



University of
Lethbridge

NEWS RELEASE

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Dentist Fern Leavens recognized as ULAA 2021 Young Alumna of the Year

The University of Lethbridge Alumni Association (ULAA) is thrilled to announce Fern Leavens (BSc '13) as the 2021 Young Alumna of the Year.

“In a short time, Fern has demonstrated a high level of excellence in her chosen field of dentistry,” says Jason Elliott, president of the ULAA. “She wears many hats, but above all else, she is passionate about providing all patients with care that goes above and beyond. There is no doubt that she delivers on this.”



Young Alumna of the Year — Fern Leavens

Fern Leavens (BSc '13) is an exemplary health-care provider, teacher and mentor who has committed her career to quality patient care. Her impressive track record in the dentistry field is further elevated by her reputation as a thorough, humble and hardworking professional. During her time at the University of Lethbridge, she completed an undergraduate degree in mathematics, with an honours thesis in biochemistry. As part of her academic endeavours, Leavens conducted research in computational chemistry and biochemistry, resulting in multiple publications. She then went on to become a dentist, obtaining her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree in 2016. However, Leavens' education journey was far from finished, and she completed additional hospital and advanced dentistry training through a general practice residency.

Leavens works as a dentist at Edmonton's Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital Dental Clinic, providing care to patients with a variety of unique treatment needs. The emphasis of her work is on special needs dentistry, including geriatric dentistry and work with patients who may have mental or physical disabilities. Specializing in this area of

dentistry is unique, and a deeply valuable resource for those who might not be able to access care elsewhere. Her commitment to working with underserved populations began during her time as a student, and she has volunteered with Big Brothers Big Sisters, the SHINE dentistry clinic and Kindness in Action, where she went to Nicaragua to provide dental care to people who otherwise did not have access. At present, she regularly commits time to advancing the dentistry field, and she has served with organizations including the University of Alberta Dental Alumni Association and the National Dental Examining Board.

As her early career unfolded, Leavens found herself continually drawn to teaching, leading her to a role as the director of special needs dentistry and assistant clinical professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Alberta. This position allows her to combine her talent in the field with her passion for educating the next generation of dentists. She equips her students with the skills and knowledge they need to provide comprehensive care for patients with a wide variety of needs. Leavens also leverages her position as an opportunity to ensure that more of our communities' future dentists are prepared for the breadth of physical and cognitive differences that are present in dentistry. Her commitment to education prevails in her ongoing journey towards completing her Master of Health Sciences Education. An extraordinary and generous person, Leavens elevates the standard within — and beyond — the dentistry community.

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