



First OHSU School of Medicine Alumni Reunion Weekend a celebratory success

More than 130 alumni, accompanied by their guests, attended the first OHSU School of Medicine Alumni Reunion Weekend celebration in Portland, June 21-22, 2024.

Graduates from the classes of 1964 through 2014 enjoyed opportunities to reconnect, including an alumni basketball game; a tour through the OHSU simulation labs; a walking tour of the Marquam Hill OHSU campus; a live Timely Topics presentation describing a neurologist alumnus' personal battle with Alzheimer's disease; anniversary class gatherings at lunch, dinner and happy hours; a PA Alumni Chapter launch and a summer evening celebration of School of Medicine award-winning alumni at the Knight Cancer Institute on the South Waterfront campus.

Campus Walking Tour

Nearly three dozen alumni, spouses and staff members joined a walking tour of portions of the Marquam Hill campus on a balmy Saturday afternoon.

Led by Mark Kemball, senior director of alumni engagement for the OHSU Foundation, participants began in the Old Library, erected in 1939, and saw evidence of the campus' growth through the juxtaposition of historic brick buildings against modern architecture and glass walkways connecting structures built in different eras.

Alumni toured the plaza outside the Vollum Institute and the Richard T. Jones Hall for Basic Medical Sciences, where a lively discussion ensued between alumni and current medical students about past and current curriculum.

Lamia Hauter, DeLancey Doty and Ben Georgioff, first-year students in the School of Medicine class of 2027, spoke about the current emphasis on how to consume information, how to relay that to patients, and how to communicate with peers. Several alumni – the class of '74 was particularly well represented – reflected on the value of shifting the grading philosophy to Pass/No Pass, which continues to foster collaboration between “learners” rather than competition.

The tour continued through Mackenzie Hall where alumni experienced nostalgia in their former classrooms before visiting OHSU Hospital with its 14 floors of patient care and the Hatfield Research Center.

The educational walk included a discussion of historic facts and dates, and served to stoke an appetite for alumni on their way to a catered luncheon.

Timely Topics: Live from Marquam Hill

In a first-of-its-kind, in-person event, Timely Topics: Live from Marquam Hill held attendees riveted with an informative and emotional presentation. More than 230 guests gathered in the Old Library Auditorium for a compelling conversation about living with Alzheimer’s disease, featuring OHSU School of Medicine alumnus Daniel Gibbs, M.D., R ’89, Ph.D., his wife, Lois Seed, and Gibb’s neurologist, fellow alumnus and OHSU professor, Joseph Quinn, M.D., R ’94.

The unique event invited participants into the everyday lives of Gibbs and Seed, exploring their struggles to maintain Gibbs’ cognitive function while Seed provides support as a spouse and caregiver – and they both try to maintain their sense of humor. They hope to contribute to the study of dementia by sharing their story.

June is Alzheimer’s Awareness Month, and the session started with a presentation by Lori Stanton, program director for the Alzheimer’s Association of Oregon and SW Washington.

Stanton shared facts, statistics and definitions about dementia, an umbrella term for loss of memory and other thinking abilities severe enough to interfere with daily life. She explained that Alzheimer’s is a progressive disease that ultimately becomes fatal by attacking the brain stem where basic autonomic, or involuntary nervous system functions, such as breathing are managed.

Stanton encouraged guests to seek resources, services and support at alz.org or by calling the Alzheimer’s Association’s 24-hour-a-day helpline at 800-272-3900.

Gibbs addressed the audience with his sense of humor intact by indicating he’d need to read his remarks because: “Otherwise, who knows what I’ll say.” He explained his interest in the disease, which he had studied for 20 years, and the unique circumstances that have resulted in his former OHSU student, Quinn, now serving as his neurologist.

The presentation included the airing of a 32-minute documentary based on Gibbs' book by the same title, "A Tattoo on My Brain." The documentary was filmed in and around Portland, Oregon in April 2022 and is [available on Paramount+](#), a streaming video service.

In the film, Gibbs tells viewers: "I'm fascinated by this disease that I could only observe from the outside. Now, I'm on the patient side of the experience; let's grab the tiger and go for a ride."

He explains that his loss of smell and "olfactory hallucinations" were his first symptoms. Seed tells viewers that Gibbs forgot their 25th wedding anniversary. She admits that it felt like he didn't care enough to pay attention, even though she understood it wasn't his fault.

Gibbs thought he had Parkinson's disease until a DNA test revealed a genetic marker that is prevalent among patients with Alzheimer's. "I think I'm screwed," he exclaimed to his wife upon seeing the test results.

The film details how Gibbs had to make adjustments to his routines, such as giving up balancing the checkbook, but leaves viewers hopeful that there can be a positive and fulfilling life after diagnosis. Gibbs emphasized the need to retain an active lifestyle and enjoy every day while finding coping mechanisms and to maintain a lighthearted look at the realities of life with Alzheimer's disease. Gibbs now needs to make lists and labels to help himself remember basic tasks. "Note to self: Remember to remember to make notes to self," he laughs.

Following the film, Mark Kemball, senior director of alumni engagement for the OHSU Foundation, led a fascinating panel discussion on stage with Gibbs, Seed, and Quinn. The frank conversation was both raw and revealing.

If you or a loved one needs additional support and resources, visit alz.org or call 800-272-3900. Special thanks to the OHSU Brain Institute and the OHSU Layton Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Research Center for collaborating on this special live event.

Physician Assistant Alumni Chapter

The OHSU Foundation has long supported active alumni associations for the Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Dentistry. Now, we're pleased to announce a new alumni chapter for the OHSU Physician Assistant Program.

Several OHSU Physician Assistant Program alumni recently met in Portland during Alumni Reunion Weekend to kick-start the new PA Alumni Chapter with food and fellowship. Hosted at Bar West, an event facility in NW Portland, more than a dozen PAs enjoyed beer, wine and charcuterie on a beautiful summer afternoon.

Attendees were asked to share suggestions for the chapter, and to spread the word in the PA community about the next event on Saturday, October 5 at Topaz Farm on Sauvie Island near Portland.

Special thanks to Karleigh Taylor '22, Cal MacKintosh '21 and Morgan Logan '23 for serving on the chapter leadership team. Interested PA program alumni can stay informed at <https://ohsufoundation.org/alumni/chapters/pa/> or contact chapter leaders at paalumnichp@ohsu.edu.

Alumni Celebration & Awards

A weekend full of celebratory events concluded with the Alumni Celebration, a reception and awards ceremony at the sleek Knight Cancer Research building on OHSU's South Waterfront campus.

About 75 guests enjoyed signature cocktails and an elegant catered dinner on a breezy patio overlooking the Tilikum Crossing bridge and the Willamette River.

Prior OHSU School of Medicine Alumni Award winner, Brian Park, M.D., R '18, M.P.H. led the formal presentation with inspiring remarks about his circuitous path from failed filmmaker to family practitioner, before introducing [this year's winners](#) with varied backgrounds and accomplishments. Newly appointed dean of the School of Medicine, Nathan Selden, M.D., Ph.D., presented the crystal awards to:

- Navid Madani, Ph.D. '99
- Sharl Azar, M.D. '10 R '13 F '16
- Wayne Burton, M.D. '74
- Holly Corbitt, Ph.D. '18
- Abby Dotson, Ph.D. F '16
- Moira Ray, M.D. '11 R '15, M.P.H. '11

The evening celebration concluded a successful series of reunion weekend events. The OHSU School of Medicine Alumni Association looks forward to celebrating with the alumni community again next year, June 20-22, 2025. Stay connected until then by finding your community at <https://ohsufoundation.org/alumni/chapters/> and joining [OHSU Greenhouse](#).

#OHSU #SchoolOfMedicine #alumni #MarquamHill #ClassOf1964 #ClassOf1974 #ClassOf1999 #ClassOf2014 #DrDanielGibbs #ATattooOnMyBrain #PhysicianAssistants #DeanNateSelden #BrianParkMD #NavidMadaniPhD #SharlAzarMD #WayneBurtonMD #HollyCorbittPhD #AbbyDotsonPhD #MoiraRayMD