

Winter 2005

# Florida International University Magazine Winter 2005

Florida International University Division of University Relations

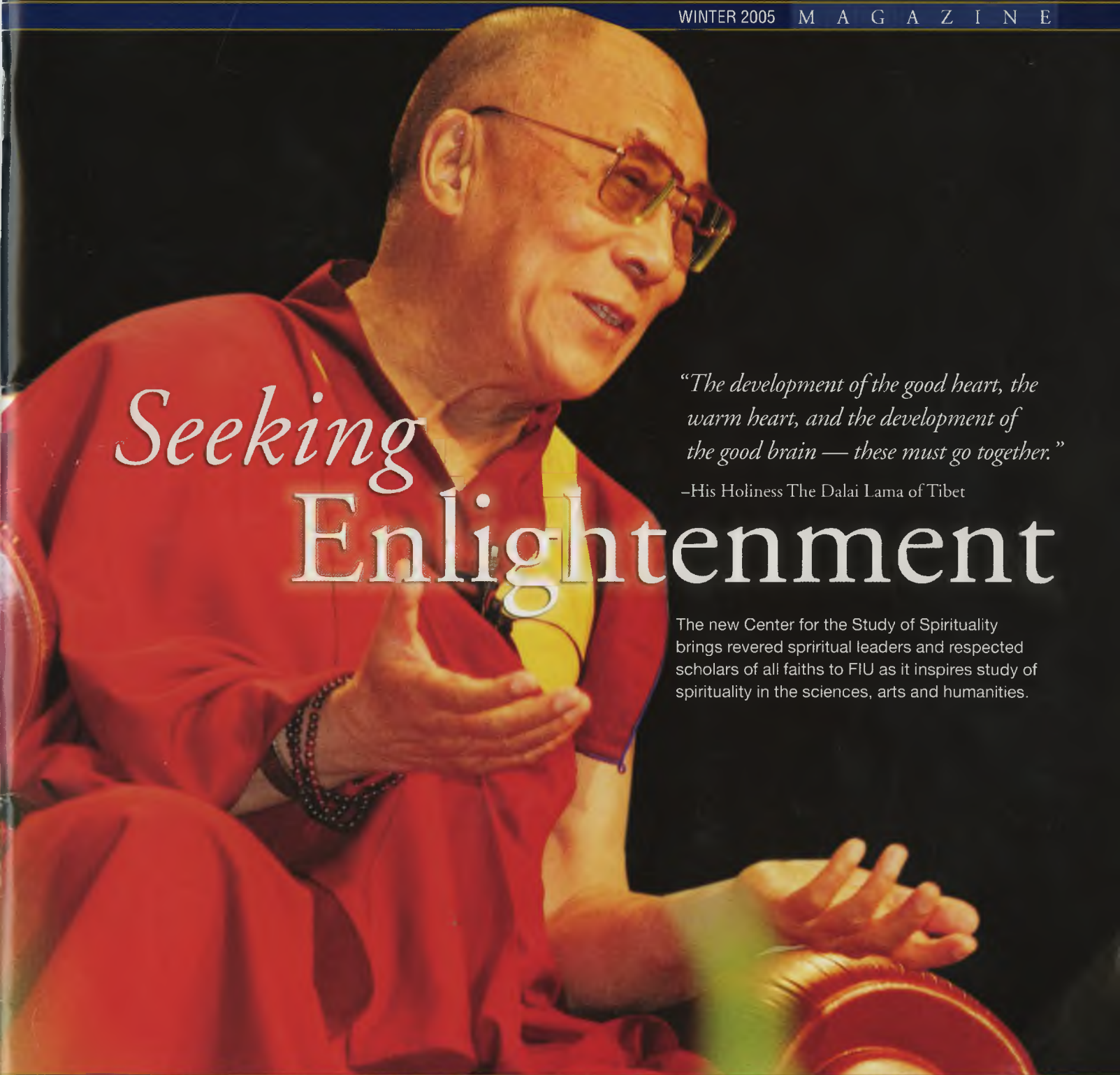
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*Seeking*  
Enlightenment

*"The development of the good heart, the warm heart, and the development of the good brain — these must go together."*

—His Holiness The Dalai Lama of Tibet

The new Center for the Study of Spirituality brings revered spiritual leaders and respected scholars of all faiths to FIU as it inspires study of spirituality in the sciences, arts and humanities.

**Also in this issue:**

University community gathers to honor outstanding alumni and faculty at annual Torch Gala.

FIU hurricane researchers forge breakthroughs during unprecedented hurricane season.

Newly renamed College of Law Carlos Costa Clinic serves immigrants fleeing persecution.

# Roary wants you!



*Feel the Pride*  
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**in the next issue**



**Meet FIU alumnus Billy Lane '97**

You might have read about Billy Lane '97 in *Easyriders* magazine or caught him on the Discovery Channel's Biker Build Off. This dreadlocked biker is famed for the custom-built choppers he creates at his Melbourne shop, Choppers Inc. Sure, he likes to have fun. But you are just as likely to find this mechanical engineer up all night playing with the mathematical equations that go into his distinctly engineered choppers. We bring you the story of this refreshingly down-to-earth celebrity alumnus.

**in this issue**

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FIU's annual celebration honoring alumni and faculty was a night to remember.

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**On the cover:  
The Study of Spirituality**

The new center was inspired by His Holiness The Dalai Lama's 1995 visit to FIU when he emphasized that education should nurture both a strong mind and a warm heart. Featured on the cover is His Holiness The Dalai Lama of Tibet during his September 2004 return to FIU, described by FIU President Modesto Maidique as a "once in a lifetime privilege" for students. The Dalai Lama's lecture, "Compassion: The Source of True Happiness," attracted more than 5,000 students, staff and faculty.

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**A Conversation with  
Adin Steinsaltz**

Renowned Jewish scholar and mystic Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz talks to FIU Magazine about faith, religion, spirituality and what really matters in life.

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**Heartening Research**

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## from the AVP, Alumni Relations



Dear Alumni,

The transition from the end of one calendar year to the start of another brings seemingly infinite possibilities — for change, for improvement and for growth. This year, FIU alumni can look forward to a variety of exciting new initiatives. To start, the *FIU Magazine* has new leadership with a new editor and Editorial Advisory Board. Editor Deborah O'Neil, who is completing her graduate studies at FIU, is bringing years of journalism experience and fresh ideas to the magazine. The magazine's new Editorial Advisory Board is also making its debut in this issue. The board members represent a variety of areas from across the university: the arts and the sciences, journalism and education, business and engineering, research and student affairs. This group of creative and thoughtful individuals serves the important role of guiding the development of themes, stories and designs for the magazine.

This issue's cover story offers a chance to reflect on spiritual improvement and growth. FIU students, faculty, staff and alumni benefited during the fall semester from the visit of His Holiness The Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet, whose joyous return to University Park is chronicled in these pages. Inside you will also find an interview with the respected Jewish scholar Adin Steinsaltz who was honored at FIU for his lifelong work in preserving Jewish culture.

Here in Alumni Relations, we remain aglow from the success of our annual Torch Awards Gala in November profiled inside. Festive and elegant, the black-tie event took place at the stylish Loews Miami Beach Hotel. The ceremony provided an evening of introspection as well as celebration. Already, plans are underway for an even more spectacular event in 2005.

In order to achieve the success within our reach this year, we are asking FIU alumni to please assist us by filling out and returning the insert enclosed in this issue. It is vital that we maintain up-to-date records on our alumni so we can be sure you remain connected and informed with the *FIU Magazine*, our monthly newsletter NOW@FIU and announcements about our many special events.

Buoyed by the examples of our alumni and by the words of respected spiritual leaders, the FIU community should welcome 2005 with hope and a sincere expectation that the year ahead can, indeed, bring each of us ever closer to the personal model of perfection that we seek.

In the spirit of Blue and Gold,

Bill Draughon  
Associate Vice President  
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# in brief.



FIU's Solar Decathlon team shown above, has completed the design (shown left) for an 800-square-foot solar house that will be displayed in Washington, D.C.

## Students break ground on solar-powered house

After months of planning, the FIU Solar Decathlon team—including some 300 engineering, architecture and communications students—unveiled the design and officially began construction last fall on a new solar-powered house for the 2005 Solar Decathlon. FIU is among 18 universities vying to win the national competition.

Team FIU has until the fall of 2005 to build an 800-square-ft. home that is stylish, comfortable and energy efficient. Once the solar home is completed, it will be transported from the College of Engineering to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., as part of a “Solar Village” where visitors are welcome to tour the competing homes. The event is hosted by the U.S. Department of Energy, Home Depot, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the American Institute of Architects.

“Finding reliable sources of renewable energy is one of the greatest challenges for our country,” said FIU President Modesto

A. Maidique. “I am looking forward to the solutions this group of FIU students prepares as a result of this experience.” ■

## Research study examines East Little Havana changes

The Cuban Research Institute has won a \$600,000 National Science Foundation grant to examine the transition that is occurring in East Little Havana as Cubans move out in favor of recent Central American immigrants.

The two-year, three-city study, “Civic and Place Engagement in Three Latino Enclave Neighborhoods in Transition,” began in January 2005. CRI is the lead institution in a three-university partnership with Arizona State University and the University of Notre Dame. FIU professors Damian Fernandez, director of CRI, and Patricia Price of International Relations and Geography are the primary investigators. The FIU component of the study will look at the changes in East Little Havana where Cubans have left and Central American immigrants have settled in the neighborhood.

With this study, FIU hopes to inaugurate a new field of study called “Comparative Latinization,” Fernandez said. This new approach to Latino studies seeks to understand the social dynamics and multiple experiences of Latinos as they migrate, settle and pursue economic, social and political incorporation in the United States.

“This is an important project that puts FIU at the forefront of Latino studies in the United States,” Fernandez said. ■

## Men's soccer joining Conference USA in '05

The FIU men's soccer team will join Conference USA as an affiliate member beginning with the fall 2005 season. The conference's board of directors voted unanimously to invite FIU, Kentucky and South Carolina to join current members East Carolina, Memphis and UAB, as well as programs from incoming members Marshall, SMU, Tulsa and UCF. The teams will play a nine-match, round-robin schedule.

“We're very excited and pleased to be joining Conference USA in men's soccer,” said Athletic Director Rick Mello. “It is one of the most competitive men's soccer conferences in the country and provides competition that is regional in nature with other public research universities.” ■



junior Carron Williams

## in brief.

The FIU Culinary Team, from left: Giovanni Fernandez, Chris Kark, Tom Flynn, Aria Kagan and Gary Allen.



## Students take second place in culinary competition

A team of Hospitality and Tourism Management (SHTM) students took second place in their first-ever culinary competition at the 101 Zinfandels Weekend in Fort Lauderdale last November. With the honor came \$2,500 in scholarships.

The five-person team was pitted against students from The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale's Culinary Arts Program and the Florida Culinary Institute's Culinary Arts Program. Each of the three teams prepared 400 appetizer-sized portions of an item of their choosing that would go well with Zinfandel wine. The teams also created a fictitious restaurant and decorated a table at the Zinfandel Grand Tasting. The teams were judged on the taste, texture, and presentation, presentation of the food, as well as professionalism and the "theme" of the fictitious restaurant.

The dish prepared by the FIU team was enough to make anyone's mouth water. It consisted of citrus-braised turkey with chipotle-cranberry glaze, corn bread pudding, and sweet potato mash garnished with an apple chip (think potato chip but made with an apple). The Inn at Gobble Bay was the name of the team's fictitious restaurant.

"The School of Hospitality and Tourism Management is not a culinary school, but our students are artists in many disciplines within the culinary arts," said SHTM Chef-Instructor Michael Moran, the team's advisor. "I really think our students can compete with anyone in the country."

The team was comprised of Christopher Kark, team captain; Gary Allen, team manager; Aria Kagan; Giovanni Fernandez; and Thomas Flynn. ■



Christos Koulamas

## CBA professor honored

The FIU Council of 100 awarded its annual Outstanding Faculty Award to Christos Koulamas, professor and chair of Decision Sciences in the College of Business Administration.

The award is the most prestigious given each fall during Faculty Convocation.

Koulamas leads the Department of Decision Science and Information Systems, which was ranked No. 11 among all business schools in faculty publication. His research has shaped how job-shop scheduling and management is carried out in organizations and how it is taught in business schools. Koulamas has 62 refereed journal publications, 33 of which are single authored. His students have voted him "Best Professor" in the Executive MBA program, the International MBA Program and the master's in International Business program.

Under his leadership, the MIS master's degree program was reinstated, generating more than \$600,000 in revenue per academic year. He also started the Microsoft certificate program that brings in gross revenues of \$550,000 per year. Koulamas has also taken a leadership role in developing and managing FIU's off-shore graduate programs in Bolivia, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. ■

## Nursing students honored for hurricane efforts

The Miami-Dade County Health Department recognized the work of 28 students from the School of Nursing who volunteered at a Monroe County shelter during Hurricane Ivan last September.

The students staffed the special needs medical management shelter opened for

## FIU RESEARCH REVEALS DRUG DANGER

### FDA Agrees; Issues Warning Against "Niagra"

By Deborah O'Neil

Last spring, a student approached FIU forensics and chemistry lecturer Alberto Sabucedo with a hunch about a so-called "dietary supplement" advertised as a 100 percent natural way to enhance male sexual performance.

Journalism graduate student Mauricio A. Gutierrez '03 suspected there might be a health risk with "Niagra," sold both over-the-counter and on the internet for erectile dysfunction.

### Sabucedo was intrigued.

So the FIU lecturer, who completed his Ph.D. in chemistry at FIU in 2001, began to run a series of tests on the pills, sold as Niagra or ActraRx. Sabucedo's chemical analysis confirmed that the "100 percent natural" pills actually contained prescription-strength quantities of the drug Sildenafil, the active ingredient in Viagra. Sildenafil is available only through prescription because of the risk of serious adverse effects in individuals with diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart disease.

in brief

The students staffed the special needs medical management shelter opened for nursing home patients from Sept. 10 through Sept. 13. Several of the students spent 24 or more hours at the shelter. Students Frances Fongkin and Alonso Marques supervised the medically needy unit during separate shifts, and instructors Mary Jorda and Tatayana Bogopolskiy coordinated the students' efforts. ■



FIU recognized the Ware Foundation. From left are Dr. Stuart Horowitz, director of the Miami Children's Hospital Research Institute; President Modesto A. Maidique, Ware Trustees Elizabeth Eason and Morgan Soumah, Executive Director Mark Edwards and Martha Ware.

### Gift establishes new brain research laboratory

A new \$1.42 million gift for FIU's College of Engineering will help brain researchers better understand and diagnose the body's most complex organ.

The Fall 2004 donation of \$1 million from the Ware Foundation marks the foundation's second donation in two years to the university. With state matching funds, the gift totals \$1.42 million.

The donation establishes as the Ware Foundation Laboratory for Brain Research

and Neuro-Engineering at the Miami Children's Hospital, strengthening the partnership between FIU's Department of Biomedical Engineering and the Miami Children's Hospital Brain Institute.

The Ware Foundation Laboratory will offer new research opportunities to both FIU faculty and students and hospital researchers. They will work together with highly specialized equipment that utilizes sophisticated sensory modalities for brain activity recording, analysis and diagnosis. The research conducted at the laboratory will help scientists better understand and diagnose brain disorders such as epilepsy, autism and brain tumors to develop more effective treatments. For a full story about the research, please see page 19. ■

### Airline adopts students' public relations campaign

Seven FIU public relation students are soaring high since their class assignment became a successful campaign for Chalk's Ocean Airways. The airline company, which flies seaplanes to and from the Bahamas, implemented the team's marketing strategies to launch its new brand of aerial tour operations out of Watson Island.

"All in One, Ink" — the name for the student team of

Daniel Casagrande, Michael Diaz, Vinora Hamilton, Stephanie Muller, Jennifer Otero, Dianycel Perez and Michelle Tannebaum — came together during the summer 2004 semester. Their assignment for School of Journalism and Mass Communication Associate Professor Catherine Ahles' class was to come up with an integrated marketing communications campaign.

"This was a challenge for us," Muller said. "Chalk's wanted a totally new subsidiary company, so we had no history to go on or brand identity to work with. We had to start from scratch."

The student-run agency created a campaign that gave Chalk's the market research, public relations and advertising tools it needed to determine what type of service to offer, what audience to target and how to reach it.

"We were able to use and implement a lot of the campaign ideas," said Jim Confalone, president of Chalk's Ocean Airways.

Their efforts earned the students the highest grade among seven teams in the class. "They worked relentlessly on the creative, looking at dozens of approaches until they got it just right," Ahles said. "That's what separates a good campaign from a great one." ■



On November 2, Sabucedo's research prompted the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to issue a warning to consumers "not to purchase or consume" the dietary supplement as it "can be dangerous to their health and even life threatening." FDA conducted its own analysis of the dietary supplement and affirmed Sabucedo's findings.

An interaction between Sildenafil and certain prescription drugs containing nitrates can cause significant lowering of blood pressure. Individuals with diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or heart disease often take nitrates - and also often

experience erectile dysfunction as a result of their condition. The FDA warning instructs anyone taking the dietary supplement to stop immediately.

The Food and Drug Administration further directed its field personnel to halt the importation of the drugs.

Sabucedo says he is pleased to know his research may prevent someone from being harmed.

"I did it for the public and as a service and for the student," he said. "I don't know how many people out there will benefit from not taking this junk. It is good to know someone out there who

may have gotten in trouble, did not get into trouble. It should never have been on the market."

The USDA warning came after Sabucedo's research was published in the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association* in February 2004. The research letter, titled "Sex, Lies and Niagra," detailed the mass spectrometry analysis Sabucedo conducted on samples of both Niagra, purchased in a local store, and Actra Rx, purchased online.

Sabucedo used the project as an educational opportunity for two undergraduate students. Keith C.

Mueller and Brandi L. Bellissima '03, who were learning to use the spectrometer. The students even helped him brainstorm the title on the JAMA letter.

"I said, 'we have to come up with something catchy,'" Sabucedo said. "They were throwing up all sorts of things: 'Niagra falls.' I remembered the movie 'Sex, Lies and Videotapes' and we went with that. It is probably the most read letter because of the title."

Sabucedo said he was pleased that JAMA included the names of all the students who participated in the research. "I share my success with them." ■



# The Study of Spirituality

## FIU seeks to develop hearts and minds



His Holiness The Dalai Lama of Tibet and FIU Religious Studies Professor Nathan Katz first met in 1973 when Katz was studying Tibetan language in India. Here, they confer just before The Dalai Lama's second presentation at FIU in 2004.

By Deborah O'Neil

Something about the words — spoken gently, but with absolute conviction — was unforgettable. From another mouth, they might have rung like an indictment. But coming from the tranquil monk in the saffron robes, they sounded like something else altogether. They sounded like an inspiration.

“In the modern education system, you pay attention to the proper development of the brain, but you do not pay adequate attention to the development of the warm heart,” His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet told a rapt audience on that day five years ago at Florida International University’s Panther Arena. “The

“Like everything else at FIU, this center is at the forefront of what is needed.”

—  
Fernando Valverde, M.D.,  
Chairman,  
Community  
Advisory Board

development of the good heart, the warm heart, and the development of the good brain — these must go together.”

A poetic notion. Simple yet profound. That was the seed.

Those words, those ideas, embedded themselves into Professor Nathan Katz’s mind, slowly working into his psyche, melding with concepts honed during a lifelong journey of religious scholarship and personal faith. It took years for Katz to fully grasp their meaning, to understand how deeply compelled he had become to convert those inspiring words into a living testament.

His vision, born of a holy man’s wisdom, came to fruition last

fall when Katz, who 10 years ago was founding chair of FIU’s Religious Studies Department, unveiled the university’s Center for the Study of Spirituality. The center’s mission is to stimulate a conversation, a dialogue between faculty, students and the community about the role spirituality plays in modern life — in health and science, education and the arts, human development and family. As Katz envisions it, that conversation can take many forms, from innovative research projects and intimate classroom discussion circles to blockbuster campus appearances by the greatest religious and spiritual thinkers of our time.

## Wisdom from the sages

### The meaning of life:

"My favorite prayer is: *For as long as space endures, And for as long as sentient beings remain, Until then may I remain In order to make some contribution, some service.* That prayer gives me the meaning of life."  
—The Dalai Lama

"This is a question someone who knows will never answer for you. Those who try to answer simply don't know. Who am I? What is the purpose of my life? These are questions that make your intellect sharp and deep."  
—Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

"For a religious person the meaning of life is to become close to God. And for a secular person, keeping in mind the separation of church and state, it would be for a limited creature to come as close as it can to infinity."  
—Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

Fittingly, the sage who inspired the spirituality center was the focal point of one of its first acts. In September, the center arranged for the Dalai Lama to make a rare second appearance at the same venue, a return to Florida International University, where he planted an idea five years ago that sprouted and grew.

"Florida International University is extraordinarily fortunate," said President Modesto A. Maidique in introducing the Dalai Lama. "I know I speak for everyone who participated in that 1999 celebration when I say I felt profoundly blessed to be in the presence of this great spiritual master. Since then, it has been my sincerest hope that future classes of FIU students might also have the same once-in-a-lifetime privilege."

To 5,000 students, faculty and staff present the Dalai Lama shared another message, one that represents the culmination of his temporal and spiritual learning:

Compassion is the source of happiness.

"I hope people can see compassion and humility are values we need," Katz said, reflecting on the Dalai Lama's return visit. "They are not usually emphasized in our culture. The Dalai Lama shows us these are not just abstract concepts. They can be manifest in us."

The Dalai Lama's presentation was led by an extraordinary live musical performance by renowned flutist and composer Nestor Torres. A practitioner of Nichiren Buddhism, Torres wrote an original score for the Dalai Lama based on the rhythmic intonation of the recitation of the Lotus Sutra, the sacred Buddhist scripture.

Torres, who has become one of the center's most enthusiastic community supporters, says the music was intended as an offering of gratitude for the Dalai Lama and a means of touching the audience. "I felt my message was to open the hearts of the people."

"No one else in the country is studying such a wide range of applications of spirituality, and if we do this well, it is going to catch on. FIU is seizing an opportunity to be at the forefront of research and instruction about an increasingly important cultural phenomenon."

—  
Professor Nathan Katz,  
Director,  
Center for the  
Study of  
Spirituality

### A Center for the Community

An impressive group of community leaders and faculty members is giving its time and energy to the new center. Community Advisory Board members include doctors, artists, religious leaders, a lawyer and a local television personality, a restaurateur and a well-known philanthropist, as well as spiritual guides. Among the Fellows of the Center are FIU professors from religious studies, gerontology, dance, social work, English and biology.

"Like everything else at FIU, this center is at the forefront of what is needed," said Dr. Fernando Valverde, the physician who serves as chairman of the Community Advisory Board. "His Holiness told me there is something about the energy of the school that people pick up, a good, positive energy. I don't think it is a coincidence the center has started there."

Study of spirituality — in all its secular and religious expressions —

continues



Photos from left: President Modesto A. Maidique described Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, shown at the podium, as "one of the great religious figures in the world today" at the January ceremony. Middle: Renowned musician and composer Nestor Torres plays an original composition he created for the Dalai Lama during the spiritual leader's September visit. Right: FIU Religious Studies Professor Nathan Katz has founded the FIU Center for the Study of Spirituality.

## ← Human existence:

"Human beings all have every right to live happily. From birth we have every right to a happy life."

—The Dalai Lama

"Ego has its own place. Keep it in its place. Our efforts to try to erase the ego make an even bigger problem. Expand your ego so much that everybody is included in it."

—Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

"The Almighty has made us with the body of an ape and a spirit like that of an angel."

—Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

has not been the traditional domain of large, public research universities like FIU. "Out of the box" is how one supporter described the Center for the Study of Spirituality. With issues of spirituality and religion more and more filling headlines and topping bestseller lists — think Kabbalah, *The Purpose Driven Life* or explorations of the prayer-healing link — the center is emblematic of the forward thinking that has propelled the University from its inception. A conference on spirituality and healing is being planned for the fall. It will explore, among others, the Vodou, Santeria and Lukumi healing practices found in South Florida Hispanic and Caribbean communities.

Every human being possesses spirituality in some measure, be it derived from an ancient religion or a New Age movement. It is fair then to ask, Just what are we talking about when we use the word "spirituality"? The answers, like spirituality itself, defy absolute precision.

Says Katz: "Openness to something beyond the self, true loving, compassionate openness." Renowned Jewish scholar and mystic Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, who visited FIU in January, describes spirituality as a gateway.

Religious Studies Professor Terry Rey, a Fellow of the center, says spirituality is personal and communal, internal and external, meditative and

"It is important we train people beyond the technical, especially for those individuals going off to work with human beings, other living things."

—  
Bruce Dunlap,  
Dean, College  
of Arts and  
Sciences

musical, silent and babbling. "It is that aspect of one's life that most imbibes her with the sacred or that most harmonizes him with the Absolute, however conceived."

What is critical, says Rey, is awareness that for many, spirituality, religion or faith influences every dimension of life, from who they are, to what they aspire to be.

"This alone testifies to the broad utility of the study of spirituality," said Rey. "For how can we understand anything about our world without careful consideration of people's deepest values and needs, which are usually spiritual?"

By design, the center is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences and not attached to any particular academic department. Eventually, the goal is for the center to offer certificates in spirituality studies that complement a range of majors. The center will also sponsor faculty and graduate research that explores spirituality across the disciplines. As FIU moves forward with its effort to open a new medical school, Katz foresees the center providing a spiritual component to the health and science curriculum.

"It is important we train people beyond the technical," said College of Arts and Sciences Dean Bruce Dunlap, "especially for those individuals going off to work with human beings, other living things.

I think spirituality studies have a role in educating college students and in the continued education of faculty as well."

There is an important distinction to be made, Dunlap notes, about the center's purpose. Just as religious studies is not about proselytizing, the center is not a center *for* spirituality. Skeptics, empiricists and agnostics all are welcome.

"In the study of spirituality, there is a lot of listening and learning and investigation," Dunlap said. "It provides, especially from the human and social science point of view, a new way of asking those questions about our lives, our futures, the meaning of life in a unifying way."

### The Year of Spirituality

The Dalai Lama's visit launched a 2004-2005 lecture series known as the "Year of Spirituality." In January, the Center hosted Indian spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, as well as Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, one of the great Jewish scholars and mystics of our times. In February, the Center brought University of South Carolina Professor Emeritus Hal French to lecture on Christian spirituality and Master Chufei Tsai to give a presentation on Taoist Alchemy.

FIU senior Jose Bauz attended the Steinsaltz lecture for a class knowing nothing of Judaism and

## Love:

"I believe the basic human nature is affectionate. Our survival entirely depends on others' care. Other human emotions — anger, jealousy, are also part of our life. They come and go. Affection we need always."  
—The Dalai Lama

"If you look at the world, at creation, you feel there is love everywhere. The entirety of creation is in love with you. Love is not just an emotion. It is our very existence."  
— Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

"There are many people who are superficially observant. They may be less religious than a person who stands before God and says, 'I hate you.' The opposite of love is not hatred, but indifference." —Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

expecting to be bored. Instead, Bauz found himself captivated.

"I believe in God, but I don't follow religion," Bauz said. "The first sentence he said was impressive. He talked about spirituality. He gave us another perspective of what life is. Every single thing he said was something very, very meaningful. He was amazing. He was a wise man."

Much of what the center seeks to do will be accomplished over time with more quiet shifts in educational approach. The lecture series, however, immediately touches the community. "Someone can hear one of these speakers," Katz said, "and it can be a life transforming experience."

For Katz and the others involved, the center's mission arouses a certain lofty hopefulness. Dr. Valverde speaks of the center as "a gift." For Torres, the very future

of peace on earth hinges on the success of such initiatives as the center. With the same passion that characterizes his music, Torres says: "I want to save the universe. This arena is absolutely ideal."

A community infused with greater tolerance, more compassion and ultimately, more happiness — that is the ultimate aspiration, says Katz.

Indian spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's visit drew an audience of more than 500, many of them members of South Florida's Asian community. Gathered in the Graham Center ballroom were entire families — grandparents, mothers and fathers, children and babies — to hear the revered hindu guru. After addressing the audience's many questions on love, spirituality, the meaning of life, God and much

"I really applaud this university for bringing in various schools of thought and broadening the vision of students. This is absolutely essential today."

—  
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar,  
FIU Year of Spirituality  
Lecture  
Jan. 10, 2005



more, Sri Sri led the packed room through a 10-minute meditation.

The lights went off. The gathered voices of hundreds — Asians and Hispanics, Blacks and Jews — chanted the mantra of spiritual potency, that vibration from which it is believed all creation emanates, the syllable of Absolute Truth and Unity.

OM. ■

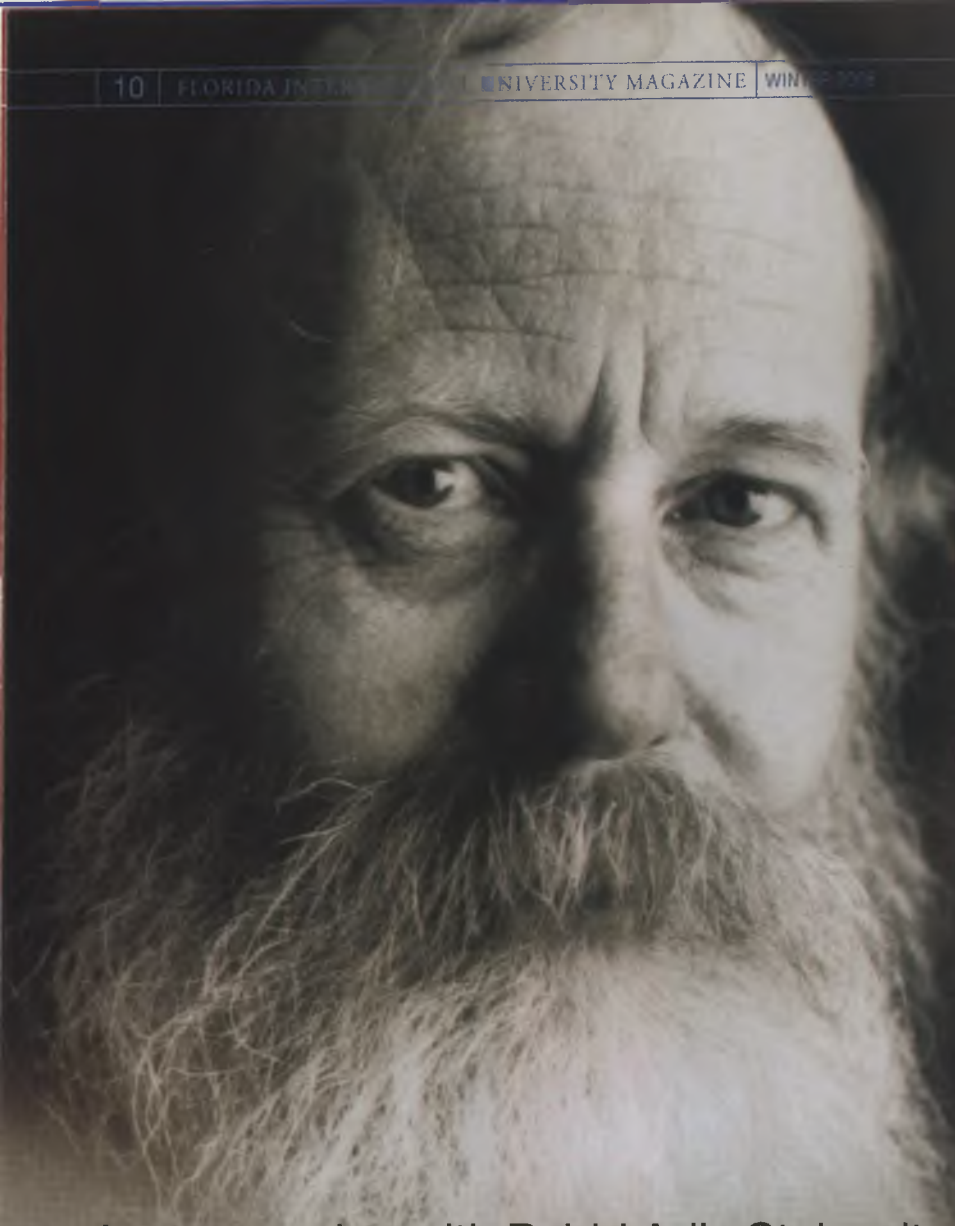


### The Stepping Stones to Forgiveness

1. Be open to changing your beliefs about forgiveness. *Recognize that forgiveness is an act of strength, not weakness.*
2. Be willing to let go of being a victim. *Choose to believe that holding on to grievances and unforgiving thoughts is choosing to suffer.*
3. Remind yourself that anger and judgments can't change the past or punish others, only hurt you. *Recognize that emotional pain you feel is caused only by your own thoughts.*
4. See the value of giving up all judgments. *The happiest people are those who choose not to judge and value forgiveness.*
5. Recognize that holding on to anger will not bring you what you truly want. *Ask yourself, "Does holding on to my justified anger really bring me peace of mind?"*
6. See that there is no value in punishing yourself. *Once you recognize that your angry thoughts about the past poison your life, you will embrace forgiveness and know love.*
7. Believe that forgiveness means giving up all hope for a better past! *Accept and forgive your past, and embrace the present and future with hope!*
8. Choose to be happy rather than right. *When we stop trying to control others and focus on our own thoughts, we find freedom and peace.*
9. Believe you have the power to choose your thoughts. *The greatest gift we have is the power to choose loving thoughts rather than angry ones.*
10. Make peace of mind your only goal and believe forgiveness is the key to happiness. *Choose not to let outside circumstances decide whether you will be happy. Judgments and unforgiving thoughts make us suffer; releasing them brings joy.*

### YEAR OF SPIRITUALITY LECTURE: "Forgiveness: The Greatest Healer of All"

Bestselling authors Gerald G. Jampolsky, M.D. and Diane V. Cirincione, Ph.D. (November 9, 2004)



“What happens if you destroy one lie after another? What remains?”

## A conversation with Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

By Deborah O'Neil

**F** professor Nathan Katz, director of FIU's Center for the Study of Spirituality, spent a decade trying to bring Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz to FIU. In January, FIU conferred on Steinsaltz an honorary doctorate of divinity. A scholar, mystic and philosopher, Rabbi Steinsaltz is among the most distinguished leaders in the Jewish faith and a preeminent religious thinker of our times. He is best known for his interpretation and translation of the Babylonian Talmud, a collection of Jewish teachings and commentaries. Rabbi Steinsaltz also has revived Judaism in Russia and serves as the spiritual mentor of Russian Jewry.

Newsweek magazine had this to say about the Rabbi: *Jewish lore is filled with tales of formidable rabbis. Probably none living today can compare in genius and influence to Adin Steinsaltz, whose*

*extraordinary gifts as scholar, teacher, scientist, writer, mystic and social critic have attracted disciples from all factions of Israeli society.*

The Rabbi's FIU lecture, "The Life of the Mind," at the Kovens Conference Center revealed his humor, his intellect and his wisdom. Prior to his visit, he took time to talk with FIU Magazine via phone from Jerusalem.

**Rabbi Steinsaltz, I hope we can have a dialogue that is meaningful for all of our readers, regardless of their faith, and even those without faith.**

AS: Well, let me begin by stating that there are very, very few people who have no faith at all. Every place, people have faith. It's very rare to find a person without it. I have a friend who published a book called "Memoirs of a Believing Atheist."

**A believing atheist?**

AS: A believing atheist, I suppose, believes in atheism. You have all kinds of sets of beliefs. They don't have to be equally right, but at least people do believe.

**You have said that you were surprised to find yourself a religious person. Tell me about your conversion, if that is the correct word for it.**

**S**ure the word is appropriate but the description is not. I know lots of people who became religious in many ways, but very rarely is it a sudden conversion. Getting into religion for me was somewhat of a continuation of an expression of my state of mind, which is basically very skeptical. It sounds like a paradox but it really is not. Religion can exist in a very different realm. Communism was a religion. Even what I call American civil religion — the

New York intellectuals. If you look at these people whose whole is escape in *The New York Times* and parts of *The New Yorker*, these people are also, in a certain way, religious. I grew up within all this. Being a skeptic, I began destroying them. In a way it was a process of elimination. What happens if you destroy one lie after another? What remains?

**I know prayer is an integral part of Jewish life. What prayer is for you?**

AS: Basically, prayer is a contact, a conversation, a way of trying to speak to God. I'll tell you a story. I have a daughter who was then 3 years old and she asked me a terrible question. I was, at the time, praying. She wanted something but because I was occupied I did not attend to her. Later on she asked me why. I told her, "I was speaking with God." Then she asked me a question that still bothers me. The question was, "And what did He say to you?" I'm still grappling with this.

If I would put prayer in the most essential meaning, it would be not just talking. It would be rather, the attendance, my movement towards. Even more basic than any words is the knowledge of He and me. That is the very essence of prayer.

**What is spirituality?**

AS: When I came for the first time to America, I came as an adult. I came with a little bit of English and for me, the word "spirituality" was a nice word. After being in America, I became allergic to it. What spirituality has become is mushiness, a lack of coherence, a lack of any kind of devotion. I'm scared of the word. I try to delete it from every text.

**Well, if you could redefine spirituality, what would it be?**

AS: Because we are physical beings, we are so very tied to matter and material things. We presume somehow that these represent reality. The idea that reality contains other things than those that a simple monkey can feel — the ability to get beyond that is an opening. In itself, it does mean much but it means the ability to acknowledge the overwhelming value of those things that are not touchable, not seeable and so

many times don't even cost money. It's a gateway. It is not, in itself, an answer.

**Can one be spiritual and not religious?**

AS: Every person is spiritual. Most of our inner feeling is not connected with the material world. Love is a spiritual manifestation. Hatred is also spiritual. Spirituality in and of itself is a different realm from the material world. It can be secular and it can be religious. It can also be evil. Spirituality is not, by definition, holy or glorious. In many places where you have a shallow notion of the world, you don't have an understanding of the reality of evil, but evil exists. Evil has spiritual manifestations, lots of them. You can have a completely evil spirituality.

Spirituality, per se, is looking into a world which is, in our modern times, something we usually don't have a clear notion about. We have all kinds of wrong definitions of what is real. Because of that, opening up to spirituality — understanding the reality of nonmaterial things — is important.

**You say humanity needs to reconnect with the fundamentals of existence. What are those fundamentals?**

AS: The fundamentals are things that have a meaning and the meaning should be understood. Being an intellectual in many ways is the ability perceive gray. The danger of it is that after some time you don't even know there is white and black. That is the danger of any kind of sophistication. The other side of it is, What are fundamental notions? Good and evil. Truth and lies. There's love and hatred. Of course, there are lots of shades of meaning. Seeing them is intellectually stimulating. Not perceiving that there are differences is the blindness that comes from knowing too much and understanding too little.

**I've had similar conversations with friends about absolute truths.**

AS: Knowing about absolutes doesn't mean you don't know about other things. From time to time, either in my life or in my politics, I have to take sides. The inability to take sides has become a malady. There are certain things where people shouldn't be neutral.

**Is God one of the fundamentals that has been lost?**

AS: As a religious person, God is the most fundamental thing... I don't think He has been lost. He was discarded.

**Discarded sounds more serious than lost; it seems more deliberate.**

AS: It's not deliberate, it is just inconvenient. It makes me stop at all kinds of stations. It makes me rethink what I have done. All of these things are unpleasant. So if you find you can live without it... Idol worship is one of the ways of getting from one big, great God to cutting him into small little gods that are more convenient. It's going back to old gods, gods of power and money like Zeus. The god of fertility and sex, Aphrodite. They are returning, not under these names. You speak about power but you do not speak about the God of power.

**You once said that if the world were just slightly worse, then its balance would be irreversible and evil would be irrevocable. Has mankind fallen?**

AS: We are not fallen, but we are not that far away. One of the problems in the world is not only evil, but stability. Who gets punished first, the sinner or the stupid? In the meantime, a lot of damage is done.

**Yet, in your writings you say there is still hope. What do you hope for?**

AS: The return of sanity to the world. It is not in the biggest demand, but possibly it is the most urgently needed.

**Can you describe your sane world?**

AS: It is described graphically as a wave. A wave is made of two movements. One is up and down. One is forward. When you have a combination of these things, this is what I'm calling sanity. Real waves are like a human heart beat. There is a repetition. There is also a newness.

**Where do you find hope?**

AS: Hope is in God. There is also a certain amount of hope in what I find in people. I've met all kinds of people. I've hardly ever found a person who is completely evil. Hope is that which I call a little spark, a little grace. It is there. It also needs a tremendous amount of work. ■■■■



# *Torchbearers A Night to Shine*

FIU'S 2004 TORCH AWARD WINNERS REFLECT THE SUCCESS OF MANY FIU ALUMNI. THEY INCLUDE A GENERAL MANAGER FROM THE DISNEY CORPORATION, FOUNDERS AND EXECUTIVES OF THRIVING BUSINESSES, DEVOTED EDUCATORS AND A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT WITH A BESTSELLING BOOK. THEY ARE PUBLIC SERVANTS — A LOCAL MAYOR AND STATE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR HEALTH. TWO TORCHBEARERS HAVE FOUND SUCCESS IN TELEVISION, ONE AT CNN AND ANOTHER AT TELEMUNDO, WHILE TWO MORE HAVE EARNED ACCOLADES IN THEIR LAW CAREERS.

The 2004 Torch Award winners top row, from left: Alberto C. Santalo, Eliot Pedrosa, Demian M. Bellumio, Roy R. Lustig, Princell L. Hair and bottom row, from left: Carole E. Bernstein, Irma Becerra Fernandez, Regynald G. Washington, Nancy O'Sullivan Humbert, Karis MacDonnell, Jorge J. Rawicz, Pamela Crawford, Ana Maria Polo and Mayor Raul L. Martinez.

By Deborah O'Neil

Florida International University celebrated the accomplishments and contributions of 14 alumni and faculty members Nov. 6 at the 2004 Torch Awards Gala. The evening was a stunning success with more than 350 community and business leaders, FIU faculty and deans, staff and alumni from around the country in attendance. The dinner and awards ceremony took place at the elegant Loews Miami Beach and was sold out weeks in advance.

"We are all for one and one for all; and we are all for FIU," said Board of Trustees member Albert Dotson Sr. during the invocation.

The Torch Awards are bestowed annually by the FIU Alumni Association to recognize alumni and faculty who positively impact their profession and community. "In doing so," said FIU President Modesto A. Maidique, "we honor two essential pillars of our university — the scholars who advance our academic excellence and our alumni who are using their education to improve our schools, advocate on behalf of the disabled, advance our economy, better our health care system and bring new innovations to their professions."

As part of the ceremony, a flaming torch was passed between four students, freshman Andre Braithwaite, sophomore Shannon Hanson, junior Adriana Pereira and senior Manny

Niebla, each representing one year of the undergraduate journey. Niebla passed the torch to FIU Alumni Association President Ty N. Javellana '88 '98, representing the success of all FIU graduates. Javellana then lit a large torch symbolizing FIU's Torch of Knowledge.

Special guests of the evening included past Torch recipient Carlos Migoya, president of Wachovia Bank and chairman of the FIU Foundation; Jose Valdes-Fauli, also past Torch recipient, president of Beach Bank and chairman of the FIU Foundation Alumni Committee; and Dr. Jeffrey Horstmyer of Mercy Hospital, chairman of the FIU Council of 100, a member of the College of Engineering's Biomedical Engineering Advisory Board and ex-officio member of the FIU Foundation.

Another special guest was Jim Perry, brother of FIU's first president Charles Perry, who spoke of his brother's unwavering belief in the power of public education to transform lives.

"My late brother Charles would be intensely proud, I think, but not surprised by FIU's continued growth in size, scope and quality," Jim Perry said. "I think it would please him greatly to know that more than 34,000 students annually choose FIU as their university."

"Our university's phenomenal achievements reflect the vision and enterprising spirit of our faculty and alumni."

—  
Modesto A. Maidique,  
President

Perry then presented the Charles E. Perry Visionary Award, honoring his brother, to Alberto C. Santalo '97. Santalo is a graduate of the College of Business Administration and co-founder, president and CEO of Avisena, Inc. of Miami, a firm that assists health care organizations in improving revenues using advanced technology.

The Alumni Association's Outstanding Achievement Award was presented to Regynald G. Washington '74, a graduate of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management. He has dual roles within the Walt Disney organization as the vice president and general manager for Disney Regional Entertainment and vice president of New Business Initiatives for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. One highlight of the evening came when Washington, who traveled to Miami from Burbank, Calif., to attend the Torch ceremony, announced his intention to give \$100,000 to FIU.

The Outstanding Faculty Award went to Irma Becerra Fernandez '94, an associate professor in the College of Business Administration. She is the founder of the FIU Knowledge Management Lab, where she has obtained funding from NASA, the Goddard Space Flight Center and the Air Force in excess of \$2.4 million.

Associate Vice President of Alumni Relations Bill Draughon says he expects the 2005 Torch Awards Gala to be even more spectacular. "It is exciting to see the growing enthusiasm and appreciation for the university and its alumni."





# FIU's 2004 TOP

## OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:



**Regynald G. Washington '74**, School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, vice president and general manager of Disney Regional Entertainment and vice president of New Business Initiatives, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, Burbank, Calif. Washington has achieved outstanding success in his profession, holding dual responsibilities for two businesses in the Walt Disney organization. He was named one of the

Top 50 Taste Makers in America's restaurant industry in 1999 and serves on the advisory boards of several universities' hospitality management programs, including FIU's.

## CHARLES E. PERRY VISIONARY AWARD:



**Alberto C. Santalo '97**, co-founder, president and CEO of Avisena Inc., Miami. Santalo has built Avisena, which assists health care organizations in improving revenue performance using advanced technology, into a firm that generates some \$120 million in revenues annually. Using his IT experience and inspiration from the philosopher Avicenna, he has helped fulfill a need in the medical industry.

## FIU SERVICE AWARD:



**Karis MacDonnell '84 '89**, College of Education, educator, Miami. A retired school teacher with more than 40 years of service to the Miami-Dade public schools, MacDonnell has supported the dreams and efforts of generations of children. She is an adjunct faculty member at FIU and established the MacDonnell Family Scholarship Endowment to support FIU students studying elementary education.

## COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD:



**Mayor Raul L. Martinez Sr. '77**, College of Health and Urban Affairs, mayor of Hialeah. Martinez has served eight terms as the mayor of the fifth-largest city in Florida. During his tenure the city has improved streets and storm drainage, increased housing programs for elderly and low-income residents, expanded parks and recreation programs and improved the public library system. Both his son and

daughter are FIU graduates.

## COLLEGE OF BUSINESS DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS:



**Demian M. Bellumio '00**, vice president, corporate finance and development, Terremark Worldwide, Miami. Bellumio analyzes and executes Terremark's corporate finance activities and develops strategic expansion initiatives. He is also a co-founder and shareholder of BroadSpan Capital Ltd., an investment banking firm that specializes in Latin American and U.S. Hispanic markets.

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA:



**Carole E. Bernstein '73**, owner, Get Smart, Miami. Bernstein has combined theory and practical application from her Ph.D. in elementary education to create Get Smart, a multimillion-dollar company with stores in South Florida that offer parents and teachers educational materials to enhance their children's development. She is also a guest lecturer at FIU and a volunteer reading teacher for special-needs children at Blue Lakes Elementary School.

## SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA:



**Pamela Crawford '91**, garden author and landscape architect, Lake Worth, FL. After earning a master's degree in landscape architecture, Crawford started a nursery and garden design business that specialized in residential landscape renovation. Her first book, "Easy Gardens for South Florida," is a bestseller and she recently released "Best Garden Color for Florida."

## SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS:



**Princell L. Hair '00**, executive vice president and general manager of CNN/U.S., Atlanta. A former news producer for Viacom, Hair is responsible for CNN's day-to-day news operation and oversees CNN.com's U.S.-based operation. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Radio and Television News Directors Association and is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists.

# ARCHBEARERS

## COLLEGE OF LAW DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS:



**Roy R. Lustig '76**, attorney, Coral Gables. Lustig has been a national leading advocate for people with developmental disabilities for more than 25 years. He serves as pro-bono counsel for United Cerebral Palsy of South Florida, South Carolina and Georgia and has played a key role in influencing public policy for the developmentally disabled.

## COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS:



**Jorge J. Rawicz '81**, founder and president of Peninsula Mortgage Bankers Corp., Miami. Rawicz founded his company in 1984 on a shoestring budget. Today it is a world leader in the minority lending market. Rawicz is active on Fannie Mae advisory boards and is president elect of the Dave and Mary Alper Jewish Community Center of South Dade.

## COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND URBAN AFFAIRS DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA AWARD:



**Nancy O'Sullivan Humbert '93**, Deputy Secretary for Health, State Public Health Nursing Director and Florida Women's Health Officer. A nurse since 1976, Humbert has devoted her career to public health and children. In her current role, she oversees the Office of Public Health Nursing, the Emergency Operations Division, the divisions of Health Access and Tobacco, the office of Statewide Research and the DOH Labs.

## OUTSTANDING FACULTY AWARD:



**Irma Becerra Fernandez '94**, associate professor, FIU College of Business Administration. Becerra Fernandez is the founder and director of the Knowledge Management Lab where she works with students to create, manage and maintain database systems for private entities such as banks, and government agencies such as NASA. The lab enjoys a \$2.4 million grant from NASA, the Goddard Space Flight Center and the Air Force Research Center.

## HONORS COLLEGE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS:

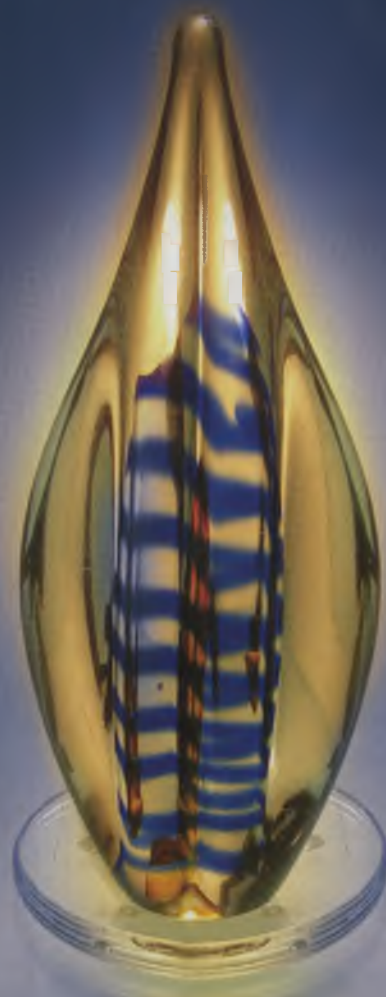


**Eliot Pedrosa '95**, attorney, Greenberg Traurig, Miami. Pedrosa serves in the Litigation Department of Greenberg Traurig, and his practice involves all aspects of commercial litigation before federal and state courts. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Pedrosa was named one of the 50 "Up and Comers" in the 2003 South Florida Legal Guide.

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA:



**Ana Maria Polo '84**, attorney and television judge, Coral Gables. Blending legal expertise, common sense and humor, Polo has won the hearts of Spanish-speaking television audiences through her work on Sala de Parejas, Telemundo's award-winning courtroom drama. Polo is a breast-cancer survivor who devotes considerable time to raising public awareness of the illness among Hispanic women.





# Heartening Research

Today there are essentially only two types of heart valves available: a mechanical valve and a bovine tissue valve. Both options bear risks.

Barely two years old, the Department of Biomedical Engineering has already secured millions in grant dollars to support innovations for treating cardiac disease, hypertension and congestive heart failure. The department's rapid rise to excellence speaks to FIU's core mission as a research university — improving the lives of those in our community and our world.

By Karen Cochrane

As physical specimens go, it is unimpressive. In fact, it's downright diminutive, measuring 2.5 centimeters by 3 centimeters. But the polymer heart valve currently in development in Department of Biomedical Engineering Chairperson Richard Schoepfoerster's lab is a towering example of the passion for discovery and innovation that exists among the nine faculty members of a department that is not yet two years old.

"Florida state schools, in general, were very late entering the biomedical engineering industry," says Schoepfoerster, who has been at FIU since 1990. "But FIU is doing its part."

The initial development of the University's biomedical engineering program occurred in the mid-1990s at the behest of FIU President Modesto A. Maidique and Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Mark Rosenberg. Envisioned as an essential component of FIU's quality improvement effort, the program was given \$300,000 annually for three years. That support helped secure the acquisition of a \$1 million gift from the Whittaker Foundation to support research efforts.



FIU Engineering Center headquarters of Cordis Corporation in a major gift from the company. The 36-acre facility — known today as the Engineering Center — facilitated the College of Engineering's ensuing growth. Originally designed as a biomedical research facility, the timing of the gift couldn't have been better for the fledgling biomedical engineering program.

In June 2000, the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation made a \$10 million gift (a \$5 million gift plus a \$5 million state match) that proved to be the cornerstone of the program's enduring foundation. The funds support two endowed faculty positions, scholarships, competitive programs to seed research between FIU and clinical and industry partners, entrepreneurial activities leading to commercialization, and basic infrastructure. Schoepfoerster credits College of Engineering Dean Vishwanath Prasad with his critical support in the establishment of the department.

Currently, the department is supported by more than \$1.5

million in annual research grants from such distinguished agencies as the National Institute of Health, National Science Foundation and American Heart Association.

In 1999, the program began accepting master's students. In 2002, it added undergraduate students. One year later, the program became one of six declared departments within FIU's College of Engineering. Last fall, it began accepting its first doctoral students. Today all of the students play an integral role in furthering the research of the department, which is a model of interaction and synergy.

Faculty members collaborate with medical partners and industry leaders to conduct research in areas such as cardiovascular engineering, neuro-engineering, tissue engineering, medical devices and drug delivery, biomedical optics and imaging, nano-biotechnology and computational engineering.

Here is a brief look at some of the dynamic research going on in the department today:

**Richard Schoephoerster:**  
**Research results thus far**  
**are 'very promising'**

Heart valve surgery corrects problems caused by aging (over time, valves can weaken or harden), disease (certain afflictions can scar or destroy a valve) or birth defects (small birth defects that are ignored can worsen in later life and cause problems). According to the American Heart Association, 93,000 heart-valve replacement surgeries were performed in 2002 in the United States. While surgical options for this increasingly common ailment continue to be

refined as Americans live longer, there remain essentially only two types of valves available: a mechanical valve and a bovine tissue valve. Both options bear risks.

Mechanical valves typically last 15-30 years but require life-long anti-coagulants, which can cause bleeding disorders. A tissue valve does not require the harsh medications of its mechanical counterpart, but it's good for only 5-10 years.

"Which valve do you go with? That's a tough question, especially for someone who is 55 to 65 years old," says Schoephoerster.

There's a good chance that his collaborative research with industry partners and a Russian scientist will make that choice a little less agonizing in decades to come.

More than five years in development, Schoephoerster's polymer heart valve seeks to combine the best attributes of current options — the longevity of the mechanical valve with the blood compatibility of the tissue valve.

Animal testing of the valve begins this July. Extensive preliminary testing has yielded "very promising results" thus far, according to Schoephoerster.



Richard Schoephoerster

Left to right: Martha Vallejo, Dr. Eric Crumpler, Benjamin Boytor and Howard J. Leonhardt



The innovation of Crumpler's work is two-fold: getting the cells to the damaged area of the heart through minimally invasive means and keeping the cells there long enough to regenerate tissue.

**Eric Crumpler: 'This work is satisfying on a human level'**

"Success doesn't come to you, you go to it" reads a sign in Assistant Professor Eric Crumpler's office. It is this simple philosophy that drives his complex, breakthrough research in cell transplantation technologies for heart patients suffering from congestive heart failure.

Working with BioHeart since 2002, a biotechnology company headed by Howard J. Leonhardt, who supports the annual Howard J. Leonhardt New Venture Challenge hosted by FIU's College of Business Administration and College of Engineering, Crumpler's research seeks to give the heart a way to regenerate muscle that has been damaged by previous heart attacks.

Using a minimally invasive catheter procedure, Crumpler's technology involves injecting into the heart a mixture of an innovative polymer and specially selected cells from a patient's own thigh muscle. The MyoCell® technology, as it is called, is markedly different from what is available currently in that other technologies use an open-heart surgical procedure that requires direct injection into the heart.

With the innovation, he hopes to render heart transplants and open-heart

continued

surgery for congestive heart failure obsolete in generations to come. (A total of 709,000 open-heart procedures were performed in 2003, according to the American Heart Association; however, not all of those were due to congestive heart failure.)

Current technologies yield only a 15 to 20 percent retention rate — that is, approximately 80 to 85 percent of the new cells injected into the heart during such a procedure are washed away by blood flow and rendered useless. Crumpler's method has tripled that outcome in testing done on rabbits, rats, dogs, pigs and sheep. Additionally, tests have shown an increased ability on the part of the heart to form new blood vessels and attract other stem cells.

Human clinical trials of the technology are already underway in Europe and the U.S.

Crumpler paints a picture to explain his work:

Imagine a leaf floating downstream in a river. The river is your bloodstream, and it is continually flowing through your heart.

Now imagine that the leaf is this dissolvable polymer, with the ultimate consistency of something similar to pudding. The polymer leaf actually contains the patient's cells.

The leaf with the cells washes up on a bank of the river and stays there, rather than being swept downstream. The bank is an area of the heart with damaged cells.

The innovation of Crumpler's work is two-fold: getting the cells to the damaged area of the heart through minimally invasive means and keeping the cells there long enough to regenerate tissue.

"We don't want the polymer to stay there permanently," explains Crumpler. "We just want it there

long enough to allow these new cells to integrate and assist in the tissue regeneration."

Crumpler's other research interests include the use of nanotechnology in drug-delivery vehicles, biodefense and tooth regeneration.



### Nikolaos Tsoukias: 'The excitement of discovery is an incredible feeling'

When assistant professor Nikolaos Tsoukias was completing his doctorate, his research involved direct testing of patients. The experience left a lasting impression on the scientist whose initial training was in chemical engineering.

"When you interact with patients, it's a real incentive to get back into the lab," says Tsoukias, a native of Greece. "It drives home the reality that we're dealing with issues that affect human lives."

His current research into the nature and treatment of complicated pathological conditions such as hypertension could potentially impact tens of millions of human lives.

According to recent estimates, nearly one in three U.S. adults suffers from hypertension, or high blood pressure as the disease is more commonly known. Because there are no symptoms, people with the disease put themselves at increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

Tsoukias' research involves the parallel development of experimental techniques and mathematical models in an effort to understand the physiological and pathological processes that manifest themselves in this disease known as the "silent killer".

The cells that line the inside of the blood vessels sense changes in the "microenvironment" of the vessel wall (for example, changes in blood flow or presence of hormones) and transmit information to the surrounding muscle, which responds by constricting or relaxing, leading to alterations in vessel diameter. Researchers know that calcium, as well as nitric oxide, are important participants in that process.

In Tsoukias' lab, they hope to discover how this intricate interplay affects blood-flow regulation. Clarifying that process could lead to a different way to develop or administer drugs for all types of hypertension, according to Tsoukias. It is also hoped that such discoveries will lead to improvements in the treatment of malignant tumors by enhancing drug delivery or by limiting delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the cancerous cells.

"We're hopeful that in the next year we will have data to move forward," he says.

Other projects in Tsoukias' lab include the development of computational models of molecular transport with the ultimate goal of providing information for the development of hemoglobin-based blood substitutes. These products are the most promising alternatives to blood transfusion, says Tsoukias.

"What drives all of us is the thought that the research we are conducting today will positively affect human life for generations to come." ■

"What drives all of us is the thought that the research we are conducting today will positively affect human life for generations to come."

Nikolaos Tsoukias,  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of  
Biomedical Engineering

# Seeing into the future

By Karen Cochrane

It is fitting that Malek Adjouadi, director of the Center for Advanced Technology & Education (CATE), offers visitors to his website an image of himself as a young boy, for it was during his youth in Algeria that the engineer decided he would spend his life helping others.

While he never became the medical doctor he envisioned, Adjouadi's work in CATE offers hope for individuals with brain disorders, visual impairments and motor-function disabilities.

With dual appointments in Biomedical Engineering and Electrical & Computer Engineering, Adjouadi has led CATE since its establishment in 1993. Researchers and students work in the lab and with community partners to forge advancements in the areas of applied information processing, assistive technologies and neuroscience. The three disciplines are inextricably linked, according to Adjouadi.

"The more we can learn about how the human brain functions, the more potential exists for scientific and engineering discoveries," says the man famous for his upbeat, irrepressible personality. "There is so much we can do as engineers to help society."

Chief among his research is his work creating a functional mapping of the brain in the hopes of identifying the causality of key brain disorders such as epilepsy, autism and brain tumors. His work has received extensive funding from the National Science Foundation and the Office of Naval Research. In light of great prospects for new research findings, the Ware Foundation recently gave \$1.42 million to the College of Engineering to establish and endow the Ware Foundation Laboratory for Brain Research and Neuro-Engineering Applications.

His research in assistive

technologies aims to help people with motor disabilities and visual impairments. While eye-gaze tracking computer technology already exists for individuals who cannot move their limbs, Adjouadi and his colleagues are creating software to make it more adaptable to the user. He is also working on voice interface technology and a virtual keyboard to facilitate access to the computer.

"Voice software is available on the market," he explains. "But it is not easy to use. How best to bridge the gap from software to action is our job."

His work in image processing to aid the visually impaired is particularly challenging.

"How do we help a blind person navigate in the real world? Vision is perhaps the most complex function that the human brain processes," he says. "We are born to see through genetics. Coupled with that, it is a learned process."

"Analyzing images is still a difficult thing to do, and computer-assisted navigational aids of the type we are working on are still years down the road," says Adjouadi. "It's a matter of making a camera understand a three-dimensional world based on what a



"There is so much we can do as engineers to help society."

—  
Malek Adjouadi,  
CATE Director

camera has captured in a two-dimensional image, among other complexities. But we remain confident that we will get there one day."

The work of Adjouadi and CATE faculty and research associates - Armando Barreto, Melvin Ayala, Ilker Yaylali, Prasanna Jayakar, Gualberto Cremades, Ana Pasztor, Mark Allen Weiss and Gustavo Roig - is well respected nationally and internationally. (The center has earned more than \$12 million in contracts and grants since opening.) Additionally, seven National Science Foundation fellows have conducted research in CATE, an impressive number that speaks directly to the quality and level of research conducted at the center.

"Malek is a creative and innovative scientist. He is very focused on important, practical health problems," says FIU Vice President for Research George Dambach. "His students are encouraged to explore their ideas so they have direct involvement in both the intellectual and hands-on activities in his laboratory. Together they are finding solutions that are ready for testing with human subjects in several areas. These are important advances, and we are hopeful about the outcomes." ■

# Chasing Hurricanes

**FIU professor seeks answers in the wind**

By Sara LaJeunesse

With wind gusts hammering his back and biting rain blurring his vision, Forrest Masters fumbles with the computer system that will activate his mobile weather station tower in preparation for the approaching hurricane. The maneuvering takes patience and precision that is nearly impossible in the 70-mile-per-hour winds of Hurricane Frances in Fort Pierce.

Masters joined the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and FIU's International Hurricane Research Center (IHRC) in the fall of 2004 and spent his first day on the job — and most of the semester — chasing hurricanes. His project was an unprecedented success and will lead to better methods of design and construction that can withstand hurricane-force winds.

It was a wild ride for Masters who, on Aug. 10, just days after graduating from his doctoral program, was already going after Tropical Storm Bonnie. And without a day off, he had to pursue Hurricane Charley up the Gulf

“What Forrest Masters is doing is tremendous, and we are so glad to get him here.”

—  
Stephen Leatherman,  
Director,  
International Hurricane Center

Coast. “I have to admit, I felt pretty ragged,” he said, three months later.

As an assistant professor and director of the Laboratory for Wind Engineering Research at IHRC, Masters studies hurricane-force wind turbulence. He does this by erecting mobile weather station towers in the paths of hurricanes just before they make landfall.

“I’m in the storm until about the last possible second,” Masters said. “It’s very loud and windy out there. Trees, structures and transmission lines are starting to come apart and fall down, and you have to be alert,” he said. “But, we’re very mission-focused. Besides, we have our guardian angels — meteorologists at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) — who stay in touch with us and look after us.”

The towers, which can withstand 200-mph gusts, contain onboard computer systems that provide Masters with novel information about hurricane wind dynamics. “This type of data has

been collected in thunderstorms and winter storms, but it really hasn’t been done in a hurricane until now,” he said.

Masters will use this data in wind tunnel experiments to simulate the effects of wind on models of homes and buildings. He hopes his research will lead to more sound construction methods.

Masters also uses pressure sensors fixed to the roofs of homes to study wind. The sensors reveal information about the types of pressure being exerted on the rooftop. Graduate student Colette Blessing — who said she was drawn to this kind of research because she grew up in Florida and survived Hurricane Andrew — assists him with this project.

“What Forrest Masters is doing is tremendous, and we are so glad to get him here,” said Stephen Leatherman, director of IHRC.

The center also has a variety of other hurricane-related research projects in the works. One of these is a windstorm simulation and modeling project for the Federal Emergency Management Agency



(FEMA) that will allow researchers to accurately predict where storm surge flooding will occur. To accomplish this, FIU researchers use an airborne laser system called LIDAR (light detection and ranging) that measures the distance from an airplane to the ground at rates of 33,000 measurements per second.

“That kind of precision is unbelievable,” said Leatherman. “I couldn’t even have imagined it myself ten years ago.”

The result — which can be attributed in large part to the work of Keqi Zhang, an FIU assistant professor and co-director of the Laboratory for Coastal Research — is a collection of elevation points that can be used to make highly detailed maps of flood zones and could potentially minimize the number of people who need to evacuate during hurricanes.

Another IHRC researcher, Hugh Willoughby, studies how hurricanes move and change in intensity. He uses this knowledge to estimate windstorm hazards

and to determine how insurance companies should calculate premiums. The IHRC soon plans to unveil results of its public model to estimate hurricane losses.

“Currently, insurance companies use black-box models, called catastrophe models, to determine what insurance rates will be,” said Leatherman. “They will not let us look at [these models] to see how they got those numbers.”

Besides insurance rates, researchers at the center also study other social impacts of hurricanes, such as how they affect different groups of people like children and the elderly. According to Willoughby, hurricanes have many hidden socioeconomic costs associated with long breaks in the regular routine. “You may have the Einstein of the 21st century and if he misses Mrs. Alvarez’s math class in high school, he misses the point that would have led him down that career,” he said. “You never think of that type of cost to your society.”

“This type of data has been collected in thunderstorms and winter storms, but it really hasn’t been done in a hurricane until now.”

—  
Forrest Masters,  
Director  
Laboratory  
for Wind  
Engineering  
Research

So, while this season’s storms have left many people devastated, the scientists and engineers at IHRC are working to ensure that we are better off the next time hurricanes strike. “I’m certainly not happy for the destruction that occurred,” Masters said, “but I’m happy that the granting agencies gave us funds to be there and learn from it.”

In the eight years since the IHRC was established at FIU, Leatherman and his colleagues have acquired more than \$20 million in federal funding and hope there will be more to come. Says Leatherman, “We think this hurricane season will generate more interest in hurricane research funding.”







FIU researcher Forrest Masters captured these images of damage throughout Florida after the 2004 hurricanes.

## FIU leads charge for hurricane funds

By Deborah O'Neil

When Hurricane Andrew devastated South Florida, FIU leaders and researchers turned their attention to federal research dollars for natural disasters. The 10 worst hurricanes, led by Andrew, caused damage totaling \$92 billion; however, they say inadequate dollars have been committed to research that could minimize damage and save lives.

Prompted by a coalition that includes FIU, the American Society of Civil Engineers and other research organizations, federal legislators took a first step last fall toward supporting mitigation research. The National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004, co-sponsored by Florida Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart and Senator Bill Nelson, was signed by President Bush October 25. The bill authorizes the creation of a new windstorm program that seeks to

minimize loss of life and property from both hurricanes and tornadoes.

"Living in Florida, we know that natural disasters are inevitable, but our preparedness for them can be improved," Diaz-Balart said. "As we know all too well from the four hurricanes that hit Florida last year, tornadoes and hurricanes not only devastate local economies, but they can devastate lives too. This legislation is an effective solution to help save lives and lessen economic impact."

FIU has been at the forefront of research and mitigation advocacy in Florida and nationwide. The university's International Hurricane Research Center, the statewide center for hurricane research in Florida, conducts applied scientific research to reduce the potential for hurricane damage. In 2004, IHRC researchers made headlines for a groundbreaking study that determined using a simple ring shank nail

in construction can improve a roof's wind resistance by up to 130 percent.

In testifying before U.S. House Science Committee on the windstorm bill, IHRC Director Stephen Leatherman emphasized further research is needed to develop damage reduction strategies. "It is in the national interest...to support the development and implementation of a rational research strategy focusing on the reduction of potential hurricane damage."

The Windstorm bill is not yet funded, although \$25 million has been designated for the new program. FIU officials say the bill represents an important milestone in building a national hurricane mitigation program.

"We are not trying to get money for a few projects," said Steve Sauls, FIU's vice provost for Governmental Affairs. "We are trying to drive a strategy so that the world is a safer place when storms come." ■

### by the numbers...

## The 2004 Florida Hurricane Season

Total Atlantic named storms:	14	Homes destroyed:	25,000
Florida hurricane strikes:	4	Total damage:	\$42 billion
Florida tropical storm hits:	1	FEMA aid in Florida:	\$3.1 billion
Floridians evacuated:	9.4 million	Floridians seeking FEMA aid:	1.1 million
Deaths in Florida:	117	Cleanup volunteers:	140,000

# Tayna Lawrence<sup>'99</sup>

FIU alumna captures gold medal at Athens Olympics

By Alexandra Pecharich

Call Tayna Lawrence a fighter. The world-class track and field athlete — the only FIU graduate to have earned medals in Olympic competition — went to the 2004 games in Athens on the heels of surgery for stress fractures in her shins and a subsequent hamstring injury. Already the winner of bronze and silver medals from the 2000 games in Sydney, in the 100-meter dash and 4x100-meter relay, respectively, she managed, in her words, “a major comeback” to capture gold this time around.

Running for her native Jamaica, Lawrence reprised her relay role when she joined three of her countrywomen in a race that many had anticipated would go to a strong U.S. team. A poor hand-off by the Americans, however, and a stellar performance by Jamaica ended in favor of Lawrence and her teammates.

The FIU alumna describes her latest turn on the Olympic medal stand as stirring as her previous two. “The feelings never change,” she said. “You see your country’s flag. You hear your country’s national anthem. It’s the same emotion.”

She speaks of her accomplishments with restraint and humility, although the preparation to compete at her level requires effort most people could never endure. Her pre-Olympic regimen involved six-hour training days, five days per week, which included weight-room work for overall strengthening and special attention to improving her form.

Pushing her along the way: coach and husband Lloyd Edwards. The two met on a recommendation that he take over Lawrence’s training upon her graduation from FIU in 1999. The pair agreed to work together, and she relocated to Texas shortly thereafter to get started with Edwards, a move that has paid off both professionally and personally. The couple married in late 2001 and today make their home in Miami.

Despite the personal relationship, the duo has escaped the pitfalls of eating, sleeping and breathing their work, Lawrence says.

“Most of the time we leave it on the track,” she explains. “[Lloyd] knows when to back off.”

Even with what many athletes would consider the highest possible achievement — an Olympic gold medal — firmly in hand, Lawrence is not even remotely considering closing the door on international competition. Although she admits to having never imagined she was good enough to enjoy a career in track after college — something her FIU coach says he never doubted — she today looks forward to continuing her charge. In August, she plans to compete in both the individual 100-meter race and the 4x100-meter relay in the world track and field championships in Helsinki. And down the road, she hopes to run in the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

In spite of the physical wear and tear from which she has so remarkably recovered, including a stress fracture in her back that had her wearing a body cast the year before her public triumph in Sydney, Lawrence believes she has what it takes to stay at her prime for four more years.

“That’s very achievable for me,” she states of her goal to participate in a third Olympics. “I’m only 29 years old, but I feel like I’m 16.” ■



# ALUMNI

Ty Javellana



## Message from FIU Alumni Association President

### Dear Fellow Alumni,

Welcome to 2005, a year that holds great promise for FIU's continued success. We, as alumni, have a vital role to play in ensuring that success. In that spirit, I challenge alumni across the state to reach out and rally other FIU graduates living in your community. One of the top priorities of the Alumni Association this year will be to establish area chapters around the state. We will be looking to the thousands of graduates living in Broward and Palm Beach counties to lead the way. Alumni in the Orlando and Tampa areas also can make a big impact by establishing new chapters.

In addition to building Panther Pride, active area chapters provide many benefits. Alumni are able to network with one another and make new friends. Through the FIU Alumni Relations Office, chapter members also have access to many athletic, cultural and social events throughout the year. FIU reaches out to all parts of the community and we offer programs for a variety of interests.

In recent months, alumni and their families have had a blast at the Panther Pit alumni tent set up for each football game. When FIU played FAMU at the Orange Bowl, the Alumni Association was there and even brought in Dr. BBQ for some extra fun. Alumni also received tickets to see The Dalai Lama of Tibet when he visited in September and Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz when he came in January. In February, the Alumni Association offered discounted tickets to one of Miami's premier events, South Beach Wine and Food Festival. If we can gather enough interest in area chapters, the Alumni Association can coordinate buses to bring members to campus for many of these events. Even more exciting would be the possibility of area chapters sponsoring their own events in their home communities.

Today, our alumni base stands at 115,000 and most of us live here in South Florida. I would like to see more people pick up the torch for FIU. Imagine what an impact we can make if we focus our energy and resources on supporting our alma mater.

I encourage you to contact me directly at [tjavellana@nextreamfx.net](mailto:tjavellana@nextreamfx.net) or contact Alumni Affairs to learn more about starting an area chapter.

Ty Javellana, CPA '88 '98  
President  
FIU Alumni Association

President Modesto A. Maidique, Dr. BBQ, Lea Maidique and Bill Draughon, AVP of Alumni Relations, enjoy the tailgate.



## Panther Pit serves up fun at Orange Blossom

More than 21,000 fans watched FIU snap up a victory on Nov. 27 as the Golden Panthers defeated the Florida A&M Rattlers, 40-23, in the 68th annual Orange Blossom Classic played in the Miami Orange Bowl.

The Alumni Association's Panther Pit traveled to the Orange Bowl for the game and attracted more than 250 alumni. Some alumni showed up early to take advantage of a barbecue cooking class with the well-known grill "Dr. BBQ."

"We had some alumni eating ribs at 9:30 in the morning," said Duane Wiles, senior director of membership for Alumni Relations.

The festive alumni tent featured a barbecue catered by Dr. BBQ, visits by the FIU Marching Band, the Golden Dazzlers and the FIU cheerleaders. For the children, there was a bounce house, a climbing wall and a clown to paint faces.

"It probably was one of our most successful tailgates this year," Wiles said. "It was just a perfect day for a tailgate. Everybody was having a great time."

Part of the fun was cheering the FIU Football Team to victory. Despite being out-gained nearly two-to-one on offense, the FIU defense made key plays to help secure the victory: a school record of six sacks, four fumble recoveries and two interceptions.

"This is a win we are all very pleased with," said FIU head coach Don Strock, who had a little something to celebrate on his 54th birthday. "I was thrilled with the big plays and, like I always say, 'Play hard for 60 minutes and good things will happen.'" ■

*Feel the Pride!*

FIU alumni and their families enjoyed a homestyle barbecue at the Orange Blossom tailgate.



FIU Student Ambassador Lindsay Rigby helps Madelynn Hollander on the climbing wall at the Orange Blossom tailgate.



Football fans watch FIU's run to victory from the VIP Box at the Orange Bowl.



## Alumni chapters keep local grads connected

From game-watch parties and family picnics to community service projects and career networking, Florida International University alumni chapters and contacts help keep local alumni connected to one another, their community and the University.

Alumni chapters are recognized chartered organizations established under the corporate umbrella of the FIU Alumni Association and comprised of alumni and friends living in an assigned geographic area, associated with a college or professional school or having a shared special interest. A steering committee or board of directors must be formed in order to receive a chartered status.

Alumni contacts are individual volunteers living in an area where an official board of directors or steering committee has not been formed. Volunteers serve as a point of contact for alumni and friends traveling to the area and resource for FIU faculty and staff. Contacts may be called upon to assist the Alumni Association in developing and coordinating activities for area alumni.

In the past year, 17 chapters have been linked, initiated, organized or revived. They include: College of Education, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Honors College, School of Nursing, Stempel School of Public Health, College of Law, Department of Construction Management, Invitational Scholars Program, Peer Advisors, Alternative Spring Break, Graduate Program, Palm Beach County, Broward County, Miami-Dade County, Greater Washington D.C., Upstate New York, and San Francisco. Two new contacts were established in the Republic of Panama and Santa Barbara, California.

For more information on alumni chapters and contacts or to let us know of your interest in

helping us start a new alumni chapter, please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 800-FIU-ALUM or e-mail [alumni@fiu.edu](mailto:alumni@fiu.edu). ■

## Successful alumni honored during fall commencement

More than 3,400 Florida International University students became alumni during five graduation ceremonies December 20 and 21. The keynote address was given by



**Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Alvarez '74**, who graduated from FIU with a degree in business. During the ceremonies, a number of distinguished alumni

were honored for their positive impact on their profession, the community, and the university.

### The alumni honorees include:



**Manuel Garcia '90**, Miami Herald city editor, was honored for his service as an FIU alumnus. Garcia graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism. His

investigative reporting led to a series of stories that exposed widespread voter fraud in the 1997 mayoral elections and netted the newspaper a Pulitzer Prize. Garcia also was the lead reporter for the Herald's Pulitzer Prize winning coverage of Elian Gonzalez.



**Stephanie Burns '77**, CEO of Dow Corning, was honored for her service as an FIU alumna. In 1983, Burns joined Dow

as a researcher and worked through the ranks at Dow until 2004 when she was named chief executive officer. As an elected alumni member of FIU's chapter of

the national honor society Phi Beta Kappa, Burns serves as an example for all women.



**Justo Luis Pozo '80**, president of Preferred Care Partners, received a Distinguished Service Medallion for his contributions to the

community. Pozo earned a bachelor's in business administration with a major in accounting. In 2002, he began operating Preferred Care Partners, an alternative to traditional Medicare HMO health plans. Currently, the health plan offers 7,800 South Floridians the same or more benefits than most Medicare HMOs.



**Adalio T. Sanchez '87**, general manager of eServer pSeries with IBM Systems & Technology Group, was honored with a Distinguished Alumni

Service Medallion for his contributions to the community. Sanchez has been instrumental in creating a bridge between IBM and FIU. His interaction with the faculty in the School of Computer Science led to a donation of supercomputers valued at \$3.6 million for FIU.



**Allen Susser '78**, owner and creator of Chef Allen's Restaurant, was honored with a Cal Kovens Distinguished Service Medallion for his

contributions to the community. Chef Allen has been the driving force behind the success of Chef Allen's. His creative genius, coupled with his keen business sense, has helped Susser redefine Florida cuisine. ■

# ALUMNI

## Make plans today for alumni tournaments

Planning is well underway for two of the Alumni Association's biggest events in 2005. Mark your calendars for the golf tournament in May and the fishing tournament in June.

**The FIU Alumni Association Golf Tournament** will take place Sat., May 21, at the Doral Golf Resort and Spa, 4400 NW 87th Ave. It will begin at 6:30 a.m. with breakfast and registration. The shotgun start will be at 8 a.m. Doral Spa discounts for the day of the tournament will be available for spouses and guests of the players.

**The FIU Alumni Association Fishing Tournament** will be held on Sat., June 18, at the Miami Beach Marina. The tournament begins at 7 a.m. and lines in at 3 p.m. Weigh-in will be at 3:30 p.m. at Monty's. There will also be a dock party at Monty's Raw Bar in South Beach, 300 Alton Road. Cash and prizes worth \$5,000 will be awarded. For more information about either event, please contact **Randi N. West CMP** at 305-348-1009 or [westr@fiu.edu](mailto:westr@fiu.edu).

## In Memory

### JAMES ALBURY '96 '04



Remembered by many as "Mr. Wonderful," FIU alumnus and staff member James "Jim" Albury passed away Mon., Dec. 27. Albury earned his bachelor's degree in elementary education and master's degree in reading education from FIU. He worked at the University Learning Center for 10 years and worked closely with the pre-medical biology program and athletes. Albury was known for his memory techniques, which helped students learn challenging material, and also for helping his students pass the Florida Reading Exam and the CLAST reading and writing exam. To his students he will be remembered for his many sayings, "Good evening ladies and jellybeans," and his characteristic goodbye, "Hasta-la-pasta." He is survived by his wife Janet; his children, Deanna Albury Decario, Loraine Albury Newman, James P. Albury III, and Kristy Leigh Albury; sons-in-law Anthony DeCario and Paul Newman and his grandchildren.

## CLASS NOTES

### 1970s

**Gayle A. Bainbridge '75** has joined Elliott, McKiever & Stowe insurance agency in Coral Gables as vice president and insurance agent.

**Richard L. Browdy '75** is one of the founders of OptimumBank, a Florida chartered commercial bank in Plantation.

**Louise S. Dawson '77** retired in 1990 after more than 20 years teaching public school in Arizona and Florida.

### 1980s

**Carlos A. Abaunza '80** vice president of finance and chief financial officer at the Miami Herald, has been promoted to vice president and corporate controller of Herald parent company Knight Ridder, Inc. in San Jose, Calif.

**Georgina M. Nichols '80** has been appointed to the post of controller at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Nichols will oversee all aspects accounting functions at the Los Angeles-area nonprofit museum.

**Ronald A. Schechter '80** is attending the MBA program in Management of Technology at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. Schechter is the manager of international rights for the McGraw-Hill Companies in Windsor, N.J.

**Aurora F. Abrante '81** has been promoted from vice president to senior vice president of the Structured Finance Group in the International Banking Division of Union Planters Bank.

**Diane M. DeLella '81** has been promoted to executive vice president and chief financial officer of MetroBank in Miami.

**Arthur Falconi '81** has joined Esslinger Wooten Maxwell's South Miami branch office as a sales associate.

**Jeffrey C. Mylton '81** was promoted to senior vice president of Commercial Banking for First Charter Bank in Charlotte, N.C. Mylton specializes in commercial real estate and corporate lending.

**William J. Sablesak '81** has launched Air, an aviation consulting company with his wife Susan. Sablesak was a pilot with Continental Airlines and Eastern Airlines before starting the business. The couple resides in Franklin, Ky.

**Mayling E. Corripio '82** has joined Great Florida Bank as vice president and business solutions consultant.



**Dulce R. Damon '85 '96** published "Building a Lemonade Stand is Not Just For Kids Anymore," a useful resource for first-time entrepreneurs as well as for those entrepreneurs reinventing themselves. It covers topics such as emotional intelligence and ethics, among others.

**Lyle D. Larson '87** has been made a partner with Balch & Bingham LLP, practicing in the field of energy and public utility law. Larson resides in Vestavia Hills, Ala.

**Nicholas G. Bustle '88** has been named head of the Miami-Dade unit of SunTrust Bank. Bustle, a 15-year SunTrust veteran, also has been given responsibility for all commercial lending in South Florida.

**Alfredo N. Cepero '88** has been named audit partner with BDO Seidman, LLP, in Miami. He serves clients in a variety of industries, including distribution, manufacturing, technology and not-for-profit.

**Mary F. Arnold '89 '94** is the assistant principal for St. Bonaventure Catholic School in Davie and was named Teacher of the Year for 2003.

### 1990s

**Raul H. Bermudez '90** has been promoted to vice president of Charter Sales and Marketing for the Moorings in St. Petersburg, Fla. Bermudez has held several positions with the company since 1998.

**Zhaleh Emami '90** was featured in The Miami Herald in October, 2003, for her new business in the Village of Merrick Park, Rugs by Zhaleh.

**Barbara C. Robinson '91** from the Holiday Inn, Steamboat Springs, Colo., has received the InterContinental Hotels Group 2004 Best of the Best Manager of the Year award.

**Carlos M. Samlut '91** is a managing partner at Samlut & Company, a full-service public accounting and consulting firm in Coral Gables.

**Enrique A. Escudero '92 '93** executive vice president and CFO of ClickPharmacy, along with his marketing staff, developed a service for corporations and associations called "Pharmacy Concierge" which allows groups to receive discounts on volume purchases. Escudero has worked closely with FIU's Office of Career Services to develop a unique internship program.

**Rita M. Ferro '92 '03** has been promoted to vice president, International Advertising Sales, at ESPN Latin America in Miami.

**Albert Corrada '93** started his own full service accounting firm — Albert Corrada, CPA, P.A. — in Coral Gables. The firm specializes in small and medium-sized companies, offering tax return preparation, auditing, consulting and bookkeeping services.

**Laura de La Horra '93** is financial planning and reporting supervisor for George Weston Bakeries in Miami.

**Linda Guaida '93** is the owner of Forever in Love, a wedding planning service. She has been married since 1996 and has a son.



**Lizzette Guerra '97** works in Panama as the Quality Director for Star Contact, a local call center serving the U.S. Her son Joseph Aaron was born in May 2004.

**Lilian A. Azel '94** is president of Children's Psychology Associates in Weston, the largest pediatric multidisciplinary psychology and rehabilitative practices in South Florida.



*Feel the Pride!*

## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PANTHER PERK:



**Yvonne C. Castaneda '94** published "The Whole Wide World," a book loosely based on her life about a teacher in an inner-city school that uses stories from her half-Mexican, half-Cuban family to keep the students entertained and well behaved.

**Karla M. Icaza '94** has won the "Young Hispanic Leadership Award" by the Nicaraguan American Chamber of Commerce. Icaza is the director of marketing for R.E. Chisholm Architects, Inc. and a board member of the Miami-Dade County Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board.

**Gabriel F. Jimenez '94** has been reappointed chair of the Hispanic/Latino Lawyers Committee of the North Carolina Bar Association, a select group of attorneys and judges that addresses legal issues raised by the growing Hispanic population.



**Barbara E. Roole '94** is a program officer at the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. She was selected by Leadership North Carolina, a nonprofit organization that identifies and provides intensive learning

opportunities for the state's emerging leaders. Roole received a bachelor's degree in social work from FIU and a law degree and master's degree in public administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Eduardo R. Arista '95** has merged with attorney Andrew M. Feldman to form Arista & Feldman, P.L. They share a philosophy of finding creative ways to resolve disputes without having to resort to litigation.

**Anibal U. Jorge '95 '01** has been promoted to vice president of marketing and sales at Tiger Financial Group, Inc.

**Barbra Diaz '96** is the Director of Children's Outpatient Services for Northwestern Human Services of Philadelphia.



**Ralph Rosado '96 '03 and wife Mari Rosado '97** are the proud parents of Mia Isabella Rosado, born Aug. 19, 2004.

**Marcia G. Fernandez '97** has been named vice president for Commercebank.

**Carlos H. Hernandez '97** has been promoted to senior vice president/area executive for Colonial Bank, South Miami-Dade. He will oversee eight offices and more than \$448 million in deposits.

**Kimberly D. Hogan '97** has joined Bode Trading Corporation, an export company based in Miami-Dade, as its chief financial officer.

**Marcos A. Rubio '97** was named assistant vice president for retail lending in Commercebank's Kendall office.

**Alberto C. Santalo '97** has been named CEO of Avisena, a healthcare management company in Miami. Santalo is co-founder of Avisena and served as president of the company since its inception in June 2001.

### Toshiba Direct

**PANTHER PARTNER:** Toshiba Direct is dedicated to being the global leader in mobile and wireless solutions. Along with the company's award-winning notebook computers, the company offers portable and wireless accessories, Pocket PCs and projectors for business customers under the Toshiba brand name. These products and services not only improve the way information is

exchanged, but provide our customers with the tools necessary to truly live the mobile lifestyle.

**PANTHER PERK:** Toshiba is offering Alumni Association members a standard Tablet notebook computer for \$1,900. It normally sells for \$2,199.

#### HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE:

Please contact Jeff Mikosz at Toshiba Government & Education Sales at 888-625-3276 ext. 7038 or email: [jmikosz@edu.gov.toshiba.com](mailto:jmikosz@edu.gov.toshiba.com).

**Patricio Suarez '97** is director of a dance ensemble at Hialeah High School. The group was invited to a national meeting in Colorado where they will perform at the opening ceremony.

**Giroldy A. Koning '98** a practitioner of the pilates method, has worked in rehabilitation centers, longevity centers and gyms and today owns a business that helps rehabilitate athletes.

**Alan A. Lips '98** has been promoted to partner of the Miami Beach accounting firm Gerson, Preston, & Co. P.A.

**Edgar A. Ceballos '99 '02** has taken a position as a business systems analyst with American Express Technologies Global Risk Systems.

**Jennifer Jakubowicz '99** runs TrueBalance, a fitness studio featuring classes that combine kickboxing, Tai Chi, yoga and other forms of exercise, dance and relaxation.

**Edson Mena '99** attended Duke University and is a financial analyst for Lennar Corporation in Miami.

**Mary C. Morla '99** attended Stetson University and graduated with her J.D. and MBA degrees in May of 2003.

#### 2000s



**Lourdes C. '00 and Fabian Balepogi '99 '00** had their first child, George Vicken, on June 18, 2004.

**Laura E. Gonzalez '00**, owner of Alpha Travel, was highlighted in The Miami Laker for her volunteer efforts and for being elected president of the Public Relations Student Association at Miami Lakes Middle School.



**Ileana M. Hernandez '00** was named assistant vice president of Premier American Bank. She is responsible for business development, account management and account analysis at the bank's South Miami branch.

**Steve Massena '00** is the chief of information systems for the Air Force and is stationed in Hawaii.

**Lauren I. Colon '01** was promoted to human resource service manager for onboard duty-free concessionaire Starboard Cruise Services, a subsidiary of Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessey in Miami.

**Alejandro A. Dominguez '01** was recently chosen to participate in the Florida House of Representatives Speaker's Fellowship Program. He also is the International Student Representative of the Public Administration Graduate Association at Florida State University.

**Wilfredo A. Gaitan '01** works in the Landlord and Tenant Branch of the District of Columbia Courts assisting Spanish-speaking clients, entering landlord/tenant cases and case dismissals and helping courtroom clerks.

**Hal R. Pitts '01** is a lieutenant in the Coast Guard. He commanded the construction of the new FIR Coast Guard Cutter, a 225-foot long vessel that visited the Port of Miami in late August during transit from Marinette, Wis. to Astoria, Ore.

**Edward J. Redlich '01** has been named vice president of ComReal Miami, Inc. He also was recognized as the Top Producer in 2002 for leading commercial real estate.

**Melissa E. Viana '01** was recently promoted to account executive for Burger King's advertising division in Miami.

**Antonio J. Arce '02** is assistant corporate buyer in the Burdines-Macy's division of Federated Department Stores, Miami.

**Noemi N. Martinez '02** is the volunteer coordinator for Habitat for Humanity in Miami.

**Carlos M. Berrio '03** is senior project estimator for Austin Commercial and part of the development team of the Miami International Airport's North Terminal Program, a \$1.5 billion project.



**Monique Catoggio '03** recently gave birth to her second child, Nia.

**Marc Poliquin '03** has been named second vice president for General Electric, Coral Gables.

**Juan F. Wills '03** has been promoted to vice president in the Technology Infrastructure Department at Citigroup Latin America in Miami.



Gathered for the ribbon cutting of the new Carlos Costa Immigration and Human Rights Clinic are FIU President Modesto A. Maidique; Carlos' niece Melissa Mendez Chantres, his sister Mirta Mendez and father Osvaldo Costa; FIU Provost Mark Rosenberg; Carlos' mother Mirta Costa and his nephew Michael Mendez; and Dean of the College of Law Leonard Strickman.

# Keeping the Flame Alive

## Family of Martyred Pilot Makes Largest Donation to Law School

By Alexandra Pecharich

The family of an American pilot shot down by Cuban fighter jets during a humanitarian mission has turned its pain into pride with a \$1 million contribution to FIU's College of Law.

The donation will support FIU's immigration and human rights clinic, renamed for Carlos Costa, which makes available trained law students, supervised by faculty members, to serve indigent clients who have fled persecution and are seeking haven in the United States. New offices and meeting rooms will be constructed for the clinic, which will be housed in the planned College of Law building designed by renowned architect Robert Stern. FIU will break ground on the new law school building this year.

In February 1996, Costa, a 29-year-old aviator from Miami, joined three colleagues in searching the international waters between Florida and Cuba, his parents' native land. He was a member of the Brothers to the Rescue organization that sends small aircraft to locate would-be Cuban refugees adrift at sea. That day, the men encountered deadly missile fire while trying to help others escape oppression. Their two single-engine



Carlos Costa

"Carlos committed his life to helping those who were fleeing oppression and seeking freedom."

—  
Leonard Strickman  
Dean,  
College of Law

planes went down in full view of horrified cruise ship passengers.

Their remains were never found.

"I think the mourning is done, and I think now it's time to commemorate the life of Carlos Costa and celebrate what he did," says nephew Michael Mendez, the director of the foundation that made the gift to FIU.

Both the largest gift ever made by the Costa Foundation and the largest donation received to date by the College of Law, which opened in 2002, the funds will serve a purpose uniquely related to Costa's own passion.

Modesto A. Maidique, FIU's Cuban-born president, hailed the family's contribution as a perpetual tribute and one that will have a positive influence on many.

"The ideals that Carlos Costa embraced will live on as a beacon to guide our law students and open doors for those who will benefit from the services of the clinic," Maidique says.

Lawsuits filed by the victims' families in U.S. District Court resulted in a judgment against the Cuban government, and the case was settled when U.S. authorities agreed to transfer \$93 million

in frozen Cuban assets to the survivors. A portion of those funds have been used to establish charitable foundations in the names of the men.

Mendez, who was 16 when Costa was killed, describes him as a regular man who loved life and loved his family. Left behind were Costa's parents, Mirta and Osvaldo, his sister and her three children, among them Mendez, a 2003 graduate of FIU.

"My uncle was a very normal person," says Mendez, who believes that Costa, like the others involved, never foresaw the risk of an armed Cuban military attack. "What drove him was flying and helping these people out who... were crossing to freedom."

Over the course of four years, Costa helped spot and then direct rescue boats to more than 500 so-called rafters, individuals who fled Cuba on homemade or otherwise ill-equipped vessels.

Says Leonard Strickman, dean of the law school, "Carlos committed his life to helping those who were fleeing oppression and seeking freedom. By naming this clinic in his honor, we will ensure that his memory and sacrifice are etched in the minds of everyone who will come through here." ■

# v.i.p.

Very Important Panthers



A pride of panthers: Eddie and Francis Hondal with sons Daniel (in white jersey), 7, and David, 9.

## Francis '87 & Eddie Hondal '88 FIU Alumni Association Lifetime Members

### Profession

**Francis :** Vice President & General Manager, International Dollar Card, American Express Company, Latin America & Caribbean Division

**Eddie:** Cardiovascular Product Specialist, Cardiovascular Division, Abbott Laboratories

### FIU Degree/Affiliations

**Francis :** Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance '87, Master of Business Administration '94

**Eddie:** Bachelor of Science in Computer Science '88, Master of Science in Human Resource Development '00  
Director of FIU Alumni Relations 1993-'98  
Director of FIU Football Development and the Law School Initiative 1998-2000  
Executive Director, Golden Panther Club 2000-'02  
Advisor, Sigma Phi Epsilon 1994-'02

### Favorite memories of your time at FIU?

**Francis :** Some of the most vivid ones are in the library — where I met Eddie — cramming for midterms or finals or searching through microfiche (now I'm dating myself). Also: Thursday nights at the "Rat," [short for Rathskellar, the former student hangout] Phi Sigma Sigma sorority happenings, Accounting and Finance classes.

**Eddie:** As a student, working with other FIU student ambassadors, including staying overnight in the Graham Center [formerly University House], when the Pope visited University Park [formerly Tamiami Park]. Additionally, being at the first basketball game at Pharmed Arena [back then, Sunblazer Arena]. As an employee, I enjoyed many satisfying moments, particularly getting alumni, students and staff energized about FIU.

### How has your FIU experience helped you in life? In business?

**Francis :** I think FIU's reputation as a solid university in the areas of Finance and Accounting created the opportunities for me early in my career. It gave me the core technical education, which gave me the confidence to transfer the theory to practice. It also provided the discipline required to manage a tough workload and to balance multiple priorities and helped me establish the motivation for high performance and achievement.

### Any advice you would offer to FIU students?

**Francis :** Establish goals and work hard at achieving them. Enjoy your college experience and appreciate your challenges to better prepare you for your future. Cherish your

successes and build from them. Develop relationships and establish a strong network of contacts and friends.

**Eddie:** First and foremost, graduate! That degree will be a beacon of light that attracts success. Once you graduate, increase the value of your FIU degree by, one, keeping a high level of professionalism, integrity and ethics at work and, two, by "talking up" the Golden Panthers. When graduates who speak highly of their school are successful professionals, that makes the institution even better in the eyes of others. Additionally, get involved with FIU in some way. Start by joining the Alumni Association.

### Why do you think it is important to be a member of the FIU Alumni Association?

**Eddie:** It is an investment in increasing the value of your degree. If all FIU alumni joined the Alumni Association, the additional membership funds could be put toward more events to promote the institution, and more dollars would be available to support the Alumni Association scholarship fund.

### Proudest accomplishment?

**Francis and Eddie:** Raising two fun-loving and responsible boys, David and Danny. ■



# Join the Fun!



## 2005 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

**GOLF TOURNAMENT**

Saturday, May 21, 2005

Doral Golf Resort and Spa

REGISTRATION 6:30 AM • CLINIC 7:00 AM • SHOTGUN START 8:00 AM

**FISHING TOURNAMENT**

Saturday, June 18, 2005

Miami Beach Marina - Monty's South Beach

BIMINI START 7:00 AM • LINES OUT 3:00 PM

*For pricing and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Randi N. West at 305-348-1009 or [westr@fiu.edu](mailto:westr@fiu.edu)*



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