at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Since 2017, Dr. Jones has been the president and CEO of the SHARE Foundation, an El Dorado, Arkansas, nonprofit working to identify and foster programs to improve health and well-being in the region.

Ben Cook, DO, '14, a graduate of ATSU-KCOM, was honored as the



Dr. Hilmes '19

2025 Physician of the Year by the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons.

Jordan Palmer, DO, '17, a graduate of ATSU-KCOM, was installed as a new trustee to the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons board.

Nadia Syed, DO, '18, a graduate of ATSU-KCOM, received a master of public health degree from Vanderbilt University. Her thesis analyzed the impact of financial toxicity on clinical outcomes in the pediatric hematologic malignancies.

Lauren Hilmes, DO, '19, originally from southern Illinois, continues her support of rural medicine as the emergency medical director

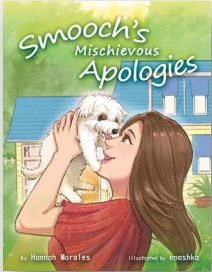


Dr. Jones '19

at Seton Highland Lakes, a critical access hospital outside of Austin, Texas. A graduate of ATSU-KCOM, she additionally serves as affiliate faculty for the Dell Medical School at the University of Texas, hoping to inspire students and residents to provide care in underserved areas.

Kalena Jones, DHSc, '19, was named one of the Top 50 Women Leaders in Arkansas for 2024 by Women We Admire. Dr. Jones serves as director of Baptist Health's 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.

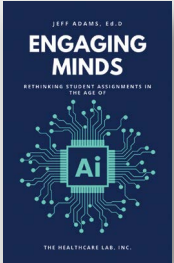
THE BOOKSHELF



Smooch's Mischievous Apologies

By Hannah Morales, doctor of health administration student, ATSU-CGHS Morales Books, October 2024

Join Smooch, a lovable Maltese puppy, on a heartwarming adventure where playful antics lead to important lessons about listening and behaving. Filled with adorable apologies and big puppy eyes, this story celebrates love and laughter, perfect for young readers and families alike.



Engaging Minds: Rethinking Assignments for Critical Thinking in the Age of AI

By Jeffrey Adams, EdD, '25 The Healthcare Lab Inc., May 2025

With the emergence of artificial intelligence, Dr. Adams developed this book as a toolbox for modern educators, featuring practical assignment frameworks to drive critical thinking, strategies to leverage AI as a creative teaching partner, and insights into how digital-native students learn and how to reach them.

CLASS NOTES



Dr. Claytor '20

2020s

Angela Claytor, DHA, '20, was named executive director of hospital operations of UnityPointHealth in Grinnell, Iowa.

Paul Cowan, DO, '20, a graduate of ATSU-SOMA, completed his otolaryngology residency at Rutgers and began a rhinology – sinus and skull base surgery fellowship at Johns Hopkins.

Shannon Youngblood, EdD, '20, was named president-elect of the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Technologist Section.

Victoria Green, RDH, MEd, MPH, '21, was named interim program director for the University of Pittsburgh's School of Dental Medicine's dental hygiene program. Green began her education career at Pitt Dental Medicine as an instructor in the dental hygiene program and served as the dental hygiene senior clinic coordinator. She also previously held a position with ATSU-ASDOH.

Bhavana Prakash, DMSc, '21, was appointed to the Physician Assistant Board by California Gov. Gavin Newsom. Dr. Prakash has been a physician assistant and program manager for the Adult Congenital Heart Program at Stanford Children's Health since 2024 and a supervising physician assistant at The Permanente Medical Group since 2015.



Dr. Prakash '21



Morgan Leichtenberger, MS, '22, a graduate of ATSU-ASHS, joined the Cedar Rapids Rapids, a Minor League Baseball team of the Midwest League, as the

team's assistant athletic trainer. It is her third season with the Minnesota Twins organization and her first in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She began in professional baseball as an athletic training intern with the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2019 and also served as an athletic training associate with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2022.



Jacqueline Miller, DDS, MS, MPH, '22, a graduate of ATSU-CGHS, retired orthodontist, and former dental director for the state of Missouri, was

named the 2024 Missouri Dental Association (MDA) Dentist of the Year. The Dentist of the Year award recognizes a member dentist who has demonstrated outstanding service to MDA, the profession of dentistry, and/or to the community in the past year.



Dr. Nakazono '24

Tessa Tolen, DO, '23, a graduate of ATSU-KCOM, was installed as a new trustee to the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (MAOPS) board. Dr. Tolen also received the MAOPS Young Physicians Network Outstanding Resident Member award.

Ryo Nakazono, DPT, '24, was named 2024-25 Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference (KCAC) Staff Athletic Trainer of the Year. KCAC recognizes one individual each year for exceptional performance as a member of an athletic training staff. Award recipients are actively involved in their community or campus, within the conference, athletic training associations, and promotion of the profession. Dr. Nakazono has served as an athletic trainer at McPherson College since 2021.

Stanley Samuel, DMD, '25, MPH, '21, a graduate of ATSU-MOSDOH and ATSU-CGHS, was elected vice chair of the ATSU-CGHS Alumni Board.

SHARE YOUR NEWS!

Have you recently met up with a fellow ATSU alum? Did you get a promotion, reach a milestone, or earn recognition? Maybe you have a story you'd like to share. Tell us about it at stillmagazine@atsu.edu



ATSU's Diversity & Inclusion department held its annual reunion on the Mesa, Arizona, campus to honor and celebrate alumni of the Graduate Health Professions Scholarship program.

Some Arizona-based alumni and students in attendance were (left to right) Quotasze Williams, DMD, '22; Raven Burrell-Williams, MS, PA-C, '20; Haymee Lucio-Reyes, MS, PA-C, '20; Gabriela Isenia, MS, PA-C, '21; Jillian Masciola-Heishman, MS, OTR/L, '21; Natalie Garcia, SLP, '26; Aya "Shion" Ienaga, PA, '26; Megan Burciaga, D2; Alexandra Contreras-Salazar, OTD, '20; Logan Danner, OMS II; and Andrew Barrios, DMSc, '27, MS, PA-C, '24.

Upcoming continuing education opportunities

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Best Practices for Managing Mental Health Conditions in the Collegiate Athlete

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Evidence-Based Practice in Athletic Training

Examination of Concussion Reporting Influences and Educational Programs

From Research to Practice: Insights and Strategies for Salary Negotiation

Got Data? Using Patient Care Documentation to Drive Clinical Decisions and Improve Care

Health Information Technology in Athletic Training

How Much Information is Too Much? The Role of Unlearning in Athletic Healthcare

Incorporating EBP into Athletic Training: Overview of Practice-Based Partnerships

Incorporating the 6th International Conference on Concussion in Sport Recommendations into Practice

Lower Limb Preventive Training Program Best Practice and Implementation

Medicolegal Considerations for Sport-Related Concussion

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Promoting Patient Mental Health: Lessons and Considerations from a Sport Psychology Perspective

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Home study courses are available year-round and are web-based. Please email atce@atsu.edu for more information.

To register for courses online or learn about upcoming activities, please visit atsu.edu/ce or call 866.626.2878, ext. 2232.

DENTAL *Programs offered by ATSU-MOSDOH*

Principle of Zygomatic Implants for the Edentulous Maxilla
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Provisional Implant Restoration: Shaping Tissue, Esthetics & Confidence – From Chairside to Digital Design
Nov. 15, 2025

ATSU-MOSDOH is ADA CERP and AGD PACE approved.

All opportunities are held virtually. For more information, please email mosdohce@atsu.edu or call 314.230.7079.

MEDICAL *Programs offered by ATSU-KCOM*

Big Cedar | Pre-Conference – Dermatology Hands-On Workshop
Dec. 4, 2025
Big Cedar Lodge | Ridgedale, Missouri

Big Cedar – Primary Care Update
Dec. 4-6, 2025
Big Cedar Lodge | Ridgedale, Missouri

ATSU-KCOM CME Cruise – Primary Care Update
Jan. 10-18, 2026
Royal Caribbean – Oasis of the Seas | Departure port: Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
Southern Caribbean

Las Vegas – Beyond Blood Sugar: Primary Care's Role in Diabetes Wellness
Feb. 26-28, 2026
Treasure Island | Las Vegas, Nevada

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PHYSICAL THERAPY

Live from A.T. Still: Clinical Decision-Making in Neurologic Rehabilitation
Nov. 15, 2025
ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona

Patient-Centered Spinal Manipulation: A Key to Creating Greater Safety in Manual Therapy
Jan. 10, 2026
ATSU Arizona campus | Mesa, Arizona

For more information, please email ptceu@atsu.edu or call 480.265.8035.

FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

ATSU

Bill Elam was named assistant director of advancement services.

Alexander Goerke was named assistant director of student financial aid in the Enrollment Services department.

Sarah Halstead was named assistant registrar for the Enrollment Services department.

Lori Haxton, MA, vice chancellor for student affairs, retired from ATSU after 36 years of service. Read more about her on Page 6.

Deanna Hunsaker, DHEd, MBA, '08, assistant vice chancellor for enrollment services, was appointed interim vice chancellor for student affairs.

Jane C. Johnson, MA, research assistant professor, A.T. Still Research Institute, retired from ATSU after 26 years of service.

Andrew Kottwitz, MA, was named director of student financial aid for the Enrollment Services department.

Michelle Mayo, PhD, Board of Trustees member, was named Claflin University's provost and vice president for academic affairs. Dr. Mayo previously served as associate provost for student success and dean of undergraduate studies at California State University, Monterey Bay.

Stephanie McGrew, DHSc, '25, MHA, '15, MPH, '24, assistant director, diversity & inclusion, received the UPCEA Leadership in

Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Award for representing best practices and demonstrating positive impact in promoting cultural shift. In addition, she earned her doctor of health sciences degree from ATSU-CGHS.

Clinton Normore, EdD, MBA, '25, chief diversity officer, earned his doctor of education in health professions education degree from ATSU-CGHS.

Jody Peterson, executive assistant, general counsel & chief operating officer, received the Missouri campus Employee Excellence Award for the fourth quarter of 2024.

Gaylah Sublette, MBA, was appointed president of ATSU's Missouri campus, effective July 1, 2025. Sublette had served as interim president since July 1, 2024. A graduate of Truman State University and William Woods University, Sublette brings 38 years of experience to her role, having served in various senior positions at ATSU since joining the University in 1987. She has been instrumental in advancing research, compliance, and strategic planning initiatives across the University. As vice chancellor of research & grants, she led the development of ATSU's centralized Sponsored Programs office and helped secure more than \$100 million in external funding. As interim president of the Missouri campus, she provided executive leadership for ATSU's Missouri-based schools, including ATSU-KCOM, ATSU-CGHS, and ATSU-MOSDOH and St. Louis Dental Center.

Kendall Tarantino was promoted to enrollment coordinator for the Enrollment Services department.

Sarah Thomas, MSW, LCSW, director, behavioral health & wellness, was honored as the 2024-25 Advisor of the Year on ATSU's Missouri campus. As advisor for the Still Kids student organization, she was recognized for demonstrating initiative in working with the student organization, helping the organization accomplish its mission, promoting student learning, and serving as a role model for student members.

ATSU-ASDOH

Michelle Brady, BDS, joined the School as an associate professor and senior director of community-based dental education. Dr. Brady received her dental degree from University of Wales College of Medicine School of Dentistry and postgraduate diplomas in conscious sedation and clinical dentistry from Trinity College Dublin. She is a fellow of the American College of Dentists.

Melanie Burns joined the School as the predoctoral clinic operations manager.

Irwin Feinberg, DDS, adjunct faculty, predoctoral instruction, retired from the School after 18 years of service.

Tehani Gonzales was promoted to project coordinator of the Integrated Community Service Partnerships program.

Alfredo Hernandez, DDS, MS, was promoted to clinical professor.

Satish Kumar, DMD, MDSc, MS, professor and director, periodontics, was elected vice president of the Arizona section of the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research.

William Leibow, DDS, MSD, was promoted to clinical associate professor.

Robert Levine, DDS, assistant professor and director, laser dentistry, received the 2025 Kumar Patel Prize in Laser Surgery from the American Laser Study Club. Dr. Levine was recognized for his outstanding contributions to CO2 laser dentistry education.

Ahmed Mahrous, BDS, MS, associate professor, director of CAD/CAM dentistry, predoctoral education; **Amira Elgreatly, BDS, MS**, associate professor, predoctoral education; and co-authors published an article in the *Journal of Dental Education* that ranked within the top 10% of most viewed publications from the journal in 2023. The article is titled "The use of artificial intelligence and game-based learning in removable partial denture design: A comparative study."

Angela Miller was promoted to business process analyst.

Kathleen Moralez, senior dental assistant, Advanced Care Clinic, received the Arizona campus Employee Excellence Award for the first quarter of 2025.

James Nelson was promoted to sterilization team lead for on-site clinical education.

Jae Hyun Park, DMD, PhD, MSD, MS, professor and director, orthodontics, was selected by the American Association of Orthodontists Board of Trustees to become editor-in-chief of the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics* (AJO-DO) and the *AJO-DO Clinical Companion*.

Maricela Segovia Santoyo was promoted to manager of preclinical education.

Lindsay Springer, DMD, MPH, '12, was promoted to clinical associate professor.

Ann Spolarich, PhD, RDH, professor and assistant dean, research, was elected as councilor of the International Association for Dental Research Oral Health Research Group.

Robert M. Trombly, DDS, JD, former professor and dean, was named dean emeritus. Dr. Trombly was recognized at the ATSU Board of Trustees quarterly meeting on Friday, Jan. 31, in Mesa, Arizona. Dr. Trombly retired in September 2024 after being named to the position in July 2017. He first joined ATSU-ASDOH in 2015 as associate dean for clinical education and student success.

ATSU-ASHS

Beatriz Barragan Serrano, PhD, associate professor, speech-language pathology, received the College's 2025 Scholar of the Year award.

Ann Lee Burch, PT, EdD, MPH, FNAP, dean, was accepted as a distinguished fellow of the Physical Therapy Academy by the National

Academies of Practice. This prestigious honor recognizes Dr. Burch's outstanding achievements and leadership in the profession and interprofessional care.

Maria Centeno Vazquez, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, was appointed chair of the Speech-Language Pathology department.

Deanne Fay, PT, DPT, PhD, professor, director, physical therapy, received the College's 2025 Service of the Year award.

Benjamin Gross, OTR/L, instructor, occupational therapy, earned his doctor of clinical science degree from the University of Pittsburgh.

Tiffany Hines, PhD, MEd, SLP-CCC, assistant professor, speech-language pathology, received the College's 2025 Junior Faculty of the Year award.

Ivonne Maldonado de La Rosa, PhD, CCC-SLP, assistant professor, speech-language pathology, was honored as the 2024-25 Advisor of the Year on ATSU's Arizona campus. As advisor for the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association Chapter, she was recognized for demonstrating initiative in working with the student organization, helping the organization accomplish its mission, promoting student learning, and serving as a role model for student members.

Raymond Pavlick, PhD, was appointed chair of the Physician Assistant Studies department.

Jennifer Radziak, OTD, OTR/L, CHT, assistant professor, program director, occupational therapy, received the College's 2025 Educator of the Year award.



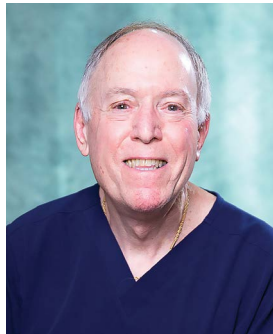
Haxton
ATSU



Dr. McGrew '25, '15, '24
ATSU



Sublette
ATSU



Dr. Feinberg
ATSU-ASDOH



Gonzales
ATSU-ASDOH



Dr. Hernandez
ATSU-ASDOH



Segovia Santoyo
ATSU-ASDOH



Dr. Barragan Serrano
ATSU-ASHS



Dr. Burch
ATSU-ASHS



Dr. Pavlick
ATSU-ASHS

FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

Tania Shearon, DHSc, OTR/L, CHT, C-IAYT, assistant professor, director of curriculum, occupational therapy, was inducted to the National Academies of Practice Physical Therapy Academy.

Adam Story, PT, DPT, OTR/L, OTD, MTC, FNAP, assistant professor, occupational therapy, was inducted to the National Academies of Practice Physical Therapy Academy.

Clay Walker, MS, PA-C, was promoted to director of didactic education for the Physician Assistant Studies department.

ATSU-CGHS

Emily Bonazelli, DHA, MS, '21, received the College's 2025 Adjunct of the Year award for the Health Administration department.

Erin Breitenbach, PhD, MEd, MA, professor and chair, health professions education, received tenure.

C. Lynn Chevalier, DHSc, MPH, MS, CSSGB CPC, received the College's 2025 Adjunct of the Year award for the Health Sciences department.

Robert Clegg, PhD, MLB, MPH, CHPHQ, MCHES, associate professor and chair, health administration, received the President's Circle Award from National University while completing his degree in the Master of Law and Business program. Additionally, Dr. Clegg was invited to serve on the Planning Committee for the 2026 Annual Meeting of the Association of University Programs in Health Administration.

Lihua Dishman, DBA, MBA, FACHE, was promoted to professor with tenure in the Health Administration department. In addition, Dr. Dishman was recertified as a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Olivia Ellison, enrollment data coordinator, ATSU-CGHS, received the Missouri campus Employee Excellence Award for the first quarter of 2025.

Helen Ewing, DHSc, MN, RN, received the College's 2025 Adjunct of the Year award for the Nursing department.

John Fick, EdD, FACHE, was promoted to professor with tenure in the Health Administration department.

Jaana Gold, DDS, PhD, MPH, CPH, professor and chair, public health, was appointed chair of the College's Public Health department. She was named to the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health Education Advisory Committee. Her term runs through 2027. In addition, Dr. Gold was recertified in public health by the National Board of Public Health Examiners.

Kathleen Mathieson, PhD, CIP, was promoted to professor with tenure in the Health Sciences department. In addition, Dr. Mathieson received the College's 2025 Professor of the Year award, which honors the most outstanding faculty member.

Eric Matthews, DHSc, PhD, MS, professor and chair, health sciences, received the College's 2025 Dean's Recognition Award for Outstanding Leadership for his thoughtful guidance and inspiring excellence.

Mary-Katherine McNatt, DrPH, MPH, MCHES, CPH, COI, professor, public health; **Marsha Presley, PhD, MPH, '18**, research associate, public health; and colleague Jan Probst, PhD, were invited to provide a plenary address, titled "Disenfranchised and Unheard: Political Determinants of Indigenous Health," at the National Rural Health Association's Annual Rural Health Access Conference in May.

Presley Melvin-Dean, MA, MPH, '22, academic advisor, received the College's 2025 Outstanding Employee Award in recognition of her exceptional service and support to the ATSU-CGHS community.

Jiji Pollock, MS, '19, adjunct professor, kinesiology, received her doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Chicago.

Michael Ryan, PhD, MS, CSCS, PN2, '19, adjunct faculty, kinesiology, was elected chair of the ATSU-CGHS Alumni Board.

Jason Salas, MAEd, instructional designer and career services coordinator, obtained a new certification in project management for instructional designers from Canvas Credentials.

Aesha Turner, DHEd, MS, MCHES, '18, business operations manager, earned her certified in public health (CPH) credential.

Megan Weemer, DHSc, MCHES, was selected as the new director of ATSU-CGHS' Office of Scholarly and Professional Development. In addition, Dr. Weemer was promoted to associate professor with tenure in the Health Sciences department.

ATSU-CHC

Romelia Ker was promoted to clinical student liaison for the Physician Assistant Studies program.

Tina Kibodeaux, program manager, physician assistant studies, received the Arizona and California campus Employee Excellence Award for the fourth quarter of 2024.

Jessica McFadden was promoted to didactic education manager for the Physician Assistant Studies program.

ATSU-KCOM

Lori Claypool, DO, FACOOG, NCMP, '90, director of student medical education, regional medicine, joined the OB-GYN team at Scotland County Hospital and Rural Health Clinics in Memphis, Missouri.

Valena Fiscus, DO, MPH, '13, assistant professor, internal medicine, was appointed vice councilor for District 2 (northeast Missouri) with the Missouri State Medical Association for 2025-26.

Kelly Kirkland, MBA, business operations manager, received the 2025 Medallion Award from the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons.

Sumitra Miriyala, PhD, MBA, MPH, FAHA, associate professor, anatomy, ATSU-KCOM, was invited to serve on a National Institutes of Health review panel for the R15 AREA/REAP opportunity and reviewed applications in cardio/pulmonary disciplines.

Robert G.G. Piccinini, DO, DFACN, clinical adjunct instructor, was installed as president of the American Osteopathic Association on July 19, marking the first time a psychiatrist has served in this role. Dr. Piccinini is board certified in general adult and geriatric psychiatry and maintains a private practice in Michigan.

Robert J. Theobald Jr., PhD, professor, pharmacology, received the John E. Thornburg, DO, PhD, National Faculty Leadership Award from the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners.

ATSU-MOSDOH

Romana Muller, EdD, MSDH, RDH, '22, associate professor, clinical education, received ATSU-CGHS' 2025 Distinguished Service Alumni Award for her work and leadership in compassionate, culturally competent care for underserved communities.

Anthony Murgo was promoted to inventory & dental dispensary technician.

Mohamed Rahhal, BDS, PhD, MSc, assistant professor and specialty care unit director, prosthodontics, was elected chair of the American Dental Education Association Special Interest Group on Implant Dentistry. Dr. Rahhal has held an officer position in this group for the past two years.

ATSU-SOMA

Eboni Anderson, PhD, DHEd, MSW, MEd, MA, '19, associate professor and director, community-oriented primary care, received ATSU-CGHS' 2025 Adjunct of the Year award for the College's Public Health department.

Breanne Jaqua, DO, MPH, '17, associate professor, was appointed interim assistant dean for the School's Academic Affairs department. In addition, Dr. Jaqua received the Outstanding Mentor Award from the Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association. The award is presented to physicians who make a significant difference in the lives of students and colleagues through mentorship.

Erin McFadden, MD, clinical assistant professor and co-regional director of medical education, received an Everyday Hero Award from the Pennsylvania Medical Society. A board-certified internal medicine physician and deputy chief medical officer of The Wright Center for Community Health, Dr. McFadden was nominated for her tireless efforts to educate the next generation of physicians and to deliver high-quality, whole person primary health services to all.

Submit faculty & staff news to stillmagazine@atsu.edu



Dr. Story
ATSU-ASHS



Dr. Clegg
ATSU-CGHS



Dr. Fick
ATSU-CGHS



Dr. Matthews
ATSU-CGHS



Melvin-Dean
ATSU-CGHS



Kibodeaux
ATSU-CHC



Dr. Fiscus '13
ATSU-KCOM



Dr. Theobald
ATSU-KCOM



Dr. Rahhal
ATSU-MOSDOH



Dr. McFadden
ATSU-SOMA

IN MEMORIAM

Still Magazine remembers those who have passed away and extends deepest sympathies to their families and friends.

Visit stillmagazine.atsu.edu to read full-length obituaries.

- 1940s
- W. Jean Davison, DO, '48

Feb. 1, 2025

Des Moines, Iowa
- 1950s
- Lawrence Hornick, DO, '53

May 28, 2025

Sayville, New York
- Richard F. Lamb, DO, '53

May 2, 2025

Kennett Square, Pennsylvania
- Glenn Hoberg, DO, '58

April 21, 2025

River Falls, Wisconsin
- 1960s
- Roy E. Kearns, DO, '60

April 16, 2025

Grand Junction, Colorado
- Charles A. Kline, DO, '60

March 26, 2025

Columbia, Missouri
- John H. Drabing, DO, '61

April 19, 2025

Colorado Springs, Colorado
- Sherman M. Barnett, DO, '62

May 11, 2024

Cherry Hill, New Jersey
- Fred D. Brink, DO, '62

Nov. 29, 2023

Guthrie Center, Iowa
- Larry L. Bunnell, DO, '62

April 10, 2025

Sarasota, Florida
- James F. Kightlinger, DO, '63

Jan. 21, 2025

DuBois, Pennsylvania
- Philip R. Brackett, DO, '64

Feb. 24, 2025

Briny Breezes, Florida, and Memphis, Missouri
- Joseph H. Hunt, DO, '64

May 28, 2025

Carleton, Michigan

- Robert C. Todd, DO, '65

Jan. 17, 2024

Woodinville, Washington
- Paul E. Kudelko, DO, '67

Feb. 12, 2025

Belleair, Florida
- 1970s
- David W. Deeher, DO, '71

March 29, 2024

Milan, Ohio
- S. Jon Rupright, DO, '72

April 20, 2024

Columbia, Missouri
- James W. Wilson, DO, '74

Jan. 10, 2025

St. Louis, Missouri
- Warren T. Wilson, DO, '74

June 2, 2025

Ewa Beach, Hawaii
- 1980s
- George M. Gasser III, DO, '80

Feb. 28, 2025

Farmington, Missouri
- Mark S. O'Brien, DO, '81

June 13, 2025

Unionville, Missouri
- Steven R. Butcher, DO, '83

April 23, 2024

Stockton, Missouri
- Steven F. Rubin, DO, '84

July 15, 2025

Paramus, New Jersey
- Lawrence E. Nichols, DO, '89

Feb. 22, 2025

Hannibal, Missouri
- 1990s
- Christopher C. Murray, DO, '92

Feb. 15, 2025

Melbourne, Florida
- Abraham S. Chen, DO, '98

July 7, 2025

Rancho Cucamonga, California

- 2000s
- William A. Grimm III, AuD, '01

Nov. 22, 2024

Columbus, Ohio
- Lee Gosson, AuD, '06

Jan. 22, 2024

Flagler Beach, Florida
- 2010s
- April L. Westfall, DMD, PH, '10

April 30, 2024

South Lake Tahoe, California
- Nadira Adatia Gularte, MS, '11

May 11, 2025

Carmel, California
- Erika Olson, DO, '13

May 28, 2025

Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Jordan A. Taylor, DMD, '18

June 27, 2025

Joplin, Missouri
- 2020s
- Madalyn N. Elliott, DO, '22

May 4, 2025

Chesterfield, Missouri

- Faculty, staff & friends
- George Blue Spruce Jr., DDS, MPH

June 3, 2025

Surprise, Arizona
- Gary C. London, DDS

Feb. 11, 2025

Belleville, Illinois



HEALTHCARE

EXPO

A.T. Still University

SAVE the DATE

Mesa, Arizona, campus
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The setting sun paints the sky above the Kirksville, Missouri, campus.





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