

Winter 2007

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Searching for Solutions

Modern-day development is destroying the Florida Everglades, a one-of-a-kind ecosystem that sustains the region's drinking water. Scientists at FIU's Southeast Environmental Research Center are at the front lines of the environmental research that is shaping a more hopeful future for the River of Grass.

Also in this issue:

Leading doctor appointed as new dean for the College of Medicine

FIU selected to lead judicial reform project in Colombia

New athletic director Pete Garcia on football fans and the future

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Feel the Pride and Carry the Card. It has its privileges.

on the cover



Crusade for the Glades

Biology professor Evelyn Gaiser, above, is among dozens of scientists conducting Everglades research at FIU. On the cover Gaiser and research technicians Mike Baranski and Rafael Travieso are setting up sites to sample plants and animals in the sawgrass marsh of Shark River Slough. Baranski is pointing to an area where Tamiami Trail will be elevated to allow greater water flow into Everglades National Park, one of the many solutions being pursued in the scientific search for solutions to the crisis facing the Glades.

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in the next issue



College of Law raises the bar

FIU's 4-year-old College of Law is fast becoming one of the top law schools in the state and it now has

an impressive new home, Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall. As part of our coverage of the February 2007 dedication of the new College of Law building – which will feature a keynote address by Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg – we showcase the college's academic accomplishments and its impact on the community.

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Restoring a legacy

FIU alumni play key roles in the revitalization of Virginia Key Beach Park, Miami's historically black beach.

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Engineering icons

Structural engineer William Howell '00 travels the world working on high-profile signature structures.

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New athletic director promises hard work

Pete Garcia talks about the future of athletics at FIU. "What we could accomplish... is going to surprise people."

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from the editor



Dear Readers,

One afternoon while this magazine was being put together, biology professor Evelyn Gaiser sat in my office smiling. She was looking at the gorgeous photographs taken by FIU photographer Michael Upright of her and other FIU scientists doing research in the Florida Everglades. "This makes me feel so good," Evelyn told me. "It reminds

me how much our research really does matter."

There is nothing glamorous about what Gaiser and her colleagues do, slogging around in the swamp, taking samples of marine critters, monitoring water quality, pouring over microscopes. But this research provides the scientific foundation for the all-important effort to preserve and restore South Florida's greatest natural asset, the Florida Everglades.

This issue of FIU Magazine delves into one of the most promising and meaningful research endeavors at our institution, the work of the Southeast Environmental Research Center. The people of South Florida need a thriving and healthy Everglades to sustain our water supply. Public policy on how to best preserve the Glades is most effective when it is built on sound scientific research. Indeed, Evelyn, the work of SERC's scientists really does matter.

Two FIU alumni and one FIU award recipient profiled inside are demonstrating caring stewardship of another local treasure, Virginia Key Beach Park, Miami's historically black beach. Maud Newbold MS '74, Miguel Germain '78, '79, MS '80 and Enid Pinkney, 2005 recipient of FIU's Cal Kovens Distinguished Community Service Medallion, are each part of the effort to restore and preserve this historic park. Floridians will benefit from their vision and dedication for generations to come.

Here at FIU, the past few months have brought significant change. Inside this issue of FIU Magazine you will meet Dr. John Rock, the new dean of FIU's College of Medicine. He hails from Louisiana State University with an impressive record of administrative and research accomplishments. You will also meet Pete Garcia, FIU's new athletic director, who is tackling the challenge of advancing FIU athletics to a new level. The FIU community is looking forward to great things from both of these leaders in 2007.

Your thoughts are always welcome at oneild@fiu.edu.

Cheers,

Deborah O'Neil

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in brief.

New medical school dean brings wealth of experience

One of the nation's most respected physicians with more than 30 years of administrative experience at some of the country's top medical institutions will lead FIU's new College of Medicine.

With this appointment, Dr. John Rock becomes only the fourth individual since 1980 to guide the growth and development of a new U.S. allopathic medical school. In January, he assumes the position of FIU College of Medicine dean and executive vice president for medical affairs.

"There are some very good administrators out there, but when you find the combination of an excellent administrator, strategist and researcher, you've found the perfect founding dean for a new College of Medicine," said FIU President Modesto A. Maidique. "Dr. Rock's experiences throughout his distinguished career position him perfectly to build a 21st century College of Medicine in a dynamic city such as Miami."

The FIU College of Medicine will accept its first class in 2008 and begin instruction in 2009. Between now and then, said FIU Executive Vice President and Acting Provost Ronald Berkman, Rock will assemble a faculty, design a curriculum and create a medical program that produces cutting-edge research and doctors who are sensitive to the needs of the community.

"In my career I have been fortunate enough to work at prestigious institutions and with great people who have put their trust in me," said Rock. "But the opportunity to guide the creation of a new program in a city as vibrant as Miami is certainly a challenge, a great honor, and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

A board-certified obstetrician-

gynecologist with a subspecialty in reproductive endocrinology, Rock has built a distinguished career in medical education. He comes to FIU from the Louisiana State University (LSU) Health Sciences Center in New Orleans where he served as chancellor and chief executive officer.

Rock, who is fluent in Spanish, earned his M.D. in 1972 at LSU and did his residency at Duke University's Medical Center. He went on to complete a fellowship in reproductive endocrinology at The Johns Hopkins University Medical Center in 1978. Recently, he returned to school, earning an M.S. in public health at Harvard University in 2003.

Rock is by turns a clinician, surgeon, researcher, educator, author, fund-raiser and administrator. He spent the early part of his career at The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions. In 1991, Dr. Rock became chairman and director of the Residency Training Program in Union Memorial Hospital's Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics at Johns Hopkins University.

In 1992, Dr. Rock joined Emory University School of Medicine. For the next decade, he served as chairman and director of the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics' Residency Training Program. From there, it was on to his most recent position at LSU Health Sciences Center. For two years of his tenure there, Dr. Rock also had management oversight of Louisiana's statewide Charity Hospital System.

Among Dr. Rock's leadership highlights at LSU Health Sciences Center are the establishment of the School of Public Health on the New Orleans campus; an 84.3 percent increase in total research funding; and a rise in NIH rankings



Dr. John Rock

from 90 in 2002 to 76 in 2004. His accomplishments at Union Memorial Hospital and Emory University School of Medicine are equally impressive.

In addition to his administrative posts, Rock has written 18 books, contributed to 83 others and written more than 200 juried and non-juried articles. He was awarded the American Medical Writer's Association's 1996 Medical Book Award for his text, "Reproductive Endocrinology, Surgery, and Technology".

The recipient of many honors, Rock has been included for the last several years in the annual listing of America's Best Doctors, an independent ranking system that reflects the opinions of 50,000 physicians worldwide. The survey is compiled by an independent organization founded by physicians affiliated with Harvard University School of Medicine. Only 5 percent of the physicians – who do not pay to participate or be included in the survey – in any country are actually selected to become Best Doctors. ■

in brief.

New research vice president hails from Carnegie



George E. Walker

George E. Walker, a nationally recognized leader in academic administration, is FIU's new vice president for research and dean of the University Graduate School.

Walker, who holds a doctorate in physics, comes from The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, a leading think tank in higher-education policy and the organization that sets the national standards for research universities. For five years he served as senior scholar and director of the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate. Before joining Carnegie, he was vice president for research and dean of the University Graduate School at Indiana University.

"Dr. Walker has stellar achievements in the development and management of sponsored research," said Ronald Berkman, executive vice president and acting provost. "We are confident his leadership will help FIU reach new milestones in its sponsored research agenda." ■

Public invited to law school dedication

FIU will dedicate the new College of Law building, Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall, in February 2007 with a series of special events open to the public. The new \$34 million law school building features 155,000 square feet of classrooms, faculty offices, a legal clinic, two courtrooms and a law library. The building is named in honor of the grandfather of U.S. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, whose work in the Florida Legislature in the 1990s helped lead to the creation of the FIU College of Law.

The special events will begin on Thursday, Feb. 8, with a legal symposium from 2-5 p.m. titled, "The Intersection of U.S. Constitutional Law with International and Foreign Law." The free symposium in the College of Law auditorium is being offered to the law community for CLE credits but has limited seating. Panelists will include professors from Yale, Northwestern and Duke, among others. The symposium will be held again on Friday, Feb. 9, from 9 a.m. – noon.

On Friday, Feb. 10, the College of Law will host a free open house breakfast from 9-10 a.m. The Student Bar Association will offer tours of the new building.

Breakfast and tours of Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall will be offered Saturday, Feb. 11, from 8:30 – 10 a.m. The dedication ceremony will begin at 10:30 a.m. at Pharmed Arena. The keynote speaker will be U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg. The ceremony is free and community members are welcome. ■

BBC vice provost to lead redevelopment

Newly appointed interim vice provost Damian Fernandez will spearhead an ambitious plan to infuse the Biscayne Bay Campus with a range of new initiatives that reflect the diverse needs of the neighborhood.

Fernandez, a professor of international relations and director of the Cuban Research Institute, was appointed in September to lead BBC after the retirement of Vice Provost Raul Moncarz. Along with Rosa Jones, vice president of Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education, Fernandez co-chaired a university task force last summer that made recommendations for the revitalization of BBC. It is anticipated that BBC will expand its offerings to include more continuing education, e-learning and custom-made

New clinic will provide learning opportunities for students

By Martin Haro '05

A new partnership with Kinetic Kids, Inc., a company founded by Jennifer Gober MS '02, will provide on-campus pediatric clinical training for FIU occupational therapy students.

Kinetic Kids Clinic, located in HLS I at University Park, is a 900-square-foot, fully equipped pediatric teaching lab. Among its features are an observation room with a two-way mirror for

parents and students to observe treatment of children with autism and a sensory room with such materials as ball pits, hanging swings and trampolines.

At the opening of the clinic in September, associate professor Patricia Scott Ph.D. '97, chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy, highlighted the importance of on-campus clinical partnerships that support the education of students and the

mission of the university.

"This is the type of university-community relationship that FIU would like to see more of in the future," said Acting Executive Vice President & Provost Ron Berkman.

During the fall, the facility will be used for classes and for clinical work with referred patients. In the spring, the facility will be used almost exclusively by Kinetic Kids



Jennifer Gober MS '02 with her business partner Jason Powe.

offerings that respond to the varied needs of the neighboring population.

"The entire FIU community will benefit from a vibrant Biscayne Bay Campus," said Ronald Berkman, executive vice president and acting provost. "We are looking forward to the collaboration of faculty, staff and students from across the university as we make the new BBC a reality." ■

College of Law receives full accreditation

Delivering on a promise made by President Modesto A. Maidique to bring high quality, public legal education to South Florida, the College of Law has received full accreditation from the American Bar Association (ABA). The accreditation was achieved in the fastest time possible.

The decision was based on a year-long review that considered, among other factors, the quality of the program's faculty, the curriculum's rigor, the program's financial resources and Bar Exam passing rates.

"This is confirmation that the course we have taken is one that is not only exciting for us but consistent with the standards of excellence demanded by the ABA," said founding Dean Leonard Strickman. ■

Marine Biology Building opens at Biscayne Bay

The new Marine Biology building was inaugurated in September, marking a milestone for the fast-growing academic program and FIU's strength in environmental sciences. FIU's Bachelor of Science degree in marine biology was approved in October 2001.

The 57,000-square-foot building on the Biscayne Bay Campus features a plumbing system that pipes water from Biscayne Bay into its 10 research labs. Those labs house the work of researchers who are looking at issues such as Florida's embattled coral reefs; shark populations and toxin levels in near-shore waters. Classroom and lab facilities provide undergraduate and graduate students the tools to learn marine biology hands-on. ■

FIU opens hospitality school in China

FIU and the Tianjin University of Commerce opened what is believed to be the first joint hospitality management program between the Chinese government and an American institution in September.

The \$50 million center, fully paid for by the Chinese government, opened this semester with an initial class of 200

students. The center has capacity for 2,000 students. It aims to train Chinese students on the nuances of serving Western clientele. The school is also open to other FIU students who want to learn about one of the world's fastest-growing economies and tourist industries. The center, which is FIU's largest international program to date, is expected to graduate its first class in 2008.

Joseph West, dean of FIU's School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, said Chinese officials sought a partnership with FIU because of its reputation as one of the top 10 hospitality management programs in the U.S.

"This growing program is further evidence of FIU's strong position as an educational leader on the international stage," said FIU President Modesto A. Maidique, who traveled to China for the building's inauguration. "Programs like this one are the reason why we have 'international' in our name." ■



Clinic. Eventually, the clinic will offer physical and speech therapy services and expanded opportunities for students in these programs.

"Kinetic Kids Clinic will be a site for making a difference and improving the quality of life of children with autism and the lives of their families," said Noma Anderson, dean of the School of Health Sciences. "It will be the site of a multidisciplinary research venture that will involve our

students and faculty alike."

Both Scott and Anderson praised Gober, an alumna of the Department of Occupational Therapy, for her commitment to therapy services.

After graduating from FIU, Gober became the therapy director of a local school for children with autism and related disorders. She helped the department grow from one to six therapists and supervised all disciplines, including occupational therapy,

physical therapy and speech language pathology.

After a year, she decided to go into business for herself and founded Kinetic Kids, Inc.; within three months, she was entirely booked. Not wanting to turn any families away, she began working extra hours to treat patients and brought on therapists to help.

This led to her interest in the potential of operating the clinic at FIU.

"The partnership between

FIU and Kinetic Kids is developing the next generation of therapists to go forth into the field of pediatrics," Gober said. "Instead of dozens of kids being helped by this clinic, we are potentially helping thousands through transference of not only knowledge and techniques, but also of passion. I don't know what our partnership will uncover [in terms of research], but I have all the faith in the world that it will benefit the families that I care so deeply for." ■

Restoring a Legacy

FIU alumni help revitalize the Virginia Key Beach Park and preserve an important piece of Miami history.

Story by Sue Arrowsmith '06
Photo by Michael Upright
Historic photographs courtesy of Virginia Key Beach Park Trust



Every time Maud Newbold MS '74 returns to Virginia Key Beach, her mind wanders to warm summer days in the 1940s when she was a child enjoying Nehi soda and corn dogs on Miami's first "colored" beach.

Under the direction of the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust, the historic beach is now undergoing a \$40 million renovation, including the construction of a 30,000-square-foot museum that will showcase the history of the beach, complete with original photos and recorded testimonials. A replica of the original mini-train was recently unveiled at a special event on the beach and organizers say negotiations are underway to acquire a vintage 1950 Allan Herschell carousel. A symbol of both the struggle of black citizens for equality during racial segregation and

the closeness of a community that found support within its ranks, the beach is slated to re-open to the public on Aug. 1, 2007.

A retired assistant principal, Newbold is one of two FIU alumni, and one FIU honoree, actively involved in the revitalization of this vital piece of Miami history. Along with Miguel Germain '78 '79 MS '80 and Enid Pinkney, 2005 recipient of FIU's Cal Kovens Distinguished Community Service Medallion, Newbold says she has devoted her time and energy to the project because she wants to share her beloved memories with new generations.

"Those were the best times of my life," said Newbold, who is chair of the Trust's Marketing Committee. "We had the mini-train, the carousel and dance pavilion. It never fazed me that

there was another beach nearby that we couldn't go to."

Located on Virginia Key, the beach and park encompass almost 83 acres of land between Miami and Key Biscayne. It first opened in 1945, after Judge Lawson E. Thomas led a protest with other black leaders against the then whites-only Baker's Haulover Park. Thomas expected to be detained and jailed, but instead he was asked to the mayor's office to negotiate creating a "separate but equal" beach and recreation park. Virginia Key Beach thrived for 37 years as a social, recreational and even spiritual hub for Miami's multi-cultural black community.

Pinkney, a retired principal with a passion for preserving black history, remembers those years as "F-U-N." She was a teenager when her late

"It never fazed me that there was another beach nearby that we couldn't go to."

—
Maud Newbold MS '74



Maud Newbold MS '74, Miguel Germain '78 '79 MS '80 and FIU Distinguished Community Service honoree Enid Pinkney all have fond memories of Virginia Key Beach Park. The three are members of the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust, which is overseeing the restoration of the park.

father, Bishop Henry Curtis, performed Sunday services and baptisms at the beach at sunrise. Later in the day, families gathered to talk and share food.

“We fixed traditional Bahamian dishes, like pigeon peas and rice and Johnny Cake,” said Pinkney, who in addition to serving as chair of the Trust’s Historic Preservation Committee, is also president of the Dade Heritage Trust and founder of the African-American Committee.

Germain, who serves as chair of the Trust’s Audit/Budget Committee, has similar happy memories of the beach during the 1960s.

“There was always a party going on,” said Germain, who is originally from Holguin, Cuba. “Whether it was the Cubans or another group that started it, we always had a good

time together.”

In 1982, the county transferred ownership of Virginia Key Beach Park to the City of Miami. That same year, the city closed the beach, saying it was too expensive to maintain. The beach and its recreation facilities fell into despair.

It might have remained that way if not for the Virginia Key Beach Park Civil Rights Task Force. This group of citizens took action in 1999 to save the beach after learning that a developer wanted to buy the land to build an upscale tourist development. Shortly after, the City Commission established the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust to oversee the beach’s restoration.

For Germain, restoring the beach is as much about giving people a quiet place to connect with nature as it is about preserving a legacy. “We have

“Virginia Key Beach is vital for the survival of green space in the city.”

—
Miguel Germain
'78 '79 MS '80

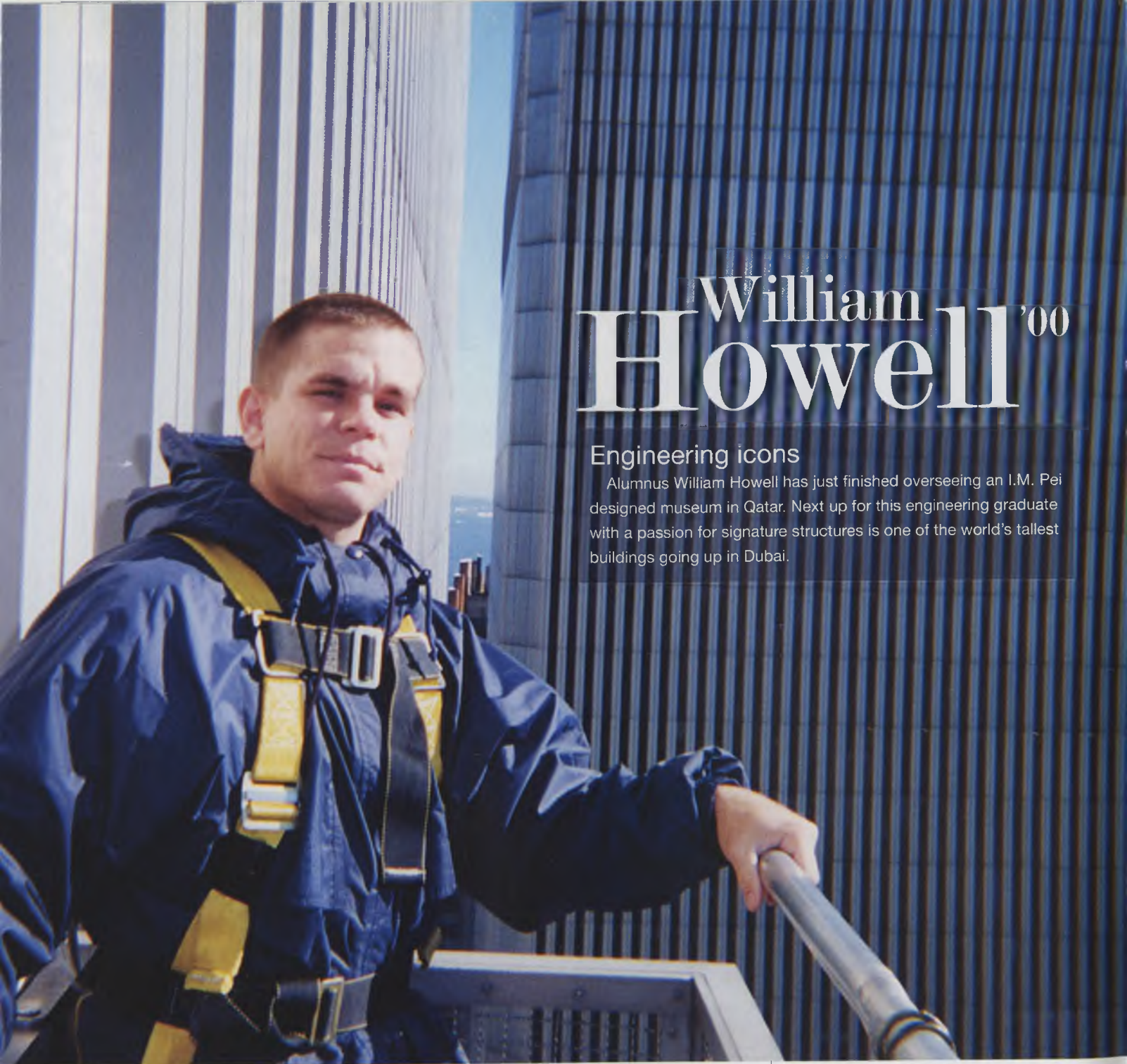
become a concrete jungle,” he said. “Virginia Key Beach is vital for the survival of green space in the city.”

Pinkney was one of the original Virginia Key Beach Task Force members. She credits her parents for teaching her the importance of saving the past.

“Historic preservation is in my blood,” said Pinkney. “My parents gave me a sense of identity and taught me to respect my heritage.”

But for Newbold, the jewel of “our multicultural beach” will be the museum, a place where she and others will be able to share their memories, while just outside at the beach, new generations begin to form their own, extending the legacy as if it had never been broken. ■

Sue Arrowsmith '06 is a writer and a copy editor with PulseMiamiNews.com.



William Howell '00

Engineering icons

Alumnus William Howell has just finished overseeing an I.M. Pei designed museum in Qatar. Next up for this engineering graduate with a passion for signature structures is one of the world's tallest buildings going up in Dubai.

By Bryan Gilmer

Most structural engineers will never have the chance to work with a great architect like I.M. Pei, famous for adding a modern glass pyramid to the Louvre in Paris.

Billy Howell almost didn't get that chance, either, though fresh out of FIU in 2000, he landed a job at the world-class engineering firm Pei favors, Leslie E. Robertson Associates (LERA) in New York City.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Howell was scheduled to be dangling against an

"The signature buildings we design are iconic, but like all buildings, are also tangible."

—
William Howell '00

outside face of one of the World Trade Center towers, inspecting its surface for tiny flaws.

"We had the inspection platform tested on Friday, but there was a bearing problem," he remembers. "The guy who was supposed to fix it on Monday called in sick. They said, 'Now it's going to be Tuesday afternoon. Nobody else can fix it — union regulations.' Well, Tuesday morning was 9/11."

So the 23-year-old was instead five blocks away at his firm's headquarters

preparing a report on the TV mast atop the World Trade Center's north tower when terrorists slammed a plane into the building. He walked past an office window and noticed sheets of paper floating like giant snowflakes.

Howell had little time to consider how narrowly he'd survived.

LERA had designed the Twin Towers. Its copies of the detailed plans became crucial to the rescue and recovery effort, since the Port Authority's copies were lost when the skyscrapers imploded.



Howell was selected in 2003 to oversee the construction of the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar designed by I.M. Pei.

Howell spent the next year on a team of engineers that monitored and calculated the strength of the surviving structure that helped to shore the retaining wall of the pit at Ground Zero. Later, Howell completed FEMA urban search and rescue training that educates engineers to better assess post-disaster structure stability when dealing with possible survivors.

“As an engineer, I realized how massive and strong and redundant those towers were,” he says now. “As a young engineer, they seemed indomitable to me. Just by luck, I wasn’t at the tower that day. A lot of the people I worked with there got trapped and died.”

Though Howell and his firm still grieved, there was new work to be done.

Pei, in his eighties and allegedly retired, still had a handful of marquee projects going, including a new 484,000-square-foot Museum of Islamic Art in the emirate of Qatar. Pei wanted someone he could trust as his on-site representative

during construction. Howell’s boss recommended him.

So Howell left Manhattan in 2003 and spent 20 months in the developing Middle Eastern nation, charged with ensuring that the general contractor built Pei’s challenging design correctly, levitating triangular slabs with a force of 1,500 tons over the museum’s 40-meter atrium.

As he fought to keep the general contractor on schedule and in compliance with the architect’s wishes, Howell was told to send daily or weekly progress reports to Pei’s office in New York.

“I initially wrote them for his project manager, not thinking that he would see them,” Howell says. “I used them to vent a lot of frustration.”

But the project manager passed along each one to the legendary architect himself, Howell later learned. When Pei visited the construction site in person, Howell tried to stay out of his way, but the young engineer needn’t have worried; Pei was thrilled with his advocate. He spotted Howell and beamed, “Oh,

where is my daily report?”

With the museum scheduled to open next fall, Howell is back in Manhattan working on other spectacular buildings, a passion he discovered at FIU after trying and discarding both biology and transportation engineering.

“The signature structures we design are iconic, but, like all buildings, are also tangible,” he says. “They are great modern monuments that, in the cases of the ones I’ve worked on, I can point to and say, ‘I contributed to that.’”

Now Howell is working on what will be one of the world’s tallest buildings, in the Middle Eastern metropolis of Dubai. For now, it is called simply, “The Tall Tower.”

Though the 9/11 attacks taught Howell that even the most impressively engineered structure isn’t invincible, he says he’s inspired by how long the World Trade Center towers remained standing after being extensively damaged – time that gave rescuers a chance to evacuate many of the occupants. Like most of his colleagues, he says, he realizes that iconic buildings may be prime targets for attacks – so he works hard to build in reasonable protection.

“In this age, building security goes far beyond just structural safety,” he says. “There are many more threats, such as biological agents, that can be introduced with just as – or perhaps more – sinister effects.” ■

Bryan Gilmer is a freelance writer based in Durham, N.C.



Photo by Ramona El Hamzaoui, USAID/Colombia.

JUSTICE FOR ALL

FIU is selected for a \$20-million grant to guide the next phase of judicial reforms in Colombia

By Deborah O'Neil

An historic transformation of justice, slow yet certain, is taking place in Colombia against a backdrop of violence so extreme that experts say the nation suffers the most serious human rights and humanitarian problem in the region.

For more than 20 years, Colombia's justice system has been undergoing a sweeping overhaul. Supported by U.S. development dollars, Colombians are re-engineering an entire system of government to transform a judiciary that was once secretive, backlogged and vulnerable to corruption into one that is transparent, independent and accessible. Change is occurring in the laws of the land, the courthouses, public defenders' and state attorneys' offices, police academies and law schools. The reforms hold increasing significance, both symbolic and real, as the Colombian government inches toward a cease fire and promises justice to the war's many victims.

Last summer, the U.S. Agency

Building trust in the new judicial system is one of the project's main challenges, particularly in communities devastated by the country's numbing violence and conflict.

for International Development (USAID) awarded \$20 million to Florida International University to lead the next phase of reforms with Colombian judicial officials. FIU's Center for the Administration of Justice was selected from among six other candidates for the grant.

"This large award marks another milestone in the development of FIU as a major research university," said Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Ron Berkman, FIU's chief academic officer. "In addition to our strengths in the life sciences, physical sciences and engineering, this award is recognition of our similar strengths in the social sciences."

Heading the project is FIU professor Victor Uribe, a Colombian-born lawyer and historian, and former director of FIU's Colombian Studies Institute. Uribe and his family moved to Bogota during the summer where he heads a staff of 22 legal experts, architects, planning and communication specialists and researchers. The project's focus is expanding the legal system to

Colombia's most vulnerable citizens: Afro-Colombians, indigenous groups, women and victims of sexual or domestic violence.

"This is an important project for my country," Uribe said. "We have the privilege to make a positive contribution to improving justice administration in a conflicted society that probably will head in a more peaceful direction if we succeed."

Since 1984, FIU's Center for the Administration of Justice has been engaged in justice and human rights issues in Latin America through research, education and real-world problem solving. It has led projects in Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica and Bolivia, among others. The center's assessments have been critical in shaping public policy throughout the region. The Colombian justice reform initiative is the latest of the center's high-profile international projects.

"Unlike other universities, FIU is involved in field work," said professor Luis Salas, director of the Center for the Administration of Justice. "FIU



Photo courtesy of USAID.

THE PROJECT'S FOCUS IS EXPANDING THE LEGAL SYSTEM TO COLOMBIA'S MOST VULNERABLE CITIZENS: AFRO-COLOMBIANS, INDIGENOUS GROUPS, WOMEN AND VICTIMS OF SEXUAL OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

is very well known in Latin America. We are a player when it comes to developing U.S. policy toward these areas. It is really incredible that FIU has become such a large player in such a large region."

Each year, the United States invests hundreds of millions of dollars in Colombia for military defense, anti-terrorism and counter narcotics programs. The long-term investment in justice system reform is meant to complement the crime-fighting strategies.

"If this criminal activity is neutralized through effective judicial investigation and prosecution, the flow of drugs to the United States could diminish," Uribe said. "Combating kidnapping and also terrorism, from both the left and right, crimes that have an impact on the United States, could also become much easier if we fix some of the problems that afflict the judicial system of Colombia."

In 2004, Colombia modernized its judiciary, adopting an oral legal system where prosecutors, public defenders and judges settle disputes in a public hearing, much as they do in the U.S. courts. In the past, Colombian legal proceedings unfolded through a cumbersome written process and the accused could be incarcerated through the entire process, sometimes for years.

In many areas of the country, Uribe

said, the system had simply collapsed. Citizens, in essence, had nowhere to turn to resolve disputes or seek justice.

Today, Colombia is developing one of the most sophisticated legal systems in Latin America, said Salas. The next phase of the reforms will extend the justice system to rural areas and vulnerable citizens through the establishment of more "Casas de Justicia," or justice houses throughout remote areas that offer everything from birth certificate registration to assistance in cases of domestic violence. Law students, judges and public defenders will be trained on new criminal procedures. Improvements will be made in the day-to-day administration of the justice system so cases flow more smoothly and records are properly stored. The team will even be involved in designing new court buildings and refurbishing existing ones to accommodate the new legal process.

In addition, a communication campaign will be launched to educate the media, and thus the public, about changes in the judicial system.

Building trust in the new judicial system is one of the project's main challenges, particularly in communities devastated by the country's numbing violence and conflict. Killings, massacres, kidnappings, disappearances, torture and extortion have terrorized many in Colombia's rural regions.

"This large award marks another milestone in the development of FIU as a major research university."

Ron Berkman
Acting
Executive Vice
President and
Provost

The country has the largest number of displaced people after Sudan. Human Rights Watch estimates that more than 3 million individuals, five percent of the population, have been forced by violence to flee their homes in the past three years.

The project responds to these challenges pro-actively. Throughout the process, Colombian citizens and public officials will be involved in the decision making as part of the "Colombianization" of the reforms. Almost everyone on the FIU team is Colombian and many have years of experience in the justice system. As an attorney, Uribe was involved in the creation of alternative legal services in Colombia early in his career, and he is completing a book about the history of domestic violence in Colombia.

"The people will have great input into what happens," Salas said. "The idea here is to make sure this is their own program so they can buy into it. If they don't buy into it, it is never going to last."

For Uribe, making connections with Colombians who haven't had access to the justice system is the most rewarding aspect of the project. "I am aware of the meaning of we do, but I must confess that it is ultimately Colombia officials and the Colombian people who will solve their problems and conflicts. Our role is to lend a hand." ■



Patricia Scott Ph.D. '97

By Martin Haro '05

Most people would think it inconceivable to endure – in one lifetime – two liver transplants, a stroke and spinal cancer. But Patricia Scott Ph.D. '97 defies the odds.

Not that she would say so herself. When speaking about her life's highs and lows, Scott feels, admittedly, a little self-conscious.

"It almost sounds like a soap opera, like all of this couldn't have happened to just one person – like I'm making it up," she said. "But I'm not."

Scott, 53, is an associate professor and chair of the occupational therapy program at FIU. She is also a survivor who, in the face of failing health, learned that with enough certainty and determination she could adapt to whatever life had in store for her.

She holds tight to this lesson and shares it with her students and fellow therapists in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. There, Scott and her staff work with individuals suffering from various disabilities. Among their patients are those with chronic disabilities, children with autism or troubled youth and adults.

The goal, she says, is to enhance and support their daily function, health and development by helping them adapt to their environment and improve their functional performance.

"People tend to believe that we get patients jobs, when, in fact, that is not what we do at all," she said. "We enable individuals to cope with all aspects of their occupations, be it by valued participation in recreational or social activities or learning how to take better care of themselves and function in society."

Scott says the OT program seeks to teach students how to really take care of their patients by listening to their needs. Then, through rehabilitation and treatment, the therapist can help patients cope with the social and emotional weight of their disabilities.

"I get really impatient with people generalizing about those with disabilities," she explained. "I want my students to remember that patients are people with names, not just conditions to be treated. I want my students to remember that there are people behind the problems and that you can't begin to understand those problems without understanding the people first – their fears and hopes."

Fighting Spirit

Occupational therapy professor Patricia Scott brings to the classroom and her patients the lessons she learned from personal experience with illness, disability and survival.

Scott herself has had to face her fears and learn how to adapt after more than two decades of serious medical troubles.

“Through it all, my biggest fear has always been not being able to speak, not being able to teach,” she said.

One of the most dramatic instances of this came in 1997. She recalls being in the hospital after her liver failed for the first time and wanting to make a phone call. She knew who she wanted to call and remembered the number. But when she picked up the phone, she could not successfully dial.

She was affected by a neurological disorder called apraxia brought on by the presence of toxins in her brain – a result of the liver failure – which rendered her unable to carry out a familiar movement, despite having the desire and the physical ability to perform it.

“Dealing with everything I have has made me a better teacher,” she said. “It has given me an insight to the challenges people with disabilities face.”

Life less ordinary

Scott became aware of her health problems in 1980 through an employee medical screening; one of the tests showed high liver enzymes. She was 27 and physically fit, yet something was “not normal.”

Two years later, after a series of tests, she was diagnosed with chronic autoimmune hepatitis, which affected her liver and caused her to become sluggish every time it would get inflamed. “I felt like I was hit by a truck every time that happened,” she said.

Her subsequent ailments have included a liver transplant in 1998 (after more than 15 years of managing her condition), a stroke in 2000 and spinal cancer in 2002 (a byproduct of the strong immunosuppressant regimen she was on to prevent organ rejection). She needed a second transplant in 2003 after chemotherapy treatments caused her liver to go into chronic rejection.

Nevertheless, Scott does not see herself as “sick.” She credits this frame of mind – always believing that she would get better and not stressing over unnecessary matters (stress is a trigger for autoimmune disease) – for her current well-being.

Mere months after her stroke and still undergoing treatment for her transplant, she competed in bowling and a 5K run in the 2000 Transplant Olympics. In 2004, she competed again, this time bringing home three medals in swimming (she gave one to her doctor).

Once in a while, she cannot help but wonder if there will be any more illness in her future. “It’s the battle scars,” she said. This was most pronounced when she suffered her stroke – which was caused by a medical error.

“I went into the hospital because I needed a catheter put in place,” she explained.

“The doctors made a mistake and misplaced it, which caused the stroke. Everyone says I should sue them, but I won’t. It was a mistake. These are the same people who saw me through the transplants and kept me alive in the first place.”

“Dealing with everything I have has made me a better teacher. It has given me an insight to the challenges people with disabilities face.”

—
Patricia Scott
Ph.D. '97,
FIU professor
of occupational
therapy

Making a difference

Today, Scott is as healthy as can be. Her lab results for the last two years have been normal and she makes sure to get enough sleep and eat well (she cannot have sushi because of the bacteria – though she admits to really missing ahi tuna).

“Everything is okay now,” Scott said. She is thankful for the “awesome” support she has felt from her husband Karl and the entire FIU community, of which she has been a member since 1988.

Scott says she does not allow everyday stuff to get her worked up. “I don’t let myself get stressed out.” This take-charge attitude has contributed not only to her good health, but also to her becoming an ambassador for the difficult issue of organ donation and transplantation.

The first successful kidney transplant was in 1954, so organ donation and transplantation is a fairly new procedure. There are many fears and misperceptions about organ donation and transplantation, she says.

In September, Scott was invited to join the Board of Directors of the Transplant Foundation, a non-profit organization supporting research, education and support of organ donation and transplantation. “I believe that by raising awareness and discussing this matter more openly, within 15-20 years, organ donation will be considered ‘normal’ in our society instead of an odd practice.” ■



Crusade for the Glades

Story by Sara LaJeunesse | Photographs by Michael Upright

THIS STORY OF THE EVERGLADES does not begin in the vast marshland to Miami's west, where dense hardwood hammocks and gnarled pinelands harbor giant reptiles and predatory cats. Instead, it begins on the Florida Turnpike at six o'clock on a September morning. While the northbound traffic creeps slowly toward Miami, I coast along at 65 miles per hour in the opposite direction, glad to be avoiding the jam. I am en route to Florida City to meet FIU biology professor Evelyn Gaiser and her research technician, Christine Taylor, who will take me to their field sites in the southern part of Everglades National Park. The sites, as I will soon discover, are submerged in several inches of water and are prime stomping ground for 10-foot alligators and the occasional 200-pound exotic Burmese python.

Gaiser's research is part of the Florida Coastal Everglades Long-Term Ecological Research (FCE-LTER) project, a \$10 million collaboration of more than 50 scientists to investigate

Exploring the long-term impact of population growth on the fragile Everglades ecosystem is one of the tasks of the FIU scientists.

the estuarine ecosystem of Everglades National Park. (The estuaries are where the freshwater Everglades mix with the salty seawaters of Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.) The largest wetland ecosystem of its kind on the planet, the Everglades is nearly devoid of nutrients. And in contrast to other places, the small amount of nutrients its estuaries do receive comes from the sea rather than from upstream freshwaters. That's what makes these areas such unique locations for ecological study.

The project is just one of several efforts taking place within FIU's Southeast Environmental Research Center (SERC) where scientists are at the front lines of the most pressing environmental issues in south Florida and the greater Caribbean. An umbrella organization that receives nearly \$7 million annually from agencies such as the National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and

National Science Foundation, SERC is the largest environmental research group at FIU. The center's research includes studies of seagrass, mangrove and wetland ecology, microbiology, ecosystem exposure to toxic chemicals, climate change and water quality, among others.

"All the research SERC is involved in will, in one way or another, bring benefits to the local environment and, therefore, to the south Florida community," says SERC's director Rudolf Jaffé. "The center is also an important player in the environmental education and training of students and provides scientific information to environmental managers and decision makers of local, state and federal agencies."

With the Everglades in their own backyard, many SERC scientists have naturally chosen to take advantage of their proximity to the fabled River of Grass, a fascinating ecosystem for anyone whose desire to understand

1. Research technicians Christine Taylor and Mike Baranski, professor Evelyn Gaiser and research technician Rafael Travieso examine aquatic wildlife to look for relationships between the animals and changes in water quality. 2. A spikerush marsh is dotted with white patches of periphyton, a mucky substance that forms the base of the Everglades food web. 3. Travieso and Gaiser inspect wildlife caught in a research throw trap. Gaiser is holding an apple snail, which is the prime food source for the endangered Everglades snail kite, a large predatory bird.



South Floridians depend on the Florida Everglades for drinking water and protection from hurricane surges. But the legendary River of Grass is disappearing under the continued pressure of development. The future of this natural treasure hinges on a massive restoration effort and the research of scientists like those at FIU's Southeast Environmental Research Center.

nature outweighs disdain for biting insects and oppressive heat. Once covering all of south Florida as far north as the Kissimmee River, the Everglades today is in a state of crisis. The original 11 million acres have been drastically reduced by drainage projects to provide dry land for urban development and agriculture. At just a fraction of its former size, the ecosystem can barely perform the services on which we so heavily depend, primarily providing drinking water and safeguarding inland areas against hurricane tidal surges. The destruction of habitat also contributed to the endangerment of numerous animals, including the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow and the Florida panther.

In 2000, President Bill Clinton called attention to the dire state of the Glades by passing into law the \$10.5 billion Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan – the largest of its kind in human history. In conjunction with other restoration efforts, this

30-year project proposed to restore the ecosystem to pre-drainage conditions by increasing the amount of freshwater flow. The plan called for the removal of several canals and levees that obstruct flow.

Driving southward through Naranja, Leisure City and Homestead, I am astonished by the sprawl of red-tiled roofs flanking both sides of the highway. These newly constructed homes are part of an unrelenting drive to cover southwestern Miami-Dade County with more houses, more condos, more shopping centers, more offices, more gas stations, more businesses, in short, more of everything. The voracity of the development is putting increasingly greater pressure on the Everglades by competing for precious water and causing pollution. These homes are only the latest in a series of encroachments that have reduced the size of the Everglades by 50 percent.

Exploring the long-term impacts of population growth on the fragile

“Everyone in south Florida is affected by what happens in the Everglades for the most obvious reason that all of us depend on the water that the Everglades provides.”

Laura Ogden,
FIU professor
of anthropology

Everglades ecosystem is one of the tasks of FCE-LTER scientists. From the freshwater fish that biology professor Joel Trexler investigates, to the seagrass communities that SERC associate director Joseph Boyer and biology professor Jim Fourqurean study, the research group has south Florida ecology covered.

After a rendezvous, we drive a mile or so down the road and launch the boat from a clearing on the side of U.S. Highway 1. Taylor starts the engine and the massive airboat fan roars to life.

Within seconds we are skimming across the shallow-water Everglades, heading away from those red-tiled roofs. Our destination is the estuarine region of Taylor Slough, where the freshwater Glades meets salty Florida Bay. For the next few hours, we're going to be playing with the squishy swamp scum that supports the entire Everglades food chain.

Following an airboat trail that only Taylor can see – she says it's like





An airboat leaves a channel through a sawgrass marsh of the Everglades. The marsh will be rehydrated once the elevation of the Tamiami Trail is completed

1. Research technician Mike Baranski and professor Evelyn Gaiser set up throw traps to capture aquatic insects and fish. 2. Gaiser and SERC assistant research scientist Len Scinto examine a sediment sample. 3. Gaiser studies a glob of periphyton mat. "It can be really smelly at certain times of year."



the faint pattern a vacuum cleaner makes when pushed across carpet – we reach our destination. A wooden platform equipped with weather data collection devices marks the location. The site is shared with other scientists, including biology professor Daniel Childers, who, as the project's leader, first installed the experiment's infrastructure.

Gaiser dips her hand into the shallow water and scoops out a thick glob of grayish muck. Called periphyton, the spongy substance is actually a dense mix of algae, fungi and bacteria glued together by calcium carbonate. The stuff is everywhere. It forms giant mats on the bottom of the marsh, floats on top of the water, and hugs the plant stems like little sweaters.

Gaiser wants to know why this periphyton – an essential component of the ecosystem because it forms the base of the Everglades food web – produces so much biomass, or living material, in a place that is naturally low in nutrients. "Periphyton is productive in wetlands all over the place, but the numbers that we're getting here are absolutely outrageous," she says.

Her status as a leading authority on the subject comes from many years spent sloshing around in wetlands. She worked in Carolina Bays – teardrop-shaped wetlands scattered across South Carolina and several surrounding states – as a graduate student at the University of Georgia before coming to FIU.

The goal of the restoration project is to recreate the historic environment of the Everglades – and it was much wetter then than it is now.

Her love of wet places came during childhood summers spent camping on the banks of Lake Huron in Michigan. Gaiser remembers setting up her mother's dish pans along the beach as habitats for various aquatic critters.

"At the time, I had no idea I could make a career out of it," she says.

Gaiser has learned that periphyton thrives in low-nutrient environments and that too many nutrients, like those contained in fertilizers, can actually harm the stuff. Since periphyton is so sensitive to nutrients, Gaiser is examining its use as an indicator of water quality changes. This technique will be particularly valuable for monitoring the impacts of the Everglades' restoration. As water flow through the Glades is increased, the periphyton will indicate whether this water is clean or polluted.



As our airboat nears the estuary, the amount of periphyton begins to decrease and saltwater-tolerant mangrove trees start to dominate. Unlike periphyton, mangrove trees thrive in the presence of phosphorus, and although the waters of Florida Bay do contain this nutrient, the amount is not enough to explain the magnitude of mangrove production in this place. Research by FIU hydrologist and earth sciences professor René Price is showing that phosphorus rich groundwater

coming from the coast may be rising into the surface water and causing spikes of mangrove production.

"The brackish groundwater flows upward toward the soils and surface waters of the Everglades, carrying high concentrations of phosphorus with it," says Price. "Organisms can then use this additional source of phosphorus to enhance their productivity."

While this may benefit some hardier species, like the mangrove trees, excess phosphorus could potentially kill sensitive organisms, such as the ones that comprise periphyton. While the dilemma spells trouble for the natural environment, it hurts people too.

That's because the same mechanism that is bringing phosphorus-rich groundwater into the Everglades is also bringing salty seawater into south Florida's drinking water wells. And according to Price, human activities are to blame. She says that canals – built to usher water off the land's surface and into the ocean – have lowered the level of surface water in the Glades and the level of groundwater in the aquifer from which we get our drinking water. This artificial lowering of the freshwater has allowed the dense layer of seawater, which sits below the freshwater, to rise. Drinking water wells tap into the freshwater layer and the more water urban populations take, the higher the seawater rises, until eventually, it reaches the height of the wells and contaminates the water supply.

Price says the calamity has already happened once.

"Miami's drinking water wells have been moved from along the eastern coastline to the western boundary of the county right next to the Everglades border where the layer of fresh groundwater is deeper," she says.

But the move has bought only a small amount of time and with the region's drinking water wells stacked up against Everglades National Park, there is nowhere else to go.



Although the future sounds bleak, it may slowly improve. Even as more people move to south Florida and new housing developments creep west, officials are heeding the advice of scientists calling for the Everglades' protection. They know that if the River of Grass is allowed to flow much as it once did, the Everglades will recover. A healthy Everglades, while a benefit to marshland critters, will also re-charge the drinking water in the aquifer.

So far, only small pieces of the overall restoration effort have been implemented. For example, portions of the C-111 levee in the southern Everglades have been removed and water from the adjacent canal is allowed to flow freely through these areas. "It's brought a lot more water into this part of the marsh and pretty much re-hydrated it," says Gaiser.

SERC scientists have been involved in the Everglades' restoration since the center was founded in 1993. Childers had established several research sites along the C-111 canal even before the FCE-LTER project was implemented.

Childers' research has contributed valuable information to restoration managers, especially regarding how changing the freshwater inflows to Everglades National Park controls phosphorus in the estuaries. Doing so enhances the nutrient status and helps to maintain more natural conditions, says Childers.

His work also shows that making the Everglades wetter causes a decline in sawgrass production. When this happens, other plants, like spikerush, which require more water, increase in abundance. All of this, he says, is a good sign. The goal of the restoration project is to recreate the historic environment of the Everglades – and it was much wetter then than it is now.

As the project enters its second six-year phase, the focus is expanding to include human dimensions. Led by FIU anthropology professor Laura Ogden, this group will study the economics, politics, and local and global demographics of land-use change in south Florida and how they relate to Everglades ecology.

"In my research, I try to understand the processes of land-use change in south Florida and how the dynamics of land-use change over time have altered the ecology of the Everglades," says Ogden.

The group will use maps, census data, historical images, and GIS data to analyze how these types of changes have occurred in the past. Then, they will work with other scientists to develop a model that links these historic changes with ecological characteristics, such as nutrient quantities and water dynamics.

"Everyone in south Florida is affected by what happens in the Everglades for the most obvious reason that all

"All of the research SERC is involved in will bring benefits to the local environment, and therefore, to the south Florida community."

Rudolf Jaffe,
director of the
FIU Southeast
Environmental
Research
Center

of us depend on the water that the Everglades provides," says Ogden. "The Everglades plays an important role in our lives by offering us green space, recreational opportunities and critical support for our regional economy."



By mid-afternoon, Taylor is expertly guiding the airboat back onto the trailer. As she takes gear out of the boat, Gaiser tells me how important the FCE-LTER project has been for her research. The project brings together scientists with unique expertise and provides them with resources, such as airboats and specialized field and laboratory equipment.

"It opened up opportunities to do cool science that I wouldn't have been able to do without people whose specialties are different than mine," she says. "The LTER has honestly been the gel that pulled everybody in SERC together into one common theme."

Standing on the side of the road waiting for the two scientists to hitch the boat to the truck, I contemplate Ogden's comment about the importance of the Everglades in our lives. Just then, a car pulls up beside me. Rolling down the window, a sightseeing couple peers out and asks, "Are there any alligators in there?"

"Not now," I say. "Any alligators that might have been here have been scared away by our boat."

"Are you on a tourism trip or something?" they ask.

"No, a research trip," I say.

After a pause I add, "We're working to protect the Everglades."



Champions for Peace
Honoring the Legacy of the Nobel Peace Prize
MURIEL NICKEL

A Champion for Action

In exploring the work of women Nobel Peace laureates in her new book, political scientist Judith Stiehm issues a challenge to us all: Go out and make a difference.

By Deborah O'Neil

FIU political science professor Judith Hicks Stiehm opens her latest book with a bold indictment: "Historians too often praise reckless and arrogant leaders who send troops to wage war." This book, she continues in her dedication, "is intended to encourage and honor those who seek to avoid war without relinquishing the pursuit of justice."

Stiehm's tenth book, "Champions for Peace, Women Winners of the Nobel Peace Prize," chronicles the lives of the 12 women who have won the Nobel Peace Prize since the first award in 1903. (There have been 79 male winners.) The women laureates come from all variety of backgrounds – high society and academia, the convent and migrant farming. They were recognized for advocating an end to bloodshed in both world wars and creating international law that bans the use of landmines. One laureate served as the voice of oppressed indigenous people in her country, and another has risked her life as a legal advocate for women and children. Their stories, Stiehm notes, "tell us that one need not be rich nor famous to make a contribution."

A widely respected scholar of the U.S. military, peace keeping and the status of women, Stiehm is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She has testified before the U.S. Armed Services Committee and served as a consultant to the United Nations Commission for the Advancement of Women. She holds the U.S. Army Distinguished Civilian Service Medal and was recently

recognized as a distinguished alumna of the University of Wisconsin.

Her new book, she hopes, will serve as a call to action for making a difference in the world. The epilogue poses this question: As an activist, what would your priorities be to make the United States a leader in peace? What follows is a 12-part list of possibilities from destroying 9,950 of the 10,000 U.S. nuclear weapons to enforcing U.N. Security Resolution 1325, which ensures women's participation in all peace negotiations.

Stiehm recently sat down with FIU Magazine to discuss her new book, war and peace, and the roles of men and women in state affairs.

How did you come to write about these women?

I wanted to write about people who really devote their lives to peace. It's hard to know what is effective, so I decided to let the Nobel Peace Prize Committee speak for me.

It's difficult to define peace based on the very different lives of these 12 women. How do you define peace?

The first thing is nobody is shooting anybody. The people in peace studies will immediately say, 'That is negative peace.' You don't have positive peace until you have a just society and nobody is shooting anybody. Four United Nations Conferences for Women have been held since 1975. Each has had the same three themes: equality, development and peace. Peace has been

"I think women have to be far more analytical and informed about foreign policy, weapons and the military."

Judith Stiehm, FIU professor of political science

a problem. What they finally decided in Beijing was to talk about peace under the large umbrella of violence against women. It is what happens in the home and it is what happens when women get raped during combat in Bosnia.

What do you want readers to take from this book?

I want people to believe they have a responsibility for pursuing peace and that they can have an effect.

What traits do these Nobel women share?

What I noticed was their perseverance and that they were totally immune to criticism. That's one of the things women in this country need to learn. Listen to the criticism but do not be deterred.

It is interesting that only four of them were married with children.

A high percentage of high-achieving women don't have children. I would say it is hard, and particularly hard if you believe you should be raising your child.

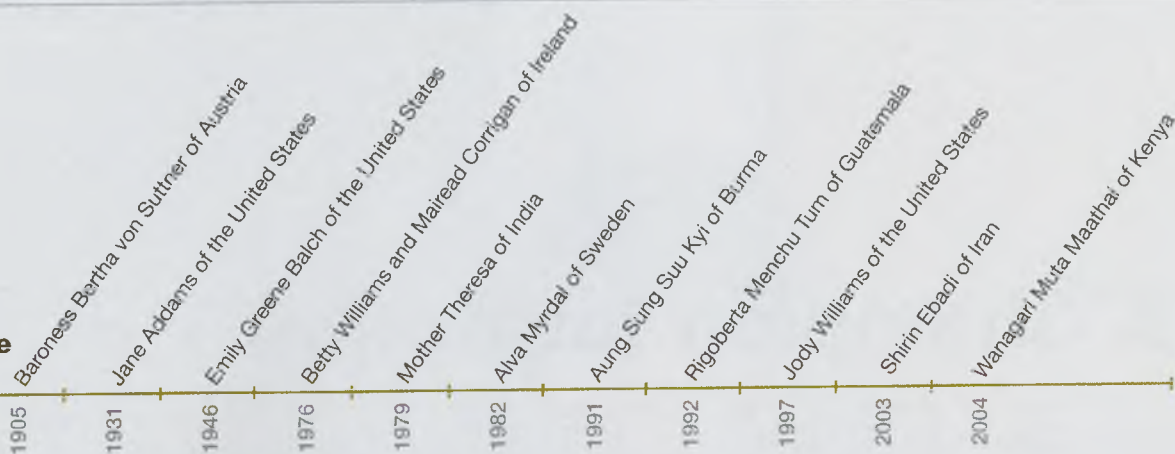
Have your three daughters read the book?

This is the first book all of my daughters and my husband have read.

Do you have favorites among the winners?

I loved the Baroness Bertha von Suttner because she just kept sailing on. Even though she had no money, she lived like she did. The royalty who would not receive her when she was

Women Nobel Peace Prize Winners



growing up because her mother was a commoner loved having her come to court once she became a celebrity. I also really liked Jody Williams who created international law by walking right around the United States. She said, 'We're going to have a conference on land mines and if you don't want to do this, don't come.' She was brilliant. She brought in thousands of non-governmental organizations and they worked with nations of good will. They made something happen.

These women are courageous and intelligent but ultimately, some didn't accomplish what they set out to do.

Well who does? Nothing is ever finished. One that I was most disheartened by was the Irish women who went full blast for one year during "The Troubles," but the movement soon fell apart. What they wanted to do was stop the killing. They refused to get involved in any kind of political process. In one way, that is why it fell apart. On the other hand, there was a significant decrease in the number of murders. But if you go to the library and read about the time of The Troubles in Ireland and all the negotiations that went on, many of the books don't even mention these women.

Are there similarities between these women peace activists and women in the military you have researched?

They all have an expanded understanding of the universe. Both groups really want peace. Both groups

"As an activist, what would your priorities be to make the United States a leader in peace?"

Excerpt of epilogue, "Champions for Peace"

want to take action. A lot of peace people are off doing something airy fairy but these women were focused on making something happen.

Do you think a day will come when there is real global peace and everyone is living in a just society?

Well, I think you have to work at it and you continually have to work at it. I think women have to be far more analytical and informed about foreign policy, weapons and the military. Incredible things are happening in our military today. We are making war profitable. Officers are resigning from the military, starting a private firm and getting big contracts to do what they were doing in the military. In the 1930s there was something called the Nye Commission. Gerald Nye was a senator and his position was that no one should make a profit from war. We are doing exactly the opposite. We are saying we want people to compete in the Adam Smith market and make a profit off this. I think that is shocking.

In the last paragraph of the book you say that when it comes to being a champion for peace, the point is to change men's behavior. Can you elaborate?

The military is a male institution par excellence and so is the national government. If you don't like what they're doing, you need to understand them and understand their motives. We have to study

men's culture. A lot of feminists in women's studies, which I support, spend a lot of time talking about women and writing about women. Well, the men are the ones fighting wars, deciding to have wars and thinking wars work.

Do you buy into the idea that women are more inclined toward peace than men?

Having nothing to do with biology, women, simply by their social location, are more likely to get things through negotiation. Women's experience has not taught them violence is efficacious. Men are taught that violence can be efficacious and they are also taught you have to fight, even if you are going to lose, in order to have respect.

So, do women have something unique to offer the peace process?

We have women in Congress now and one thing is for sure, when they are there, issues are on the agenda which wouldn't otherwise be. So yes, having women in the peace process does make a difference.

How did you come up with this list of possible peace projects as your epilogue?

I was proofreading and I thought to myself, 'You need an action plan.' So I wrote it up at the last minute and sent it in. When you preach, you should offer some concrete possibilities before you say, 'Go out and take action.' ■



BUILDING FOR THE FOOTBALL FAITHFUL

FIU's Golden Panthers, the youngest team to transition from Division I-AA to Division I-A football, will soon be playing in a unique stadium complex that will enhance campus life in more ways than one.

By Karen Cochrane

They've been called Fall Cathedrals and Saturday Shrines, and their faithful speak of their stirring power in reverential tones. They are college football stadiums, and true fans will tell you a stadium's soul and spirit (only heathens think they don't possess them) are as integral to the college football experience as the tailgates, crowd, fight songs and players who leave their hearts on the field each week during the season.

As ESPN's Jim Caple writes in an article titled, "College Football Favorites," "NFL stadiums are just locations. College stadiums are destinations."

In March 2007, the university hopes to embark upon a renovation project of the FIU Stadium that will transcend sport and transform the University Park campus.

"In order to get the football program and the Athletic Department to the next level, an on-campus stadium is a must. Increasing the quality of campus life for our student body will be greatly enhanced with this stadium," says Athletic Director Pete Garcia. FIU, University of Florida and Florida State University are the only three universities in the state that currently enjoy on-campus stadiums.

In September, FIU's Board of Trustees approved construction of a multi-purpose facility that includes a \$29 million renovation of the present stadium and the construction of a \$24 million student

services center. The project will transform the home of FIU football into a 20,000 permanent-seat facility featuring a wrap-around concourse with a full-field view, club seats, video score board, stadium club and air-conditioned luxury suites. University officials will ask the Florida Board of Governors in January 2007 for final approval to proceed.

The 100,000-square-foot student services center will house undergraduate advising, admissions, financial aid, registration and records, cashier services and a welcome center. The innovative design twist nearly doubles the current space allotted those functions in Primera Casa, frees up significant space for badly needed classrooms, and provides a heretofore missing component of the FIU experience — a singular space to welcome and introduce students to campus life and traditions.

The inclusion of non-football-specific facilities in the plan reflects recognition nationwide of the need to maximize scarce resources — including land and funding — while improving campus life and the student experience.

"There is a trend for all stadiums to be multi-purpose," says Gerardo Prado, principal architect with HNTB, a Kansas City, Mo., firm specializing in the planning and design of sports facilities. HNTB has overseen stadium renovations such as Ohio Stadium at The Ohio State University, Sanford

"In order to get the football program and the Athletic Department to the next level, an on-campus stadium is a must."

Pete Garcia,
FIU athletic
director

Stadium at University of Georgia and Commonwealth Stadium at University of Kentucky. Prado says combining a football stadium with a student welcome center has been considered before although he's not aware of any stadium that's actually incorporated the concept.

University officials hope to begin the stadium renovations in March 2007 and complete them by fall 2008. The student support complex should be finished in 2009. Future phases, including construction of additional seats, will be initiated as warranted by community support.

Almost two-thirds of the project will be funded from existing sources such as athletic fees, NCAA funds and existing vendor contributions. Future ticket sales will be applied toward financing the improvements.

Joe Velasco, executive director of FIU's Athletic Association, says the university will go public with a campaign in late 2006 to secure stadium naming rights and sell stadium suites and corporate sponsorship packages. This additional revenue stream is expected to generate \$3.9 million annually.

Says Velasco, "This isn't about just helping the football program. It's about improving the social experience on campus for our students, alumni and the community." ■



New Athletic Director Pete Garcia talks with the media at a press conference announcing his appointment at FIU.

New Athletic Director promises hard work, tough love and plenty of passion

By Deborah O'Neil

On day one of his new job, Athletic Director Pete Garcia faced what he hopes will go down as the worst and last controversy of FIU's sports programs – the embarrassing brawl between FIU and UM football players that rocketed the teams into the national spotlight.

Garcia meted out swift sanctions meant to send a message: FIU will not tolerate this kind of behavior. "We're going to do everything in our power to make sure nothing remotely close to this will ever happen again with any institution we play in any sport," Garcia said.

Behind FIU's handling of the student-athletes was a lesson Garcia intends to be more positive than punitive – for instance, the requirement that the players complete community service working with youth. "Every student-athlete that comes into this university will be taught what is acceptable behavior. Like it or not, they are role models for our community. The most important thing

is that we make sure we use this to teach young kids out there that this was not acceptable behavior."

Garcia, 45, joins FIU from the University of Miami, where he was senior associate director for External Operations. Born in Cuba and raised in Hialeah, Garcia is a lifelong sports fan who never had time to play himself. FIU is counting on his years of sports management and recruiting experience with UM and the NFL's Cleveland Browns to make FIU's athletics programs excel.

"Pete's outstanding reputation in the world of sports administration tells us he is the right person to tackle the challenges as our program continues to reach new levels," said President Modesto A. Maidique. "He is going to lead the university into a new era of athletics."

Garcia recently laid out his vision for the future of FIU athletics with FIU Magazine.

What attracted you to FIU?

I like to build things. FIU has been put on the map already. Building it to the next level really excites me. I'm very grateful to the South Florida community for taking



SAVE THE DATE: As this issue was going to press, it was announced that the FIU and UM football teams will meet again on Saturday, Oct. 6, 2007, in the Orange Bowl. Details will follow as soon as they become known.

in my family. If I can repay South Florida by building this program, I will be very satisfied.

What do you hope to accomplish at FIU?

My vision is use athletics to continue to build this university's growth. Together, they become bigger and stronger than if they were separate. What FIU has accomplished is nothing short of remarkable. What we could accomplish in the future is going to surprise people.

What are your plans for the immediate future?

I will evaluate whether we have the adequate resources and if they are being used properly. Then, I have to evaluate everyone who is here and make sure they have the work ethic, character, passion and vision.

And long term?

You develop and implement a plan for success. If you don't have the proper resources, you go get them. If people need to be added, you add them. If people need to be replaced, you replace them. The important thing is to look at the entire picture.

How would you assess the potential of our football team?

The potential is unlimited but it is going to take a lot of hard work. It is going to take a strategy to get our students and alumni to come out. There is a lot that goes into it and it's not just out on the football field.

What is your approach to recruiting?

You have to identify who is making the decisions. Is it the student-athlete, the mom or a minister? Make sure you are recruiting the right one. It is also about recruiting the ones you have. It's twice as important to keep the good ones already playing for you.

How can FIU become more competitive in recruiting top athletes?

There is enough talent in South Florida, from Orlando and Tampa on south for everybody. I always say, don't worry about the other schools. Worry about who you are signing. Obviously, you have to start winning at some point. Athletes don't want to play on losing teams. FIU has a new athletic training room, a new student center and soon a

new stadium. Those are the things that are going to make a difference to student-athletes.

What expectations will you set for student-athletes?

We will do things the right way at FIU. We will have discipline. We will not take shortcuts. And we will out-work everyone else. Good student-athletes want somebody who is going to make them better. I'll be there to show support, and I will be there to show tough love.

How can FIU rally greater fan support for all athletic programs?

Winning is important but one of the things we have to look at is what type of experience our alumni and students have at these events. Are people having fun? They will come if you are winning and it is fun. You have to make it something for the whole family. One of the things that I am going to propose for the new stadium is a family section with a family parking lot.

How important will fund raising be for the future?

It is very important. Generating revenue is going to be extremely critical if we want to compete at a higher level. A lot of FIU alumni are giving to a lot of causes that are all good causes but they aren't FIU. We have to get FIU alumni to give to their university to better all our programs and to give more value to their degrees.

President Maidique told you, "I want to win." That's a tall order.

I'm honored that he has shown that kind of faith in me. To me, it is personal. I have to make sure I don't let him down, FIU down or this community down.

What message do you have for FIU's alumni?

The law school, the medical school and the new stadium are going to take the university to a completely new level. Right now we need everyone to come together to make that happen. This is something special and it is all about them. When student-athletes look up into the stands and see their family and friends, it takes on a little bit more importance because you can't let those people down. If you are passionate about FIU, it becomes personal. ■

ALUMNI

Will R. Trueba, Jr., Esq. '90
President Alumni Association



Dear FIU Alumni and Friends of the University:

This fall, I had the pleasure and privilege of participating in two FIU traditions: Freshman Convocation and the Trail of the Torch. I cannot overstate the spirit and affinity generated and expressed by the students and the other participants at these events. Experiencing the Trail of the Torch reaffirmed for me why it won the CASE Gold Medal Award for Best Student Involvement Program in 2005 (out of more than 1,300 universities). For me, the experience can only be compared to the exhilaration I felt at the first FIU football game four years ago as more than 17,000 FIU fans cheered not just for our team, but because FIU was participating in NCAA football – what a milestone.

As an alumnus who attended FIU in the 1980s, I am truly amazed to see the spirit of Blue & Gold prevalent on campus and spreading beyond. While I know that same spirit has always existed, what I witnessed at these recent events was magnified and widespread – in one word, it was phenomenal. Inevitably, this same pride for our alma mater will spread to all 120,000 of us. Case in point, this past fall, while attending the FIU football game at the University of Maryland, I had the good fortune of catching up with a fellow FIU alumnus and star tennis player, Michael Cianfone (Class of 1974). He was so impressed with all the news of FIU's achievements over the past 20 years and was proud to be cheering on our team.

A few years ago, a group of our Board members met over a period of many months to develop a strategic five-year plan for the FIU Alumni Association. One of the primary issues we addressed was increasing active participation in our organization. We concluded that we needed to place special marketing emphasis on attracting more “student alumni” and recent graduates. Our Alumni Association's increase in active membership and the success of the Trail of the Torch and Freshman Convocation leave no doubt we were correct in targeting FIU students. Under the direction of the Alumni Relations team, the FIU Student Alumni Association is the largest student organization at FIU with more than 1,500 members. But more importantly, its members express an affinity for FIU that will last a lifetime.

Whether you graduated in the 70s or more recently, I encourage each of you to join our Alumni Association, come back to FIU and participate. You too will “Feel the Pride” – the same pride expressed by more than 800 students during the Trail of the Torch as they were led by the FIU Cheerleaders and Roary carrying the FIU Torch, singing the FIU Alma Mater and other FIU cheers to the beat of the FIU marching band.

In the Spirit of Blue & Gold,

William R. Trueba, Jr.

Ty Javellana, CPA '88 MST '98, immediate past president of the Alumni Association, lights the FIU Torch of Knowledge at the 2005 Torch Gala.



Torch Awards Gala set for March 2007

The FIU Alumni Association is bringing the 2006 Torch Awards Gala home to the Graham Center Ballroom at University Park on March 31, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

The Torch Awards, named for FIU's Torch of Knowledge, Service and Understanding, recognize outstanding alumni and faculty who have made significant contributions throughout the community. The gala has grown each year, making it one of FIU's signature events. Plans are underway to make the 2006 Gala bigger and better than ever.

Past Torch Award recipients include Stephanie A. Burns '77, president and CEO of Dow Corning; Major League Baseball all-star Mike Lowell '97; and Stephen M. Fain, FIU professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.

For more information on sponsorships or to purchase tickets, please contact Alumni Relations at (305) 348-3334. Details are also available at www.fiu alumni.com/torchawards.htm. ■



Feel the Pride

Nearly two dozen incoming freshmen took part in the first-ever Panther Camp in August.



Panther Camp makes freshmen roar with pride

Twenty-three students were “Pantherized” in FIU’s first Panther Camp, a new three-day program that aims to encourage active relationships among incoming students, faculty and staff and to foster the student leaders of tomorrow.

A collaborative program between Alumni Relations, Campus Life, the Office of Orientation & Commuter Student Services and Residential Life, Panther Camp activities promote school spirit and teach students about FIU and its traditions.

“I wanted to ‘pantherize’ new students and teach them more about FIU,” said Sean Kramer ’95, director of Student and Young Alumni Programs. “I wanted them to make friends so they wouldn’t feel overwhelmed by their first year at the university. My goal was to get them to come out of this experience bleeding blue and gold.”

The first camp, held this year at Lake Worth in August, was a success evidenced by the notes the participating Golden Panthers wrote in the Panther Camp Diary. The diary will be updated every year as more and more new freshmen sign up for the program.

“I had a great time and everything was the bomb,” wrote Marvin Carranza, 18. “I’m really glad that I decided to go and that I now know what it means to be a Panther for life.”

Maria Mur, 18, said, “I feel amazing about our future at FIU. I strongly believe we are going to enjoy FIU like crazy.”

Fireworks greeted the annual lighting of the Torch at the 2006 Trail of the Torch event for students.



Freshmen can sign up for next year’s Panther Camp at Freshman Orientation or by calling the Office of Orientation & Commuter Services at 305-348-6414. ■

Trail of the Torch welcomes freshmen

More than 800 students gathered at University Park for the 2006 Trail of the Torch during Welcome Week in August. The event, designed to promote Panther Pride and welcome incoming freshmen to FIU, is organized by the Student Alumni Association with funding assistance from the Student Government Association.

Roary led the pack of Golden Panthers who chanted and sang FIU cheers as they made their way through the two-mile trek from the center of UP (they began behind Primera Casa) around campus to the residence halls and back. After completing the route, students enjoyed food, drinks, fun giveaways and fireworks at a foam party held between the Blue and Gold parking garages.

The annual tradition was established three years ago when SAA learned that the university’s iconic Torch of Knowledge, Service and Understanding – usually lit on the first day of a new academic year – would remain extinguished due to budget cuts.

“We at SAA were looking for ways to create richer traditions on campus,” said Bryon Tompkins, founder of the event. “We wanted to have a symbolic ceremony to welcome both old and new students and alumni back to FIU and raise the profile of

Students wound their way across campus on a two-mile procession to the lighting of the Torch ceremony.



the university in the process.”

With the guidance of Sean Kramer ’95, of Alumni Relations, students have organized the candlelight procession since 2003. As a result, SGA will now fund the lighting of the Torch on such special occasions as Freshman Convocation, commencements and big sporting wins.

The event received a Gold Medal for Excellence in student programs from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education in 2005. ■

Alumni Association membership tops 10,000

Your FIU Alumni Association has reached another milestone with our membership topping 10,000 for the first time in FIU history. Thank you to all the wonderful FIU students, alumni, families, friends, faculty, staff and fans for making this possible.

Your membership dues help support our award-winning FIU Magazine, monthly e-newsletters, student scholarships, alumni career fairs, alumni reunions, chapter programs and athletic pre-game events that keep more than 120,000 Golden Panthers connected to FIU.

It’s never too late to become a card-carrying member and start taking advantage of our many member benefits. To view a listing of our latest Panther Perks, please visit www.fiu alumni.com/benefits.htm.

Join today at www.fiu alumni.com or call 800-FIU-ALUM. Feel the Pride and Carry the Card. Membership has its privileges! ■

ALUMNI

Just a few of the alumni and friends who took the YUPA inaugural cruise.



YUPA! inaugural cruise huge success

YUPA! (Young Urban Professional Alumni), a special-interest chapter of the Alumni Association for graduates 39 years of age and younger, hosted its first cruise August 24-28 to Key West, Florida, and Calica, Mexico, aboard the Carnival Cruise Lines' Imagination. Although the cruise was hosted by YUPA, it wasn't just young alumni who attended; a total of 77 people, including students, friends, children and guests, were present. Golden Panther hospitality got the cruise off to a great start with a welcome reception aboard ship on Thursday, Aug. 24. Additionally, all FIU Alumni Association members received a special token bag in their cabin when they arrived. The hospitality continued with an informal happy hour on Sunday, Aug. 27.

The next YUPA cruise is scheduled for May 26-June 2, 2007. This seven-day

cruise will visit Cozumel, Mexico; Grand Cayman, Grand Cayman Islands; and Ocho Rios, Jamaica. For more information or for reservations, please call 305-348-6490 or 888-340-7928. ■

YUPA! established as official alumni chapter

YUPA! (Young Urban Professional Alumni) is now an official special-interest alumni chapter of the FIU Alumni Association. The chapter's mission is to provide alumni who are 39 years of age or younger with an opportunity to interact and network with one another.

On Saturday, Feb. 10, 2007, YUPA! will launch its future aboard the Renaissance Aqua Lounge Yacht. The group will embark on a tour of Biscayne Bay at 5:30 p.m. and will return at 10 p.m. If you would like to see the yacht, please visit www.renaissanceonthebay.com.

The cost of the event is \$20 for FIU Alumni Association members and \$45 for non-members. The non-member cost includes an annual membership in the Alumni Association. Unlimited hors d'oeuvres and refreshments will be provided. To RSVP, please email alumni@fiu.edu or call 800-FIU-ALUM.

Additionally, YUPA! is planning numerous signature events in 2007: a progressive dinner and night on South Beach, a unique

networking event, casino night, networking breakfasts, and happy hours.

The YUPA! Board of Directors looks forward to your active participation in 2007. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Frank J. Pena '99, chapter president, at 305-761-7763. ■

Here is your 2006-2007 YUPA! Board:

President:

Frank Pena

President-Elect:

George Corton

Vice President of Membership:

Oscar Grau

Vice President of Finance:

Manny Paucar

Vice President of Events:

Scarlette Carballo

Dianne Cordova

Alumni, Women's Center launch mentoring program

A new Mentoring Partnerships Program brings together female students with faculty and alumnae who can help ease the transition from the classroom to professional future. The program is a collaboration between the FIU Women's Center and Alumni Relations.

"Students and professionals have commented on the connection it provides

For the Diazes, education is all in the family – and FIU



By Martin Haro '05

The importance of education was a value that Lázaro and Lucy Diaz set out to share with their six children. Neither had an opportunity to go to college, but they made sure all of their children did.

Today, five of six of the Díaz children have graduated from FIU and the youngest, Carlos, 19, is currently attending the

Honors College. In September, the family was recognized during Freshman Convocation by FIU President Modesto A. Maidique. The Diazes, Maidique said, "define the words 'FIU family' perhaps better than anyone in the university's history."

The Díaz family alumni include: Jorge Díaz '83; José Manuel Díaz '86; Lissette Díaz

them with to the university,” said Suzanne Onorato, associate director for the Women’s Center.

To become active in the program, both students and mentors complete an involvement form, which is used to match pairs based on common skills and interests. The program includes interactive activities such as workshops and “meet-and-greet” events, but the real focus is on the pairs meeting independently at least twice a week to share ideas and develop their relationship.

The next recruitment period will begin in April 2007, but applications are accepted year round. Program details and an application can be obtained online at www.fiu.edu/~women. For more information, please contact Suzanne Onorato at 305-348-1506. ■

Alumni getaways planned to Greece, Scandinavia

Two exciting cruises have been planned for the Alumni Association’s 2007 Golden Panthers Getaways educational and travel programs – “Path of the Phoenicians” and “Scandinavian Splendors”. Home base for the travel adventures will be Oceania Cruises’ mid-size flagship, Regatta.

The 10-day Path of the Phoenicians cruise from Athens to Venice will depart on April 27, 2007, and will be hosted by

Mrs. Betty Perry, former First Lady of FIU and wife of FIU’s founding president, the late Charles E. Perry. The cruise will follow ancient trade routes through the eastern Mediterranean and Greek Isles with port calls in Greece, Turkey, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia and Italy.

The Scandinavian Splendors Cruise from Stockholm to London departs on June 30, 2007, and will be hosted by Alumni Association Executive Director Bill Draughon and his wife Dale. Consistently ranked as a favorite among travelers, this cruise will visit distinctive cities such as Stockholm, Copenhagen, Tallinn, Berlin, Amsterdam and London. One of the highlights will be spending three days in beautiful St. Petersburg, Russia. FIU professor Ralph Clem of the Department of International Relations and Geography will provide enrichment lectures throughout the journey.

As part of its collaboration with FIU, Oceania Cruises makes a donation to FIU in support of the Alumni Association’s student scholarships and the international programs of the Department of International Relations.

Currently, both cruises are sold out. Alumni can be put on a priority wait-list by contacting Oceania at 800-404-6313 and requesting the FIU alumni promotion. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS<<<<<

FIUAA BOD Meeting

When: Tues., Feb. 13, 2007, 6:30 p.m.
Where: MARC International Pavilion
Contact: Alina Alfonso, 305-348-7271

2006 Torch Awards Gala

When: March 31, 2007
Where: Graham Center Ballroom
FIU University Park campus
Contact: RSVP to Jennifer Restrepo at restrepj@fiu.edu or 305-348-0159

FIUAA BOD Meeting

When: Tuesday, April 17, 2007, 6:30 p.m.
Where: MARC International Pavilion
Contact: Alina Alfonso, 305-348-7271

FIU Graduation Cruise to Bahamas

When: Fri.-Mon., May 4-7, 2007
Where: Onboard Carnival’s Fascination
Contact: FIU Travel, Graham Center 168,
305-348-6490 or 888-340-7928

11th Annual FIU Scholarship Golf Tournament

When: Friday, May 18, 2007, 8 a.m.
Where: Doral Golf Resort and Spa
Contact: RSVP to Jennifer Restrepo at restrepj@fiu.edu or 305-348-0159

5th Annual Alumni Association Fishing Tournament

When: Saturday, June 16, 2007
Where: Miami Beach Marina with Monty’s South Beach post-tournament dock party
Contact: RSVP to Jennifer Restrepo at restrepj@fiu.edu or 305-348-0159

Viera '97, MS '99; Elizabeth Díaz-Perez '98, MSW '01 and Daniel Díaz '94.

They represent the growing number of South Florida families who have established an educational legacy at FIU.

“My parents created a sense among us of the huge privilege that it was to educate ourselves,” said José. “I can remember my father’s quote from 20 years ago

very clearly. He told me, in broken English, ‘You can do whatever you want, but whatever you do, be the best.’”

The honor of being recognized by his alma mater filled Jorge with Panther Pride.

“It was great having Dr. Maidique recognize my father and mother for their attention to our education and our family for having earned

[a cumulative] seven degrees to date,” he said.

His sister, Lisette, also appreciates the recognition. “Education is something that can never be taken away from us, after all,” she said.

As more and more families look to FIU for their children’s higher education, the university remains committed to its mission of serving the

community by providing high-quality and affordable education to all.

“Going to college was not only encouraged, but expected of us. It was the next step in our education,” said Elizabeth. “I could study whatever I liked just as long as I studied. It is nice to see FIU acknowledging family as an integral part of your education.” ■

ALUMNI

Bill Draughon (center) welcomes Ralph Oquendo '73 and Gladys Baker, who traveled from Amsterdam for the event.



Golden Panthers feel silver pride

Nearly 120 alumni from the classes of 1972-'81, family and friends attended the inaugural FIU Alumni Association Silver Pride Brunch & Silver Pride Induction Ceremony in the new Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall College of Law Atrium at University Park during Homecoming Weekend 2006 in November.

The FIU Alumni Association hosted the event to acknowledge 25 years or more since the honored classes' graduation.

College of Education Interim Dean Judith Blucker and Chancellor of the State University System and FIU's Immediate Past Provost Mark Rosenberg recognized the achievements of the classes of 1972-'81 and praised them for paving the way for the university's subsequent success.

School of Health & Social Sciences graduate Ralph Oquendo '73 traveled from the Netherlands especially for the Silver Pride ceremony.

"It's fantastic to be back," he said. "I knew back then that FIU would become what it is today because of the dedication of its faculty."

Althea McMillan '79, a graduate of the College of Education, said the event was a long time coming.

"One of the things I got out of this ceremony is that it's important that we all come back to build on the foundation that was laid out years ago," she said. "I believe in supporting my university." ■

CLASS NOTES

1970s

Muhammed Abba Aji '79, MPA '82 is currently serving a four-year term as a senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria following his April 2003 election to represent the Borno Central Senatorial District of the Borno State of Nigeria.



Elizabeth M. Hernandez '79, city attorney of Coral Gables, was recently recognized by the Miami-Dade County Commission as an honoree of the "In the Company of Women" award during Women's

History Month, 2006. She was recognized for her contributions to improving the quality of life and justice in the community and, specifically, her role in planning and providing diversity sensitivity training seminars to judges in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit. Hernandez was recently named chair-elect of the Florida Bar Association's City, County and Local Government Section and is incoming president of the Florida Municipal Attorneys Association.

Judy Karpis '79, MS '81, Ed.D. '92 is a dental hygienist who has been writing online curricula for medical and dental professionals for more than five years. Most recently, she began doing photojournalism, photographing, among others, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

Joseph S. Miranti '75 has spent nearly 30 years working in county government. He most recently served as county manager of Madison County in North Florida.

1980s

Robin A. Kolodny Gaddy Ph.D. '85 contributed research that went into "The Election After Reform," a book published last spring that includes chapters on political parties, 527 committees and interest groups, television ads, the ground war and presidential campaigns.



Felicia B. Bryn '86 released a memoir titled "Never Forget to Lie" last spring, recounting her struggle as a young girl, first to survive the Holocaust as a hidden child and then to uncover the truth amid the

lies essential to her survival. You can read more about the book at: <http://www.trafford.com>. For 12 years, Bryn was the director of Russian Outreach, Inc., a non-profit organization initiated by her son, Rabbi David Bryn OBM, which aids Russian immigrants in resettling in the South Florida area. Since its inception in June of 1993, she has helped hundreds of Russian immigrants with various needs.

Edward J. Thompson, Jr. '86 was named vice president of U.S. Operations for the Miami-based global IT consultancy firm Neoris in late 2005.

Elaine L. Andrews '87, an artist, recently showed some of her artwork in New York City. You can view her work (including some created at FIU) on her website, www.miamiwatercolor.org.



Rodrigo Pigna '87 has accepted a position as the director of engineering at Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam Inc.'s Miami office. He will be responsible for the management and operation of the

firm's professional planning and engineering practice in South Florida. Pigna has worked on several high-profile projects with the Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Department and his roster of former clients includes private developers, local governments and the Florida Department of Transportation.

1990s

Magaly N. Prezeau '90, MPH '94 is currently a working member of the U.S. Southern Command Haiti Assessment Workgroup. In the past, she has served as a key, Haiti-specific consultant for the Florida Association for Voluntary Action in the Caribbean and the Americas and contracted with Development Alternative, Inc. in Haiti to conduct market research, trade shows and promotion of businesses importing from Haiti to the United States. She has also coordinated USAID-funded diaspora outreach events in Florida.



Ana L. Cruz-Taura '94 and **Rolando E. Cruz-Taura '93** recently opened Fifty Restaurant & Lounge at 444 Ocean Drive on South Beach. The restaurant's menu is progressive American.

Sue A. White '94 has served on the Governor's "491" Board of Clinical Social

Feel the Pride

Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Mental Health Counselors. She has been involved in volunteering with a variety of mental health venues with the Agency for Health Care Administration and Guardian Ad Litem program and is a certified expert witness in the family courts. She currently operates a private practice in Coral Gables.

Andy R. Green '95 is a dermatologist in a private practice in North Miami Beach. He completed his residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital in 2003.

Rebecca H. Markham '95, MS '01 has taken a post-doctoral position in the Department of Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin.

Frederick W. Bredemeyer II '96, deputy director for operations for the Miami Parking Authority, was recently tapped as a 2006-'08 board member and officer for Kristi House, an organization that provides a healing environment for child victims of sexual abuse and their families through community collaboration and system coordination.

Alejandro A. Crespo '96, MA '00 was recently promoted to the post of director by the accounting firm of Morrison Brown Argiz & Farra LLP.

Sandra M. Ferrera Esq. '96 was named partner at the law firm of Meland Russin & Budwick P.A. in May. Ferrera joined the firm in 2002. She was also recently elected to her fourth term as director and officer of the Cuban American Bar Association and serves as treasurer and editor-in-chief of the group's "CABA Briefs." She lives in Coral Gables, Fla.

Marlene Marcos '96 was married to Juan Carlos in a September wedding in Coral Gables Lutheran Church.

Claudia Alejandra McLaughlin (Canales) '96 and her husband Gary John McLaughlin welcomed their first baby, Kaleigh Gabriela, on March 17, 2006 (St. Patrick's Day).

Sean P. Kramer '96 and his wife **Dr. Anna McConnell Kramer** welcomed their second baby girl, Sara Rose, on Aug. 15 (sister Emma Shay is 14 months older). Kramer is the director of Student and Young Alumni Programs in Alumni Relations at FIU; he and his family live in Palmetto Bay, Fla.

Veneshia C. Gonzalez '98 has been a National Board certified teacher since 2004. She is currently pursuing a master's degree to teach English to non-English speakers. She has been married for seven years and has a daughter, 6, and a ten-month-old son.

Tak Lung R. Tang '98 recently had a baby girl named Hally Victoria Tang.

Fabian Balepogi '99 and **Lourdes "Luly" Carreras Balepogi '00** welcomed their second son, Marcelo Javier (7 lbs., 10 oz.), last summer.

Antonio Zamora, Jr. '99, MST '01 a certified public accountant with the firm of Kaufman Rossin & Company, P.A., in Miami, was recently tapped as a 2006-'08 board member and officer for Kristi House.

2000s

Cindy Castelblanco '00, MS '04 married Juan Serrato on Nov. 19, 2005, at St. Hugh Catholic Church. They had a Tiffany & Co.-themed reception at the Bank of America Tower at International Place.

Rona Carter '01, MS '05 was recently awarded a pre-doctoral fellowship from the American Psychological Association's Minority Fellowship Program Training Grant.

Michelle M. Castro '01 has accepted a position as assistant dean of students/coordinator for Greek Life at the University of Miami, following an absence from Miami of almost five years.

Jenny Torres, Esq. '01 and **Oscar Grau '03** were married in September. They are currently working and living in Miami. She recently won her first trial in Palm Beach County, with a \$193,000 verdict.

Mary E. Auger '02, MPH '04 married Capt. Jason Houston, U.S. Air Force, on Nov. 11, 2005. They are currently living in Eagle River, Ala.

Jason T. Quimby '02 was recently named vice president of Miami-based Iberia Tiles.

Aravinthan Arunachalam '03 was awarded the Teaching Assistant Excellence in Teaching Award in 2006 by the FIU Academy of the Arts of Teaching. He was one of nine recipients of the university-wide award for the year 2005-'06.

Jose Gomez '03 recently accepted a job as senior loan officer in the company Homestead Mortgage. He previously worked at the FIU Bookstore as merchandise manager.

Marilyn Marrero '03 married Jonathan Marrero on Nov. 5, 2005, at the First Methodist Church of Coral Gables.

Zakiat N. Darajat '03 has entered first year studies at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg, WV. While at FIU she received the Florida Gold Seal Scholarship and the FIU Nursing Scholarship.

Keith H. Tintle '03 has recently accepted a position as an account executive at PUSH, a full-service branding agency in Orlando. He will be responsible for account management, strategic planning and implementation.

Heidi Markovitz '04 recently relocated to Washington, D.C., where she has taken a position with the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

Claudio D. Ortiz MS '05, a doctoral candidate in the Life Span Development Science Program, has been awarded a pre-doctoral fellowship from the American Psychological Association's Minority Fellowship Program Training Grant.

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donor profile



From left to right : Honors College student ambassadors Katherine Chapman, Sofia Cueto, Alejandro (Alex) Diaz-Ferguson and Allison Leonard in a First Generation Student Campaign Planning Meeting.

A brighter future for first generation college students

By Sue Arrowsmith '06

Students, faculty, alumni and FIU supporters together pledged \$530,000 for FIU's First Generation Fund for student scholarships.

Created by the 2006 Florida Legislature, The First Generation Matching Grant Program will distribute \$6.5 million to public universities statewide for needy students. Under the program, the state will match private donations made to the FIU First Generation Scholarship Fund dollar-for-dollar, bringing the university's total grant pool to \$1.06 million. The scholarships will be awarded to first-generation, first-time-in-college freshmen who do not have enough to pay their education costs after receiving financial aid.

Upon hearing about the program, a group of Honors College Student Ambassadors organized a fund-raising initiative. Their campaign entailed several planning meetings and a training session on fund raising provided by University Advancement. The students then made presentations in Honors College classes asking their fellow students to pitch in for the cause.

“Education and the opportunity to access higher education are tremendously important to me.”

—
Dany G. Johnson,
FIU Foundation member and
First Generation Fund donor

Katherine Chapman, a science major, got involved by collecting funds from family, friends and making classroom presentations to her peers.

“We decided to focus on Honors College students because many of them are attending school with scholarships,” said Chapman, who personally raised about \$200.

Leading donations came from the Bachelor Foundation, which made a \$150,000 three-year pledge and from FIU Foundation member Dany G. Johnson, who gave \$100,000. Talk of the scholarship program at a recent Foundation board meeting instantly struck a chord with the longtime education advocate, who was intrigued by the matching component.

“The matching feature is powerful,” said Johnson, CEO of JDM Partners. “It allows my donation to work twice as hard and impact a greater amount of lives. That’s a deal that you never pass by.”

Johnson said the program aligns perfectly with her previous philanthropic efforts.

“Education and the opportunity to access higher education are

tremendously important to me,” said Johnson, who founded The Beacon Experience, an organization that provides young children with the tools and financial resources to continue their education beyond high school.

Together with her husband, actor Dwayne Johnson, aka “The Rock,” she also oversees The Dwayne Johnson Rock Foundation, which distributes toys to hospitalized children throughout the nation.

“There are so many significant benefits to the first-generation program,” said Johnson. “At the core, we are sending students to a tremendous university. That, in itself, can provide these students with the ability to direct not only their lives to even greater heights, but also positively affect the lives of their families.”

For many FIU students, financial aid is often not enough to cover all necessary college education expenses. The grant money will be used to fill in the gaps and allow students to focus on school full-time. For the 2006-07 academic year the minimum award amount is \$250 and the maximum is \$1,000. ■

Joseph L. Caruncho '81

Bachelor's of Business Administration, finance major

Profession: Chairman & CEO, Preferred Care Partners, licensed attorney. **FIU Affiliations:** Member, Alumni Association Board of Directors; Member, FIU Foundation Board of Directors; Member, College of Business Dean's Council

Justo Luis Pozo '80

Bachelor's of Business Administration, accounting major

Profession: President, Preferred Care Partners, Inc.
FIU Affiliations: Board of Directors Alumni Association

How has your FIU education helped you?

Caruncho: After FIU, I obtained a law degree and practiced 13 years as a corporate lawyer. Then, I co-founded Preferred Care Partners, which has been a tremendous success. Both careers were made possible by the knowledge, tools, skills and discipline that I obtained from FIU. In addition, as an evening student working full time, there were times when my ambitious dreams appeared unachievable. However, the faculty at the business school served as role models and encouraged me to press on.

Pozo: As president of one of South Florida's largest Medicare health plans, I feel that I am at the top of my game. The comprehensive academic business tools provided to me at FIU set the stage for my personal and professional career, initially as an accountant for 18 years and then in the entrepreneurial transition of building a \$300 million-a-year successful business.

What are your favorite memories of FIU?

Caruncho: There were round robin competitions held at the tennis courts in the early evenings. After a long day at the office, the opportunity to gather with friends to play tennis and catch up was a great way to wind down and get ready to learn.

Pozo: My most favorite memory is meeting my wife in December of 1979 in PC 326 and all the times we spent together on campus "penniless," as students should be. Twenty-six years later, four kids, one dog, and an auto tag that reads "PC326", they were actually much simpler times.

Why is it important to belong to the Alumni Association?

Caruncho: The value of our degree increases as the prestige and importance of FIU increases. And the best way to increase the value of FIU is to influence the significant community of alumni and to focus that collective voice to support the vision of President Maidique as he continues to build the university. And just as we had mentors to get us on our way, we owe it to current and future students to give back to the university.

Pozo: Every alumnus is a part of FIU, the opportunity to be directing the association and how we position and direct the alumni voice is critical as FIU continues to position itself as a global leader and the association strengthens the buy-in from the 100,000 plus alumni.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

Caruncho: My most significant achievement is raising two beautiful kids who are decent, loving and hardworking, and who have a passion for life and fulfilling their dreams. In my professional life, I am most proud of having been part of putting together a great team to make the vision of Preferred Care a reality when most people said it could not be accomplished.

Pozo: My proudest accomplishment is my family. Without their support I would not have had the courage to risk my prior life and venture into what was at the time (1998) a pioneering health care model which was unproven.



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FIU alumni Joseph Caruncho '81 (left) and Justo Pozo '80 (right) met at FIU and later founded Preferred Care Partners.

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