

# Orthodontic Alumni Association of Illinois



The Department of Orthodontics  
at the University of Illinois Chicago  
College of Dentistry

MOONSHOT 2029

Winter 2023-2024

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## WE WELCOME YOUR SUPPORT!



Please help support the Orthodontic Alumni Association of Illinois by completing the enclosed remittance envelope with your \$200 payment to the "Orthodontic Alumni Association of Illinois." Thanks to you, we are able to present scholarships to deserving Department of Orthodontics residents. Please include your email address for frequent updates, and visit our Facebook page as well.

## RIGOROUS ORTHO ADMISSIONS PROCESS BRINGS STUDENTS WITH INCREDIBLE TALENT

**Greetings, esteemed members of the Orthodontic Alumni Association of Illinois!**

I hope this finds you well as we approach the end of another exciting year in orthodontics. Today, I am thrilled to share with you an inside look at the rigorous admissions process for the UIC Orthodontic Program, shedding light on the incredible talent and dedication that aspiring orthodontists bring to the table.

As the field of orthodontics continues to grow and evolve, the competition to enter prestigious programs like the one at UIC has become increasingly fierce. With the culmination of my recent experience as a member of the UIC Orthodontic Admissions Committee, I am thrilled to provide you with a glimpse into the intensive interviews, thoughtful evaluations, and ultimate selection of our next class.

Over the course of three intense days in October, esteemed faculty members and I had the privilege of conducting in-depth interviews with candidates who aspire to join our program. Divided into teams, we delved into pre-determined questions that ranged from problem-solving abilities to motivations for choosing UIC Orthodontics. As we explored cutting-edge orthodontic technologies and gained personal insights into each candidate's aspirations, we were impressed by the passion and dedication displayed.

The demand for our program was evident, as we received a staggering 425 applications for just nine available spots. Our faculty members reviewed these applications and selected 68 exceptional candidates for interviews. These individuals were the cream of the crop – bright, research-

oriented, and at the top of their dental school classes. It was truly inspiring to meet candidates from diverse backgrounds, hailing from different corners of the globe, each bringing a unique perspective to the table. Some candidates had already practiced dentistry, while others were completing their General Practice Residencies or were on the cusp of graduating dental school.

After each interview day, the admissions committee meticulously ranked the candidates, taking into account the input from our third-year residents who

had informal interactions with the candidates. The decision-making process was further solidified as the candidates went through the Match Program to determine their compatibility with our respected program.

Participating in this admissions process was an enlightening and invigorating experience. Witnessing the talent, dedication, and passion of

these young dental professionals left me inspired and grateful for the incredible work being done by our department. As we continue to shape the future of our profession, it is heartening to know that the next generation of orthodontists is in capable and enthusiastic hands.

In conclusion, I invite all of you, my fellow alumni, to join me in supporting the UIC Orthodontic Program and its commitment to excellence in orthodontics. Together, let us pave the way for the next generation, push the boundaries of our field, and create brighter, healthier smiles for all.

Wishing you all the best for the upcoming year!

*Dr. Pamela Johnson (UIC '91)*

President



*Alumni Board members Dr. Pam Johnson and Dr. Vince Arpino were happy to be invited to help interview UIC orthodontic candidates and our future alums.*

## Letter from the Department Head: Ortho Experiences Strong Year

*Dear Alumni and Friends of the UIC College of Dentistry Department of Orthodontics::*

During the past year, UIC Orthodontics scaled the heights of important achievements.

We obtained the most number of AAOF awards in the country for the third consecutive year, and our faculty continue to excel as nationally recognized leaders in Orthodontics education and scholarship.

Five of our faculty members were promoted. Drs. Maria Therese Galang and Phimon Atsawasunan were promoted to Full Professors. Drs. Christina Nicholas, Maysaa Oubaidin and Min Kyeong Lee were promoted to Associate Professors. We submitted the dossier of Dr. Mohammed Elnagar for consideration of promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure.

We provided over \$70,000 in scholarships/awards to our residents.

Our department has established a worldwide niche in using state-of-the-science technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to diagnose, plan treatment, and evaluate end-of-treatment outcomes. We published multiple peer-reviewed articles in this area, many of which have been extensively cited.

I was honored to have completed a successful five-year review and embarked on my second five-year term as Head of the Department.

We all can be very proud of our faculty, residents, and staff. I am very thankful to them and to our alumni and friends for their continued support. We all look forward to even greater achievements in 2024.

*Sincerely,*

*Sath Allareddy, Department Head*

### YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES AT WORK!

Our alumni association is proud to be able to give back to the orthodontic residents at UIC. Excess dues collected from members were given directly to the residents as scholarship money—\$8,000 in 2022 and \$10,000 in 2021. Your dues also help sponsor the graduation banquets of the residents, as well as our AAO reception. We are appreciative of your continued membership and support!

We also welcome you to join our Facebook group "Orthodontic Alumni Association of Illinois." This is where you will find frequent notifications and updates from the department. Log on to [www.facebook.com/groups/767797047025446](http://www.facebook.com/groups/767797047025446).



*Alumni Board 2023 with Dr. Sath Allareddy.*

### Dr. Budi Kusnoto Celebrates his 25-year Anniversary Serving UIC

Celebrating his 25-year anniversary in UIC's Department of Orthodontics, Dr. Budi Kusnoto since 2005 has served as the Program and Clinic Director of the Orthodontic program and is a tenured Professor. He served as our sixth Interim Department Head from 2016 to 2018.

While at UIC, Dr. Kusnoto has assisted with the implementation of digital technology in the Department of Orthodontics. He has also been actively involved in research and teaching on the subject of diagnosis and treatment planning utilizing 3D imaging technology and is currently working on Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology.

He has assisted in the work of many resident theses over these years and has had numerous publications as well as being a sought-after speaker. At this year's American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) meeting, he spearheaded having the UIC Orthodontics Department feature speakers at Fred Talk, which was the first involvement by an orthodontic program.

Thank you, Dr. Kusnoto, for your dedication and devotion to the Department as we look forward to your continued success and achievements not only within the Department, but also in the orthodontic community at large!



*Dr. Budi Kusnoto is shown with his 1998 classmates Drs. Andy Tringas, Gary Benson, Peter Lam, and Cecile Yaan at the UIC open house.*



UIC faculty and residents obtained four awards/grants for a total funding of \$111,200 this year. Once again, we were awarded the most number of awards/grants from American Association of Orthodontists Foundation (AAOF). This is the third consecutive year that UIC Orthodontics has won the most number of AAOF awards. Our very own Dr. Mike Durbin, who will be President of the AAO in 2026, presented the awards in August. Join us in congratulating the awardees!



**Dr. Phimon Atsawasuwana (Biomedical Research Award - \$40,000)** for the project titled "Roles of MiR-145 in Osteocytes During Tooth Movement."

**Dr. Mohammed H. Elnagar (Biomedical Research Award - \$37,000)** for the project titled "Developing an AI Diagnostic Support System for Interpreting Dental and Craniofacial Images" (Co-investigators: Drs. Sath Allareddy, Ahmet Enis Cetin, and Rashid Ansari).

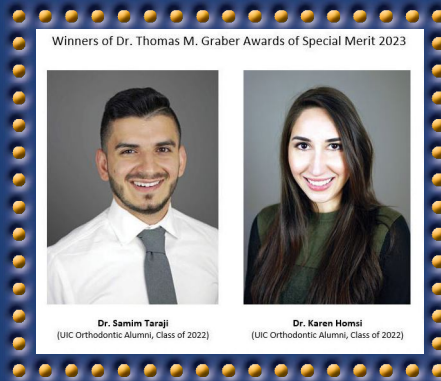
## Alumni Drs. Karen Homsy and Samim Taraji Win Graber Awards

It gives me great pleasure to share with you that UIC Orthodontics has won two American Association of Orthodontists Awards this year. We won two Dr. Thomas M. Graber Awards of Special Merit. Please join us in congratulating the winners:

**Dr. Samim Taraji** (mentored by **Dr. Mohammed H. Elnagar**) for his paper titled "Novel machine learning algorithms for prediction and treatment decision in patients with Class III Malocclusions." This study was funded by the Brodie Craniofacial Chair Endowment.

**Dr. Karen Homsy** (mentored by **Dr. Mohammed H. Elnagar**) for her paper titled "Clinical evaluation of artificial intelligence driven remote monitoring technology at tracking tooth movement and reconstruction of 3D digital models during fixed orthodontic treatment." This study was funded by American Association of Orthodontists Foundation Robert M. Ricketts Sunflower Orthodontics Fellowship Award.

The late Dr. Tom Graber was a faculty member at the College who passed away in 2007.



## Dr. Allan G. Brodie Resident 2023 Research Scholarships

Join us in congratulating this year's Dr. Allan G. Brodie 2023 Research Scholarship recipients:

- Dr. Evan Booth (Class of 2024, mentored by Dr. Phimon Atsawasuwana),
- Dr. Jenna Burton (Class of 2026, mentored by Dr. Mohammed H. Elnagar),
- Dr. Zainah Shaker (Class of 2026, (mentored by Dr. Atsawasuwana),
- Dr. John Lorenz (Class of 2025, mentored by Dr. Elnagar).

## Congratulations to our Class of 2023!

Congratulations to our newest alums! This is the first all-female class of residents to graduate from UIC Orthodontics: Drs. Pheba Abraham, Jessica Begley, Sara Kahng, Sophie Moon, Alexandria Rozgony, Chandani Shukla, Yougjae Sung, and Kayla Yip. Best of luck to the Class of 2023 as you start the next chapter of your life—loan repayment!



Dr. Ben Youel (UIC '19) mentoring UIC third-year residents Drs. Shirley Zhang and Zach Shabelund with a visit to his office.

## Help Support the Resident Scholarship Fund!

Are you looking to support the future of orthodontics and give back to your alma mater? Consider making a donation to the Orthodontic Resident Scholarship Fund. This fund aims to provide direct financial assistance to our aspiring orthodontic residents, help them achieve their educational goals, and further their careers. By contributing to this fund, you can have a direct impact on the lives and future success of these

individuals. Not only will your donation support future alums, but it will also contribute to the advancement of the orthodontic profession as a whole. Join the community of alums who are making a difference by helping the next generation of orthodontic professionals.

**Please take the time to support the UIC Orthodontic Program and the Orthodontic Alumni Association of Illinois!**



## 2023 AAO ALUMNI BASH IN CHICAGO HAPPENINGS

Thanks to everyone who attended the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) Alumni Reception in Chicago and made it a tremendous success, with a fantastic turnout. It was an excellent opportunity to connect, network, as well as visit with the current residents. The event celebrated the five-year anniversary of Dr. Sath Allareddy as Department Head, as well as the 25-year anniversary of Dr. Budi Kusnoto as a faculty member. Overall, the reception provided a wonderful atmosphere for camaraderie and collaboration among the alumni. We look forward to seeing you at the AAO in New Orleans in 2024!



## Save the Date!

### AAO ALUMNI RECEPTION NEW ORLEANS 2024



Saturday, May 4  
6:30-9:30pm

**Mulate's of New Orleans**  
201 Julia St., New Orleans, LA 70130

Are you going to the AAO Meeting in New Orleans in 2024? If so, please make plans to attend the off-site alumni reception. This is a return visit as we hosted a reception there in 2014, which included a visit by some members of the Kenny Loggins band. You never know who might show up. The Alumni Association will be hosting a gathering at the famous **Mulate's of New Orleans**, which is conveniently located across the street from the Convention Center and is billed as "The Original Cajun Restaurant." Learn more about the restaurant at [www.mulates.com](http://www.mulates.com). FREE drinks and appetizers will be provided! (The Alumni Association promises to bring a lot of Roloids!) We hope you plan on attending.



The reception location will be listed in the AAO meeting program under the University of Illinois, and we will send our reminders based upon the registration. Still another benefit of membership!

Please take the time to support the UIC Orthodontic Program and the Orthodontic Alumni Association of Illinois!

# Alumni in the News!



Congratulations to Chicago Dental Society Jubilarian (50-year member) Dr. John Damas (UIC '75) who was presented the award by outgoing CDS President Dr.

Mike Durbin (UIC '90) at the Installation of Officers ceremony for the CDS. John happily reports the transition of his practice to allow for more time to scuba dive and ride his motorcycle when he is not visiting the grandchildren. Best of luck, John! You deserve it!



After many decades of dedicated service, Dr. Ed John (UIC '68) bids farewell to his role as clinical faculty at the UIC Orthodontic Department. His expertise and commitment to excellence have made a positive impact on the countless residents he has mentored throughout the years. Thanks to Dr. John so much for his heartfelt speech and advice for the residents! Best wishes for the next chapter of life!

Drs. Sharon Durfee and Jackie Rosen have made a successful transition from private practice to academia. With their extensive experience in the field, they bring a wealth of practical knowledge and skill to their teaching roles. Students benefit from their unique perspectives, as they combine their clinical expertise with a passion for educating the next generation of orthodontists. Please let us know if you, like Drs. Durfee and Rosen, are interested in joining our UIC team!



If you have any alumni news that you would like to share, please either post to our Group Facebook page at "Orthodontic Alumni Association of Illinois" or email [varpinobraces@msn.com](mailto:varpinobraces@msn.com).