

1 December 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Last week, on November 21, 2020 former Penn Dental Medicine Dean, Dr. Marjorie Jeffcoat, passed away after a long and challenging illness. Dr. Jeffcoat served as Dean of our School from 2003 – 2008. Her deanship was one of great distinction. She recruited preeminent and diverse scholars and raised the reputation of our School to all-time highs. She presided over an important expansion of extramural research, and enhanced clinical and educational facilities all while strengthening our fiscal stability.

Dr. Jeffcoat's impact as a scientist had an even greater impact on the world. She is widely respected for illuminating the links between oral and systemic health, including the profound implications of those links for the health and welfare of pregnant women and infants. Her most recent research included the discovery that relatively simple and inexpensive periodontal therapy might lead to substantial improvements in systemic health, notably in pregnancy outcomes, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. A periodontist by training, she also found a genetic marker that is strongly correlated with the success of such therapy in treating periodontitis.

Dr. Jeffcoat was the author of more than 200 peer-reviewed publications — covering a wide range of topics, including novel instrumentation and analytical techniques, clinical periodontics, scientific study design, osseointegration, and oral-systemic links. Beyond her own research, Dr. Jeffcoat helped to shape the profession through her work as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the ADA, the Presidency of the American Association for Dental Research, and the International Association for Dental Research. She was a distinguished member of the National Academy of Medicine, a rare honor for a dentist. She also served as president of the Academy of Osseointegration (2004-2005).

Dr. Jeffcoat also had a profound impact on the community surrounding Penn Dental Medicine. During her tenure, programs such as PennSmiles and Bridging the Gaps were expanded, bringing critically needed dental care to West Philadelphia families and young people. We embrace her example and continue to grow those commitments to this day.

Our sincere condolences to Dr. Jeffcoat's husband, Robert, who shared with me that services for Dr. Jeffcoat will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations are welcome to honor the people whose compassionate care helped Marjorie through her last illness. Contributions can be made to the Quadrangle Employee Grants Fund (3300 Darby Road, Haverford PA 19041; slieberman60@aol.com).

Sincerely,



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