

**DR. JAMES O. ARMITAGE:**  
**WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR  
THE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE?**

We want the college to be as good as it can be — an excellent College of Medicine, one that excels in outstanding clinical services, attracts and graduates outstanding students and has excellent residents. We also want a college that contributes in an effective way to Nebraska in continuing medical education and has excellent research programs that are able to successfully compete for external funding and publish important contributions in the areas people are working.

Nationally and internationally distinguished health-care experts were appointed to lead two of UNMC's four colleges this year. Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., chose James O. Armitage, M.D., a world-renowned scientist and clinician and a longtime administrative leader at UNMC, as dean of the College of Medicine. The appointment was effective April 1. Dr. Maurer also named John W. Reinhardt, D.D.S., a longtime faculty member and a nationally recognized department chair at the University of Iowa, as dean of the College of Dentistry. His appointment was effective March 20. Here, they discuss the challenges they face and the visions they each hold for their colleges.

# NEW DEANS ON THE JOB

**IN GENERAL, WHAT CHALLENGES DO  
COLLEGES OF MEDICINE FACE?**

The challenge is being able to attract the right faculty members. How good you can be depends on the people. After all, the College of Medicine is not buildings, it's faculty and trainees. The caliber of faculty we're able to recruit will determine what we're able to accomplish.

**WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED  
AS A FACULTY MEMBER TO HELP YOU  
GUIDE THE COLLEGE?**

There is a huge advantage to having been on this faculty for 18 years. I know the people so I'm able to make some decisions and do some things more quickly than I would if I had to meet everybody for the first time.



JoAnn Frederick

## MEET JAMES ARMITAGE, M.D.

**BIRTHPLACE:** Los Angeles, grew up in Kearney, Neb.

**EDUCATION:** Undergraduate, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; medical degree, UNMC.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:** UNMC faculty member since 1982, when he started the bone marrow transplant program; most recently served as chair of the Department of Internal Medicine.

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:** American Society for Blood and Bone Marrow Transplantation, National Cancer Advisory Board, American Society of Clinical Oncology, American Society of Hematology, Royal College of Physicians

**PERSONAL:** Wife, Nancy, and four children, Amy, Gregory, Anne and Joel.

three out of four years in football, you might brag we have Bud Shaw, a “champion” liver transplant surgeon.

### WHAT AREAS DO YOU WANT TO IMPROVE ON?

We want everything, as much as we can, to be excellent. An obvious area of focus right now is recruiting leaders in our open chairs in orthopedics,

internal medicine, the new neurology department and ophthalmology.

### WHERE DO YOU ENVISION THE COLLEGE BEING IN THE NEXT 5 TO 10 YEARS?

Dr. Maurer has challenged the faculty to double the external research funding in five years from \$34 million in grants in 1998 to \$68 million. We’d like to hit those targets. We would like to keep the high quality of medical students. We also would like to have more prominent clinical research programs with laboratory and clinical scientists, in addition to the ones we already have. Of course, the ones we have we want to be excellent, but we’d also like to find some other areas.

### WILL YOU CONTINUE TO SEE PATIENTS AND DO CLINICAL RESEARCH?

Oh, yes. Deans often don’t have clinical practices. I wouldn’t care to have a job where I didn’t practice medicine. I really enjoy being a physician, so I have two afternoons where I have clinics and then I’ll see new patients on other days. The relationship with my patients is important to me.



### DR. JOHN W. REINHARDT: WHAT KIND OF PROGRESS IS BEING MADE IN THE FIELD OF DENTISTRY?

Dental treatment is becoming increasingly more comfortable for patients. Technological advances are providing exciting new options for treatment — lasers for

### WHAT ARE THE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE'S GREATEST STRENGTHS?

Hands down the greatest strength is our faculty and excellent staff. There’s nothing else that comes close. Another great strength is the citizens of the state, who have been tremendously supportive of the university. That’s a big advantage. It also helps that there are really two things that the citizens of Nebraska can easily identify with the university. One is sports, like the football team. The other is the College of Medicine. In the same way you’d go to California and brag to your relatives that we were national champions



surgical procedures, air abrasion devices for removing decay, and new plastics for tooth-colored filling materials. In addition, dental implants have improved tremendously in the past decade and are now considered a viable option for replacing missing teeth. Computers are being used to help design restorations in the dental laboratory.

Research findings have led to preventive practices that have helped decrease the number of cavities in the United States. Unfortunately, about 25 percent of the children still get about 80 percent of the cavities, and these children are typically the socio-economically disadvantaged who can least afford treatment.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD OF DENTISTRY?

One of the challenges is finding ways to improve the oral health of the children I mentioned, those with significant decay problems and limited access to preventive or restorative care. Also, because of improved care and knowledge about gum diseases, many adults are now keeping most or all their teeth for their entire life. However, now that we are saving teeth, the rate of decay is increasing in older adults. We need to find ways to improve preventive measures for those seniors.

Another big challenge is providing the dental services needed and expected by the growing U.S. population.

Our population is growing rapidly. A large number of dentists graduated in the '70s and early '80s, but since then dental school class sizes have decreased. The practitioners reaching retirement age in the next 10 to 20 years are going to be difficult to replace. More



Susan Rantia

## MEET JOHN REINHARDT, D.D.S.

**BIRTHPLACE:** Nashville, Ill.

**EDUCATION:** Undergraduate, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Ill.; doctor of dental surgery, Loyola University, Chicago; master of science, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa; master of public health, Harvard University, Boston.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:** Twenty-two years at the University of Iowa College of Dentistry; 12 years as department head of operative dentistry department.

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:** Academy of Operative Dentistry, American Board of Operative Dentistry, American Dental Association, American Association of Dental Schools, American College of Dentists, International Association for Dental Research.

**PERSONAL:** Wife, Claudia.

than 4,000 dentists graduate annually in the United States — down from about 6,000 in 1982 — compared to about 18,000 physicians and 40,000 lawyers.

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE COLLEGE?

My vision is that this college, which has outstanding educational programs in dentistry, dental

hygiene and postdoctoral specialty training, will become an even stronger member of the dental and UNMC communities. We will do that in a number of ways by:

- Enhancing our curriculum to help our students become true lifelong learners with strong analytical skills and by improving continuing education opportunities for practitioners.
- Developing a stronger research program that will enhance our teaching and complement one of UNMC's missions — being on the cutting edge of biomedical sciences.
- Improving our delivery of dental services and student training by providing state-of-the-art equipment in our clinics and pre-clinical laboratories.
- Emphasizing ethical values and leadership skills in our training programs.
- Being a "good citizen" in the community and state by participating and collaborating with other University of Nebraska colleges and departments in outreach/service activities, research and organized dentistry.

### WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO UNMC?

The people are what brought me here. This is an opportunity and a challenge I couldn't resist. I feel comfortable with the commitment, values and work ethic of Nebraska's faculty, students and staff; the loyalty of the college's alumni and friends; and the strong support of Chancellor Harold Maurer. In addition, I can continue to treat patients, teach and be involved in research — all of which I enjoy. As the eighth dean in the school's proud history, I feel honored and humbled to be charged with the stewardship of the UNMC College of Dentistry and to represent Nebraska at the national level. *d*