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M A G A Z I N E

The Last Hope

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on the cover



The Last Hope

Haitian immigrant Cidoine Casimir, photographed by Angel Valentin, was held at Krome Detention Center for 32 months before FIU students in the College of Law's Costa Immigration Clinic took over his case. Today Casimir is one of the success stories of the clinic, one of three where law students provide legal assistance to vulnerable populations as part of their education. The law clinics are making important contributions in the community as the College of Law builds a reputation for academic excellence.

in the next issue



Sugar as Fuel

With a new \$1 million state grant, researchers in FIU's Applied Research Center will investigate

whether Florida sugar bagasse, a by-product of sugar production, can be converted into clean-burning ethanol fuel. The project comes at a time when the development of alternative fuel sources stands at the forefront of scientific inquiry and policy debate.

in this issue

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Former football star realizes NFL dream

Former Golden Panthers football defensive leader Nick Turnbull goes to the Super Bowl with the Chicago Bears.

from the editor



Dear Readers,

In this issue we spotlight the FIU College of Law, which opened its doors five years ago with a promise to do things differently. For one, this law school would be a high-quality alternative for aspiring lawyers unable to afford pricey private legal education. The curriculum would capitalize on Miami's strengths by emphasizing international and comparative law. And each student's legal education would be infused with what Ruth Bader Ginsburg has described as a regard for law as a public calling.

So far, the results have been spectacular. The community celebrated the accomplishments of the law school, its faculty and its alumni in February during the dedication of its new facilities, Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall, now a signature building of the University Park campus. The dedication, attended by community leaders and university supporters, was a proud moment in FIU history.

One of the distinctive programs of the new law school is its Carlos A. Costa Immigration and Human Rights Clinic. The clinic responds to a pressing need in the community while providing students with unparalleled legal experience. Under the direction of professor Troy Elder, the students at the law clinic are tackling immigration cases on behalf of refugees who have nowhere left to turn. Most recently, the students have filed a class action lawsuit against the U.S. government to challenge immigration policies toward Haitian refugees.

The students at the immigration clinic are forging ahead at a time when the political environment toward new immigrants can be downright hostile. Standing up for the most vulnerable among us is hard work, yet the clinic has an ever-growing list of success stories. As you will read inside, the Costa Clinic embodies a spirit of boldness, determination and commitment to the community that are the hallmarks of this university.

I welcome your thoughts at oneild@fiu.edu.

Cheers,

Deborah O'Neil

Deborah O'Neil

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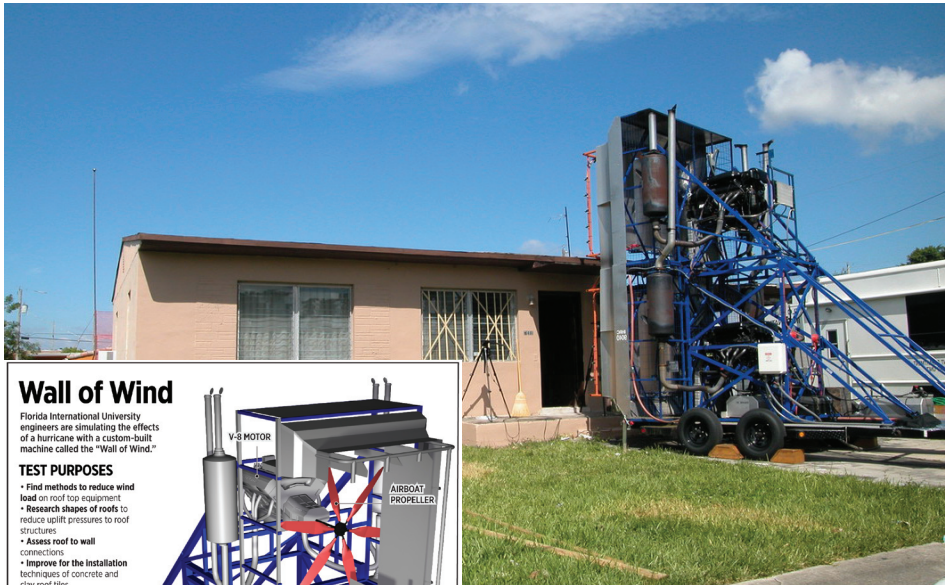
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in brief.

The International Hurricane Research Center tested its Wall of Wind last fall on a condemned house in Sweetwater. Under development is a new six-fan Wall of Wind that will create Category 4 hurricane winds.



Wall of Wind

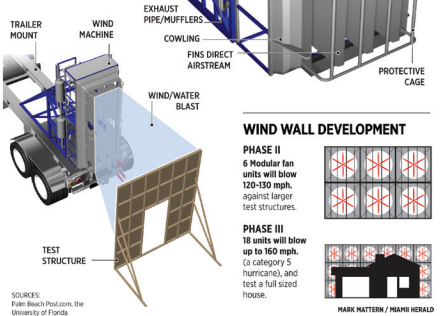
Florida International University engineers are simulating the effects of a hurricane with a custom-built machine called the "Wall of Wind."

TEST PURPOSES

- Find methods to reduce wind load on roof top equipment
- Research shapes of roofs to reduce uplift pressures to roof structures
- Assess roof to wall connections
- Improve for the installation techniques of concrete and clay roof tiles

PHASE ONE

Two 7-foot aircraft propellers each driven by Chevrolet V8 motors, are stacked within a frame. They blast test structures with hurricane-force, 120-mph gusts of wind. Water can be sprayed into the air stream to replicate wind-driven rain.



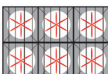
WIND WALL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE II

6 Modular fan units will blow 120-150 mph against larger test structures.

PHASE III

18 units will blow up to 160 mph (a category 5 hurricane), and test a full sized house.



Researchers to develop hurricane simulator

FIU's International Hurricane Research Center (IHRC) will be partnering with a private company to develop technology that will replicate a Category 4 hurricane for research.

The RenaissanceRe Wall of Wind, or WOW, will feature six industrial fans that will create hurricane conditions with 130-140 mph winds and rain in a laboratory environment, allowing scientists to precisely study the impact of severe storms on physical structures and building materials and

methods. The project is being developed with WeatherPredict Consulting, Inc., a U.S. affiliate of reinsurance and insurance provider RenaissanceRe Holdings Ltd.

The testing facility is slated to be completed in late summer 2007.

"We must devote more resources to understanding the impact of extreme storms on our residential and commercial structures, as well as the utilities and public works at the foundation of our communities," said IHRC Director Stephen Leatherman. "By exposing these to the WOW, we will be able to provide data that can help reduce property damage and, thus, better protect our families and neighbors against future storms." ■

Financing approved for football stadium

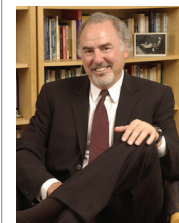
The Florida Board of Governors has given FIU the green light to finance the expansion of the football stadium, a multi-phase project that includes the creation of a student support complex. The January 2007 vote allows the university to issue bonds to finance the \$31 million first phase of the project, which will convert the stadium from

7,500 seats to an 18,000-seat facility with air-conditioned luxury suites, a wrap-around concourse with a full field view, 14 luxury suites, 1,400 club seats, video scoreboard and a stadium club. The first phase will be completed by the opening of the 2008 football season.

In the second phase of the project, a 100,000-square-foot student center will be built to house undergraduate advising, admissions, financial aid and welcome center. This phase, at a cost of approximately \$24 million, is expected to be completed in 2011.

The bonds will be repaid with funds from ticket sales, vendor revenues, corporate sponsorships and naming rights. The expansion also opens the door to other sources of revenue such as the hosting of concerts and other large events. ■

Berkman appointed new FIU provost



Ronald M. Berkman

Ronald M. Berkman has been selected as FIU's new provost, executive vice president and chief operating officer. He has served on an interim basis since November of 2005, when his predecessor,

Mark Rosenberg, became chancellor of the State University System of Florida.

"His record of leadership and achievement while serving in an acting capacity promises that he will be an extraordinary provost," said FIU President Modesto A. Maidique, who conducted a national search for the position. "Ron is a great administrator, a leader and a respected academic."

During his 14 months as acting provost and executive vice president of academic affairs, Berkman brought contract negotiations with the faculty to a successful

in brief.

conclusion, helped secure state approval for the College of Medicine and helped recruit the college's founding dean, John Rock. Berkman arrived at FIU in 1997 and in 2004 became the executive dean of the College of Health and Urban Affairs. ■

FIU ad campaign captures top honors

Alumni and community members alike took notice in September 2006 when FIU launched a bold advertising campaign in *The Miami Herald* to showcase the university's excellence. For 30 days, FIU

highlighted faculty, research, academic programs, students, athletics and student life in full-page ads in English and Spanish that ran as part of the *Herald's* World Class Organizations series.

The community responded to the campaign with marked enthusiasm, praising the university's effort to tell its story publicly. Now the campaign has won recognition in one of the most competitive award programs in the country. In January, FIU received an Award of Excellence from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, the world's

largest educational association. The award was given as part of its annual Southeast District honors in the category of paid advertising series. Other winners in the category include the Savannah College of Art and Design, the University of Central Florida and the University of Tennessee. ■

FIU graduates named teachers of the year

Three FIU alumni were recently honored in counties across the state as Teacher of the Year.

Sandy Melillo Ed.D. '02, an English and TV production teacher at Northeast High School in Oakland Park, was named the 2008 Broward County Teacher of the Year. Melillo, who has been a teacher for 33 years, directed more than 35 student plays as a drama teacher before switching to television production. Her students produce a morning show at the high school.

Math teacher James Gibbs III MPA '96 was named the Hillsborough County Teacher of the Year. Now in his fifth year of teaching, Gibbs served in the Air Force for 24 years as an intelligence officer before joining the classroom. Gibbs also coaches



From Pennsylvania to Kenya, students research sustainable farming around the globe



By Martin Haro '05

Last summer, Nasser Brahim, 21, found himself among the Kipsigis of Kenya, an agrarian tribe that lives in the southern highlands of the eastern African country. The graduating senior spent three weeks there, surveying the Amala River's watershed and interviewing small farmers in the highlands about their use and management of the area's natural resources.

Brahim's research opportunity was funded by a grant from FIU's nascent Agroecology Program. Established in 2005 in the Department

of Environmental Studies, this curricular program focuses on agricultural issues at both the farm (micro) and regional (macro) levels. Students study emerging technology and bring what they learn back to FIU and South Florida. The goal of agroecology is to practice farming in a way that is ecologically, economically and sociologically sustainable.

Tea thrives in the area that Brahim visited and is Kenya's most important agricultural product, so indigenous forests have suffered as the land has been cleared for the crops. One of the objectives of Brahim's research is to create a system of ranking trees

FIU student Nasser Brahim (center) spent last summer in Kenya doing research on farming issues in the country.

boys track and girls softball at Burns Middle School in Brandon, Fla.

Miami native William Roberts '01 was named Lake County Teacher of the Year. After earning an architecture degree at FIU, Roberts realized his true calling was in the classroom. He taught math at Cutler Ridge Elementary before joining Cecil E. Gray Middle School in Groveland, Fla. ■

New online portal launched for students

The recent launch of MyFIU, the university's highly anticipated new student portal, is ushering in a new era of communication between students and the university. Through MyFIU, students can access personal information such as class schedules, outstanding balances and messages from Enrollment Services and Student Financials and read the latest FIU news and information — all on one page.

The initiative reflects a heightened awareness of the wants and needs of college students in the 21st century. "MyFIU is one of the most innovative and practical student resources I have ever seen," says University Park Student Government President Alfonso Leon. "It



integrates all major levels of the university and provides students with a bridge to really connect with FIU."

For the initial roll-out, MyFIU will be available to FIU students, prospects and alumni. Plans to include faculty and staff are underway. To visit MyFIU go to: <https://my.fiu.edu>. ■

FIU team to build new "Future House" in Beijing

A team from FIU will be the only American university team invited to take part in the "Future House Community Project" in Beijing, China, which will be located near the site of the 2008 Olympic Summer Games.

The "Future House Community Project" was prompted by China's pressing energy and environmental concerns. It will include 10

houses from eight countries. Each country will design and build a house that reflects its own technological capabilities and aesthetic sensibilities. Among the countries participating in the event are Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain and Sweden.

"It is a distinct honor to be selected by the Chinese government as the only university to represent the United States in the project," said FIU professor of mechanical and materials engineering Yong Tao.

The Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of China sponsors the "Future House Community Project." The ministry invited FIU to participate after its team won first place in Energy Balance at the 2005 National Solar Decathlon in Washington, D.C. The competition requires student teams to design, build and operate a solar-powered house. Tao, College of Engineering Dean Vish Prasad and Yimin Zhu, FIU professor of construction management, will direct both the design and construction of the Future House USA Project. The house will feature Frank Lloyd Wright and Chinese feng shui design themes, focusing on originality, unity with nature and the smooth flow of air and light. ■

in brief

that would balance farmers' preferences with ecological considerations.

"From the shamba's [farm's] highest point, the view was spectacular," Brahim wrote in an online journal dispatch from Kenya. "But my initial feelings of wonder gave way to rising concerns as my eyes were drawn to the distant forest edge. Fifty years ago it would have stretched as far as the eye could see. In another 50 years it might disappear. Where trees were once dominant, tea has taken over."

Many students like Brahim have already benefited from field trips, summer internships and training

workshops offered through the two-year-old program.

Katherinne Valverde '06 was the first student to complete the new Agroecology Certificate Program last fall, after finishing an internship at a local organic farm. This spring, junior Jose Pacheco presented his work on biological control of Brazilian pepper to a group of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials and students in Washington, D.C.

Like their peers, senior Melissa Abdo traveled abroad, to Bali, Indonesia, last year to study how small-scale farmers maintain their livelihood by managing the local landscape; graduate student

Kathy Stone went to India in 2005 to study the ecological and social constraints to restoring the mangroves in Western Karnataka; and this summer, senior Robin Escovedo will travel to Chile to study grape cultivation.

The program, under the direction of professors Mahadev Bhat and Krish Jayachandran, got its start with a \$230,000 grant from the USDA. Two recent USDA grants totaling \$220,000 will be used to support students' agricultural internships abroad and fund freshman-to-senior studies for five students.

Graduate student Cristina Clark-Cuadrado '05, 22, has

received full-funding support for her master's degree in the Department of Environmental Studies under the grant program. Last summer, she accepted an internship at the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which is part of the USDA, in York County, Pa.

"The program has provided me with an opportunity not available anywhere else in South Florida," she said. "I wanted to concentrate on preventing pollution from agricultural areas and this program has allowed me to learn and discover new technologies and practices dedicated to this concern." ■



RAISING THE BAR

FIU College of Law builds for the future as it celebrates its early success

By Deborah O'Neil

Buildings, says renowned architect Robert Stern, should symbolize the highest aspirations of the institutions they serve. Thus, in designing the new headquarters for the College of Law, Stern opened spaces for dialogue and let light pour in.

"It is my hope faculty and especially students will adopt it as their own and will regard it as a significant touchstone in their evolving professional lives," Stern said in February during the dedication of the new Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall.

The opening and dedication of the 156,000-square-foot building is the latest milestone of the five-year-old college's early success. The headliner for the three days of dedication events was a keynote address by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She praised the college's diverse faculty and student body, its legal skills and values training and concentration on comparative law. But educating exceptional lawyers requires something more, she added, which distinguishes FIU.

"It takes the will to educate students to regard law as a public calling," Ginsburg said.

Graduates of the College of Law finished first among all law schools in the state on the February 2007 Bar Exam with a passing rate of 94.4 percent.

With required community service, emphasis on international law and a trio of thriving student law clinics, FIU's law school has, almost overnight, earned a reputation for academic excellence. The student passing rate on the Florida bar exam has been consistently higher than Florida's average. In December, the quality of its programs was validated when, after an exhaustive year-long review, the college received full accreditation by the American Bar Association.

"For the middle of year five, we are in great shape," said Dean Leonard Strickman, who has led the college from the start. "This has been the best job of my life. To found a law school in this dynamic university in this dynamic city at a period in history when you can build a curriculum that is going to be a little different and more relevant to the 21st century – it has been a great privilege."

The college today has 25 faculty members, 385 students and some 135 alumni from two graduating classes. As anticipated, the school has had no problem filling seats. Applications have increased 130 percent in five years. The plan is to grow the college to 36 professors and 650 students.

College of Law adjunct professor and trial attorney H.T. Smith leads a class in the law school's new courtroom.

1. Rafael Diaz-Balart, Jose Diaz-Balart, Dean Leonard Strickman, President Modesto A. Maidique, Mario Diaz-Balart and Lincoln Diaz-Balart celebrate the dedication of the new law school building in honor of their grandfather Rafael Jose Diaz-Balart. 2. Florida Gov. Charlie Crist congratulates FIU's law school during the dedication events. 3. Dean Leonard Strickman and FIU President Modesto A. Maidique welcome U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg to campus for the law school building dedication.



Experts and mentors

Without fail, the professors in the College of Law speak with unabashed enthusiasm about the progress, fellow faculty and students of the new college. Professor John Stack, who was part of the law school planning committee, described his work at the college as “the highlight of my career.”

The faculty are an impressive group of lawyers with wide-ranging expertise and pedigree from such universities as Yale, Harvard and Cornell. The university’s best known scholar, Stanley Fish, a nationally recognized public intellectual, joined the law school in 2005.

Many of the professors bring to the classroom years of experience in policy and law. Professor Elizabeth Price Foley, an expert on medical law and bioethics, worked on Capitol Hill as a health policy advisor. Professor Hannibal Travis practiced intellectual property law in San Francisco and New York. Professor Jeremy Levitt served as a legal aide to South Africa’s Constitutional Assembly when the country was writing its new constitution.

Faculty members say they came

This year,
there were
1,900
applicants
for
170 seats.

to FIU for a variety of reasons: the excitement of being part of a new program, the diversity of the student body, a love of the community. Professor Aya Gruber grew up in Miami and knew the city was full of untapped potential, young people who would make great lawyers but couldn’t afford law school.

“Many of these individuals are minorities and the Florida Bar had a problem with diversity,” she said. “I thought the FIU law school would provide a wonderful opportunity for these individuals to get a first rate legal education and bring diversity and excellence to the bar.”

The public mission of the new law school also drew prominent constitutional law scholar Thomas Baker, who served at the U.S. Supreme Court. He is the son of an Eastern European immigrant who worked in steel mills and learned to speak English at the YMCA.

“So I was like many of my students,” Baker said. “I was the first in my family to graduate from college and go to graduate school. A legal education was the door to my professional career. I get excited imagining my students’ futures.”

Community of students

Law schools around the country work hard to achieve the sort of diversity that happens effortlessly at FIU. And the student diversity is more than racial and ethnic. A number of students are older adults pursuing a second career. The College’s part-time curriculum for working students has proved enormously successful.

“Whatever their particular background, dealing in a globalized, multi-ethnic environment comes naturally to our students,” said professor Jose Gabilondo, who along with several other professors described the students as “unusually nice” for the typically cut-throat environment of law school.

“They remember where they came from and they know where they are going,” Baker said. “They are bright and hard-working, committed to their studies, but they know how to enjoy school and life. They look out for each other and have a sense of community. What singles them out is their palpable sense of gratitude – they are genuinely grateful for the opportunity to attend law school.”

Most of the college’s students are South Floridians. Their average score on the LSAT – the equivalent of the

college SAT required for entry into law school – is the fourth best in the state. Strickman says the scores are strong and will likely increase as the law school becomes more competitive. This year, there were 1,900 applicants for 170 seats.

“I just want us to be highly competitive,” Strickman said. “I don’t have to put a number on that.”

Through the college’s required 30 hours of community service, students have already made an impact in the community. Students are volunteering at Lawyers for Literacy, a program of the Miami Partnership for the Homeless; at Catholic Charities Legal Services; and Legal Services of Greater Miami, among others.

“It is a way to teach students to make a contribution by throwing them into a situation where they can do it,” said Therese Stewart, who coordinates the program. “It is part of the privilege

of being a highly educated person who has skills that can help people.”

At Carlton Fields, a large law firm with offices around the state, FIU law students worked on the Election Protection Program for Miami-Dade County, which aims to protect voter rights. On election day, students monitored minority precincts around the county to ensure polls opened on time and that voters with valid identification were allowed to vote without harassment or intimidation.

“The FIU students were wonderful to work with,” said Carlton Fields attorney Olga Vieira. “They volunteered for long shifts and helped in any way they were asked. Volunteers have to be flexible and accommodating. FIU students fit in very well and were extremely helpful.”

The college’s three law clinics provide students with another opportunity to practice in the real

“When I came out of law school, I had a head start on other lawyers just out of law school.”

—
Callan Garcia '05
College of Law
alumnus

world what they are learning in the classroom. Attorney Callan Garcia '05, who graduated in the first College of Law class, today is supervising attorney at Catholic Charities Legal Services of Miami, which serves immigrants and refugees. He credits his experience at the Costa Immigration and Human Rights Clinic with preparing him for a career in immigration law and paving the way for rapid promotion in his field. Garcia also studied Haitian Creole at FIU, one of the few universities in the country that offers the language. It is a skill he uses every day since more than half of his clients are Haitian refugees.

“When I came out of law school, I had a head start on other lawyers just out of law school trying to learn immigration law from the day of hire,” Garcia said. “I wouldn’t have progressed this quickly without the

Continues on page 10



An End to Homelessness: Alumna couples her legal education with social work to improve public policy for the poor.

By Martin Haro '05

From her early stints as a grant writer and social worker for many Miami charities, to her current position as director of housing and advocacy at Citrus Health Network Inc., Olga Golik '85, MS '93, JD '06 has devoted a great deal of her life to helping others.

As she has worked on behalf of the needy, the medically underserved and the homeless, Golik has earned three degrees at FIU, each of them chosen to strengthen her career as an advocate. Most recently, Golik

earned a law degree at the FIU College of Law.

“I thought I received a good education the first time, so I went back twice. You could say I’m addicted to FIU,” Golik said in an interview at her office in Hialeah. “It was affordable and I went there part time at night so it allowed me to work and meet other professionals. The College of Law definitely exposed me to a broader range of advocacy and legal issues that I wasn’t aware of before.”

As a graduate student

majoring in social work, she worked as a social worker for Douglas Gardens Community Mental Health Center, raising funds to provide health care and housing services for the needy. As a law student, she wrote a rule challenge to an administrative agency to increase housing resources as part of the community service required by the College of Law.

Today, Golik mines her experience and knowledge of advocacy issues in her role monitoring public policy that impacts the homeless.

Continues on page 10

Continued

clinical experience. I just feel myself growing in leaps and bounds and it fulfills the need in your heart to be involved in progressive change.”

Just the beginning

With such success early on, the law school's challenge for the future will be to sustain its forward momentum. Stanley Fish, who has had a distinguished career at universities around the country, says FIU will have to work to keep the law school's talented faculty.

“Other universities will begin to notice them,” he said. “The university must take steps to continue the exciting start at the law school. After the first rush of pleasure, administrators turn their attention to new projects and the enterprise they started withers. We'll have to see how smart FIU administrators are about that.”

For the faculty, maintaining the law

“For the middle of year five, we are in great shape.”

—
Leonard Strickman,
College of Law dean

school's unique identity will be essential as it grows. Plenty of law schools bill themselves as preparing lawyers for public interest law, says Gabilondo. But the real measure of that claim is what happens later on, when the lawyers enter the working world.

“I'm happy to see that many of our graduates do seem to be actually pursuing public interest jobs,” he said. “I think that this law school may actually come not only to talk the talk about community ties, but also to walk the walk.”

Staying on the cutting edge of international law is also critical, says Gruber, who teaches criminal law. “We must not be complacent in our successes,” she said. Rather, she adds, the law school must constantly assess its teaching methodologies, curriculum, faculty scholarship and community service.

In many ways, the law school has been engaged in self-evaluation from

the start. New law clinics have been created to respond to community needs. In the near future, the College will capitalize on its international niche by introducing new programs in American law for foreign lawyers and transnational business and trade for U.S. and foreign lawyers. There is a move to establish a local chapter of the Order of the Coif, the law school equivalent of the National Honor Society Phi Beta Kappa.

Sitting in his bright and spacious office, Dean Strickman says the law school's strong start is just the beginning. The new building, created to reflect the program's values and expectations, provides the law school a solid foundation for the future.

“We still have a long way to go to be the law school we aspire to be,” he said. “We have to be a law school that has a recognizable impact on the law and on our community.” ■

Continued

Citrus Health Network is a federally supported non-profit organization that provides primary care, mental health services, rehabilitation and housing in Miami-Dade County.

An estimated 22 percent of homeless people suffer chronic mental illness, she said. Golik believes that often makes people disinclined to want to help.

“For some reason there's a stigma about helping homeless people who have a mental illness. People are afraid of them and try to shut them out instead of trying to help them,” she said. “I'd like this to change; it's hard work,

but I'd like to see an end to homelessness in Florida.”

The Office of Homelessness of the Department of Children and Families has found that 85,907 people in Florida were homeless on any given day in 2006. There were 83,391 in 2005. Golik says in Miami-Dade, children and families make up the fastest growing group of homeless, a consequence of variables as job loss, domestic abuse or displacement because of natural disaster.

“Poverty is the biggest cause for homelessness,” she said. “There's a lot of discrimination toward the homeless and

they're much more likely to be criminalized.”

In addition to her work, Golik gives of her free time to a number of volunteer organizations. She is a 10-year board member of the Miami Coalition for the Homeless and recently became a board member of the Florida Supported Housing Coalition. She also has volunteered for the United Cerebral Palsy Human Rights Committee, SaveDade and the Human Rights Ordinance Political Campaign.

Being on the front lines on behalf of the community's most needy can be frustrating and

stressful. Golik unwinds by painting from time to time and by spending time with friends and family, including her partner of 16 years, Roxanne, whom she met when they both worked for the American Red Cross. However, she says the real rewards come when she knows she is making a difference.

“I'm not opposed to making money, but my belief in God is that we're here to make a difference, that's why I do it,” she said. “Homeless people, poor people, they have the least amount of rights and opportunities.” ■

A black and white photograph of a man, Cidoine Casimir, looking out a window. He is wearing a bright red short-sleeved button-down shirt over a white t-shirt, a large silver cross necklace, and a large silver belt buckle. He is standing in front of a window with a decorative glass pane featuring a floral pattern. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

The Last Hope

FIU Law Clinics reach vulnerable members of the community

By Sue Arrowsmith '06

Cidoine Casimir fled the violent political turmoil of Haiti in the early 1990s after a military coup overthrew the presidency. He boarded a tattered wooden boat with more than 200 others, leaving behind his baby daughter.

"It was hard, but I had to leave," he said. "At the time, there was no president and they were killing people in the streets."

After living and working in Miami for almost a decade, Casimir was picked up by U.S. Immigration in 2004 and sent to Krome Detention Center, where he remained for 32 months. The lock-up took a toll on him.

Cidoine Casimir is one of the Costa Clinic's success stories.
Photo by Angel Valentin

"While I was detained I was very depressed. I had terrible headaches and my body shook," said Casimir. "It was a lot of stress."

As his visions of a better life were beginning to dim, a group of FIU law students at the Carlos A. Costa Immigration and Human Rights Clinic stepped in. Casimir's brother in Broward County had heard of a new legal clinic at FIU that assists refugees and called on his brother's behalf.

Two students under the guidance of FIU law professor Troy Elder took on Casimir's case and successfully argued in immigration court for his release last year. The legal victory was all the more dramatic because during his detention, Casimir had been moved from Krome to another immigration prison in Arizona. When the ruling came down, Elder and law students Jordan Dollar and Lina Hussein flew across the country to bring Casimir home.

Today, the 38-year-old lives with his brother, holds a steady job, takes English classes and proudly shows off his U.S. permanent resident card. Now he wants to bring his now 13-year-old daughter to the United States. FIU law students at the Costa Clinic are trying to make that happen.

"You would have to open my heart to understand how much appreciation I have for what FIU did for me," Casimir said. "What happened was clearly God's work. Only God knows how appreciative I really am."

"The true practice of law"

Education and social justice are at the core of the FIU College of Law's Clinical Training Program, a trio

Students have already won asylum for an abused Colombian boy detained at Boys Town and prevented the deportation of a homeless Cuban man in need of disability benefits.

of clinics that serve, free of charge, low-income individuals in Miami Dade facing myriad legal challenges. In addition to the Costa Clinic, the two other clinics focus on supporting community development and juvenile justice. The students work on a volunteer basis with the guidance and support of law professors who direct each clinic. From helping refugees navigate complex immigration policies to supporting affordable housing initiatives, the students are overcoming barriers as they gain real-world experience working in the U.S. justice system.

"The primary goal of the law clinics is to educate students in the true practice of law, but they have a secondary role to serve the underserved in the community," said College of Law Dean Leonard Strickman.

Three years since the Costa immigration clinic opened, FIU students have done groundbreaking work. Last year alone, students at the Costa Clinic provided more than 3,100 hours of free legal service to 44 immigrant clients. Cases can take years to be resolved, but students have already won asylum for an abused Colombian boy detained at Boys Town and prevented the deportation of a homeless Cuban man in need of disability benefits.

Most recently, the clinic took the unprecedented move of filing a class-action suit against the U.S. government to challenge immigration policies toward Haitian refugees seeking asylum in the United States. It is the sort of complicated and time-consuming legal challenge that few private lawyers would be willing to tackle.

A victory in this class action suit

could change the fate of hundreds of Haitian refugees facing deportation. The case comes at a time when immigration is at the forefront of national debate and the U.S. government is cracking down, even erecting walls, to keep undocumented migrants out.

"To practice immigration law anywhere in 2007, in this period of scapegoating, is a challenge," said Elder, the professor who heads the Costa Clinic and hails from Yale Law School. He has extensive experience working with poor communities such as Little Haiti and Spanish Harlem in New York.

"Students who gravitate to this clinic have a real interest and commitment to human rights," he added.

Jordan Dollar, a third-year law student also involved in the class action suit, witnessed living conditions in Haiti when he visited the island with a Christian ministry before entering law school. That experience left a lasting impression and sparked his interest in helping immigrants.

"There is just so much poverty," said Dollar. "I saw the reasons they were leaving."

"An amazing experience"

After opening the Costa Clinic, the law school responded to the growing need for free legal advice for small businesses and non-profit organizations with the creation of the Community Development Clinic. Designed for working students, the community clinic operates mostly after hours and on weekends. Here, in addition to providing legal representation, students educate

aspiring entrepreneurs on such topics as business law, drafting contracts and negotiating leases.

Professor Peggy Maisel, clinical program director and community clinic supervisor, personally understands the powerful effect clinical work can have on a law student. She discovered her passion for advocacy at an institute for public interest at Georgetown University. Before coming to FIU, Maisel lived in South Africa for six years helping to develop clinical programs at the University of Natal.

“The best form of legal education combines putting theory into practice through an opportunity to work with clients and increase access to justice,” said Maisel.

The most recent addition to the law school’s clinical program is the Juvenile Justice Clinic, which aims to give youth who have been in trouble with the law a second chance. Under the direction of Phyllis Kotey, a former county court judge, students in this clinic work in collaboration with the Public Defender’s Office to represent minors facing felony and misdemeanor charges.

Law student Michelle Piwko appeared in Juvenile Court as a trial attorney for the first time through the Juvenile Justice Clinic. “I didn’t sleep,” said Piwko. “I stayed up all night practicing my opening statement.”

Looking back, she says, the practical knowledge she gained was priceless.

“It was an amazing experience,” said Piwko, who became a state-certified legal intern when she participated in the clinic last semester. “In classes you read a lot about the law, but out there you get to practice it.”

“The last hope”

While some of the Community Development Clinic’s cases involve organizations such as non-profits or small businesses, many are on behalf of individuals, such as Filomeno Gonzalez, who have exhausted their options and resources.

When Gonzalez arrived in Miami, he began to create the life dreamed about by many who have fled Cuba with nothing. In 1974 he purchased a small one-bedroom fixer-upper for \$25,000 in Sweetwater. He did all the repairs by hand and looked forward to spending his retirement years at 11364 S.W. 2nd St.

In 2000, Gonzalez’s vision for the future was foiled by disaster, first natural and then bureaucratic. That October, Miami experienced massive flooding that seeped water through the flooring in Gonzalez’s house, ruining it from the outside in. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) promised homeowners millions of dollars for rebuilding, but the assistance never came.

The most recent addition to the law school’s clinical program is the Juvenile Justice Clinic, which aims to give youth who have been in trouble with the law a second chance.

The city declared the house unlivable in 2004 and Gonzalez was forced to demolish it at his own expense: \$14,000.

Now, almost seven years later, Gonzalez is 71 years old, living in an efficiency and still waiting for his check from FEMA. An almost 20-year maintenance employee at FIU, Gonzalez had nearly given up when a co-worker suggested he seek help at the law clinics.

Tony Montesano, a third-year student enrolled in the community clinic, is representing Gonzalez. He is negotiating an agreement between Gonzalez and the city of Sweetwater so his client can, at long last, receive the cash to rebuild his home.

“These young attorneys are my last chance,” Gonzalez said, “the last hope that I have.” ■

Students in the FIU Community Development Clinic are helping Filomeno Gonzalez obtain FEMA dollars he is owed for the reconstruction of his Sweetwater home, which was destroyed in 2000 by flooding. Today, there is an empty lot where his home used to stand.



Photo by Ivan Santiago



Stanley Fish

By Dan Grech

Professor Stanley Fish strode into his jurisprudence seminar on a recent Wednesday. “I hope you got a good night’s sleep last night,” he told the squirming second- and third-year law students.

Fish is a foremost expert on English poet John Milton, a contrarian *New York Times* columnist, a firebrand ex-dean of the University of Illinois at Chicago, and in his latest – and perhaps final – incarnation, a law professor at FIU and the university’s best known scholar. Like much of his recent work, today’s class borrows from his expertise in literary theory and applies it to the law.

“There’s nothing difficult or tricky about what I just said. I spoke in monosyllables, the grammar was straightforward,” he tells the class. “So, what did I mean?”

Students offer various interpretations. One suggests Fish was expressing concern for their welfare. Another says he is warning the class there will be a lot of work in class today. A third says he sensed students were distracted and wanted to get their attention.

Fish smiles. He has made his point. Words alone, he says, won’t tell you what an utterance means. You must determine the intention of the author. This seems simple, obvious, unavoidable even. But it has radical implications when applied to the U.S. Constitution.

There have traditionally been two answers to the question, ‘What does the Constitution mean?’ The first is often called textualism, and its most famous proponent is Supreme Court

College of Law

faculty profile

“Think Again”

Scholar and public intellectual Stanley Fish challenges his law school students, along with the rest of us, with provocative questions and insights.

Justice Antonin Scalia.

Textualists say you should focus on the language of the Constitution itself and the historical interpretation of the words at the time of the writing. A second approach is the so-called living Constitution, which argues the Constitution’s meaning can and should be reformulated by contemporary legislators to fit the needs of the present society. This second approach is sometimes criticized as judicial activism.

Fish offers a third answer: intentionalism. The Constitution means whatever the framers intended it to mean. This is both totally obvious and rather unhelpful. After all, how do you figure out what the framers intended if they’ve been dead for two centuries? Fish concedes in an influential 2005 San Diego Law Review article, “There is no Textualist Position,” that it’s not easy to figure out intention – it may even be impossible. But acknowledging these obstacles “does not change the fact that the answer to the question, ‘What does a text mean?’ is that a text means what its author intends it to mean.”

As a public intellectual, Fish has made a career of coming up with provocative answers to difficult questions.

• How should a professor approach teaching? “Aim low,” he wrote in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, arguing the role of a teacher is to responsibly present the material on the syllabus and perhaps equip students for independent study – and that’s it. Forget about teaching civic responsibility or tolerance for difference or the transformative power of learning.

• How should educators address elected representatives? “Cause them pain,” he wrote in *The New York Times*, saying administrators are too nice to critics. The best way to defend academia against politicians is to be “aggressive, blunt, mildly confrontational, and just a bit arrogant.”

• As for one of the great issues of our day, the title of his 1994 book says it all: “There’s No Such Thing as Free Speech... And It’s a Good Thing, Too.”

Years ago, Fish spoke at an FIU Faculty Convocation. He said something that caught the attention of FIU President Modesto A. Maidique. “This university,” Fish said, referring to FIU, “is unstoppable.” When Maidique heard Fish was retiring to Florida in 2005, he decided to try to recruit him.

“First it was maybe. Then it was yes. Then it was no,” Maidique said. “Then it was yes. He is one of America’s premier public intellectuals, someone who speaks his mind in a thoughtful and provocative way. It’s great to have him around.”

Fish, a proponent of huge salaries for prominent scholars, has been criticized by other academics for his conspicuous consumption. He owns two homes, in the Catskills and in Delray Beach, and four convertibles, including a Jaguar and a Mercedes. He is unapologetic. “The academic personality is passive aggressive with an overlay of false humility and an overwhelming sense of self-righteousness,” he says. “One of the battles I’m fighting is the false asceticism of university teachers.”

Fish may come across like a curmudgeon. One of the most

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—
Stanley Fish,
College of Law
professor

prominent books in his office has the word “Blasphemy” written in big block letters on the spine. But in person he is engaging, approachable and very persuasive.

“He’ll have lunch with whomever is around,” law school Dean Leonard Strickman says. “He brings with his slashing intellect a sense of intellectual excitement. My colleagues and I are stimulated by his presence and engagement with the law school.”

By his own account, at age 68, Fish should be retired. He even planned on retiring. “It didn’t work out,” he says with bemusement. “I keep finding myself defending and re-elaborating my positions, and sometimes changing my mind.”

Part of Fish’s problem is he loves a good debate. His weekly *New York Times* column, “Think Again,” which appears online, often draws hundreds of responses. A recent piece had only 15 comments by 11 a.m. He wrote an email to his editor suggesting a new tease line to provoke more of a response.

And even after a lifetime in academia, he still gets a thrill provoking his students. So what exactly did he mean when he said he hoped his students had a good night’s sleep? Which student guessed was right?

“They were all wrong,” he said. “It was purely pedagogic.”

In other words, his question was only meant as an example. ■

Dan Grech is the Miami-based Americas correspondent for *Marketplace*, the public radio business news show produced by American Public Media.



TORCH
SOCIETY

PHILANTHROPISTS LAUDED FOR SUPPORT, VISION, GENEROSITY

Florida International University honored a group of its most generous benefactors in January 2007 at the second Torch Society Induction Ceremony. Among this year's inductees were 16 Torch Gold Flame members who have given \$1 million or more and nine members of the Torch Silver Flame who have donated \$500,000.

The Torch Society was established in 1989 as the premier organization of the university's top philanthropists. The ceremony is FIU's signature event for donors, each of whom donned academic regalia to be formally "inducted" into the Torch Society at the Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Performing Arts Center event.

FIU President Modesto A. Maidique spoke of the critical role donors play in helping the university fulfill its vision of excellence, to excel in all areas of academics and research: medicine and law, arts and architecture, public health and engineering.

"As leaders you understand the unparalleled benefits a major university brings to economic development, education, health care and the environment," Maidique said. "You have demonstrated commendable commitment to the future of this community though your support of Miami's public university."

The importance of each donor's gifts to FIU was recognized in video clips narrated by FIU students. Among other endeavors, the donations of this year's inductees have supported scholarships, athletics programs, building campaigns and faculty endowments. With these gifts, the university has forged new areas of research in urban education, nursing, hurricane mitigation, nanotechnology and the study of Sephardic Jewry. Other gifts have provided students and researchers with technology and cultural resources.

Honorees were also given a Torch Society Sculpture, commissioned in 2004 by artist Hung Nguyen of Frabel Studio in Atlanta. The sculpture embodies the FIU Torch of Knowledge, Service and Understanding.

THE 2007 TORCH SOCIETY INDUCTEES INCLUDE:

GOLD FLAME

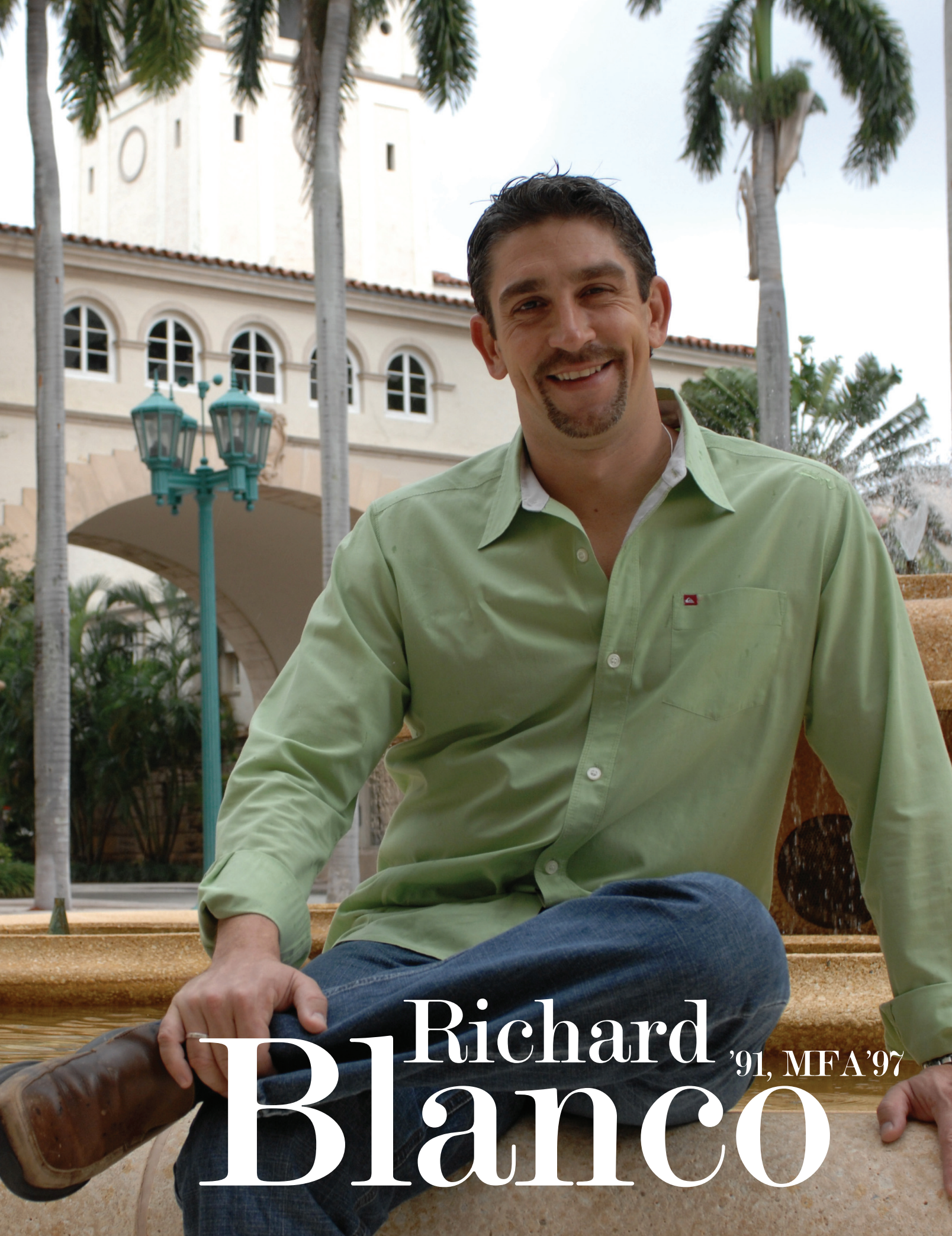
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1. Medical School Dean John Rock with Javier Henernandez-Lichtl representing Baptist Health South Florida and George Daviglius representing the North Dade Medical Foundation. **2.** FIU CFO and Senior Vice President Vivian Sanchez, Gold Flame inductee R. Kirk Landon with Joan Peven Smith, FIU Foundation Board of Directors member. **3.** Gold Flame Inductee Gabriel Norona on behalf of Bentley Systems, Inc. joins in on the reception festivities with his family. **4.** Silver Flame inductee Brian Stark on behalf of Barnes & Noble College Booksellers, Inc., with Jim Brogan. **5.** Gold Flame inductees Luis Perez '78 and Adalio Sanchez '87 on behalf of IBM Corporation. **6.** Silver Flame inductee Patricia Dahne '75 on behalf of the Miami Board of Realtors Educational Foundation with Gold Flame inductee Ray Flores on behalf of BellSouth Corporation. **7.** Past President of the FIU Alumni Association Board of Directors and current member of the FIU Foundation Board of Directors Gerald Grant and wife Jennifer with Silver Flame inductee Carlos Davila on behalf of Citigroup. **8.** FIU Alumni Association Executive Director Bill Draughton and Silver Flame inductee Betty L. Perry '74. **9.** Albert Dotson, FIU Board of Trustees member, passes the ceremonial torch to S. Lawrence Kahn, chairman of the FIU Foundation Board of Directors. **10.** On-stage conferral of our 2007 Torch Society Gold Flame inductees. **11.** FIU President Modesto A. Maidique, Provost Ronald Berkman, FIU Board of Trustees member Albert Dotson, Gold Flame inductee Nicholas Bustle '88 on behalf of SunTrust Bank, FIU Board of Directors Chairman S. Lawrence Kahn, and FIU Vice President for External Relations Marcos A. Perez '90, MBA '00.



Richard '91, MFA '97
Blanco

There and Back Again

A Cuban-American poet's urgent search for home brings him back to Miami

By Steve Watkins

Richard Blanco is home now, back in Miami after a six-year journey that launched the award-winning poet and FIU double-graduate into what was supposed to be the “real America.”

“The great prodigal return,” he calls it, the irony evident in his voice—not only about the places he’s been, but about the place he’s come back to. The journey has shaped much of Blanco’s recent poetry, and his evolving sense of identity as a writer, as the son of Cuban immigrants and as an American.

Blanco, now 39, came to the United States in 1968 from Spain with his Cuban-born parents when he was 45 days old. He grew up in a Cuban neighborhood in Miami, worked in his uncle’s mercado, and learned all his parents’ stories about their lives in a Cuba he never knew, but to which he would someday return. Or so he was taught.

When he finally did visit Cuba, on a trip with his mother when he was in his late 20s, he was drawn to the people and places he had heard so much about, but he also experienced a keen sense of disappointment that the place that was supposed to be his true home, wasn’t.

In 1999, Blanco tried a different direction: this time north.

When many Cuban immigrants leave Miami to visit anywhere else in the United States, they say they’re “going to America.” The problem with that America—the one Blanco thought he knew from the Anglo TV shows he watched as a boy—is that once he was

“There are
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There’s
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—
Richard Blanco

there, teaching at Central Connecticut State University, the idyllic America of his imagination didn’t exist any more than his parents’ native Havana—at least for him.

What he found instead was a complicated New England city—Hartford—working class, racially and ethnically mixed, dirty and deprived. “I was expecting sleigh rides, Jingle Bells,” he recalls. “Boy was I wrong.”

A child of exile

The struggle for him now, in what has been a lifelong search for home, is that the Miami of his childhood has been transformed from Cuba Norte into a “Pan-Latino” metropolis that, as Blanco wryly describes it, “changes every 24 hours.”

On the one hand, Blanco, acknowledges being frustrated, “robbed of my city,” and says he feels the way his parents must have felt when they were finally allowed back into Cuba to visit, decades after fleeing on one of the famous Freedom Flights in 1968.

On the other hand, Blanco recognizes that in many ways, his life as a child of exile—conceived in Havana, born in Madrid, raised in Miami—has been “the quintessential American experience.”

“There are real consequences to being a child of exile,” he says. “There’s always an absence of home. You have instilled in you a sense that home is this place you have to go back to, to regain, and you’re always looking for that place.”

That search has been a dominant theme in Blanco’s life, and in his work.

So much of my life spent like this-suspended,
moving toward unknown places and names or

returning to those I know, corresponding with
the paradox of crossing, being nowhere yet here,

leaning into the wind and light, uncertain of what
I might answer the woman to my right, anchored

in a flutter of cottons and leaning over the stern,
should she lift her eyes from the sea toward me

and ask: So, where are you from?

—From "Crossing Boston Harbor" in *Directions to the Beach of the Dead* (2005)

Continued

The old Miami, and what Blanco calls "the myth of a Cuban home," have been the subjects of much of the poetry in his two published collections.

Since his return to South Florida, though—and to his career as a civil engineer, designing roads, parks and schools—the search has seemed less urgent. He's found common cause in his dual careers as an engineer and as a poet—both, as he now sees, defined by issues of place and, through that, issues of identity.

And in a heady achievement announced late last year, Blanco received a prestigious "Beyond Margins Award" from PEN, the international writers' organization, in recognition of his work. Some 130 books of poetry by writers of color were nominated for the 2006 awards; Blanco's second book of poetry, *Directions to the Beach of the Dead*, published in 2005, was one of five winners.

"The award taught me that I am a Cuban-American writer," Blanco says. "It's not what I write about, it's who I am. I'm not just working on 'Cuban stuff.' And it's the quality of my work that is significant, not just the subject matter."

A poet's journey

Blanco credits FIU—a near-constant for him, virtually since childhood—with helping launch both his careers. He lived half a mile from the campus while growing up in nearby Westchester, at the time a neighborhood in transition. "You could tell where the Anglos lived," he jokes, "because there were still

The Miami
of his
childhood
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transformed
from Cuba
Norte into a
Pan-Latino
metropolis.

trees in their yards that weren't for consumption."

In 1986, he enrolled at FIU, and he graduated with a civil engineering degree in 1991. Two years later, uncertain about his vocation, and motivated by what he calls "naïve arrogance and creative impulse," he applied for admission into FIU's Masters of Fine Arts program in creative writing. He was turned down, but invited to take courses as a special student and reapply a year later.

So that's what he did.

Blanco's first class in the MFA program, in 1993, was also the first class taught at FIU by the newly-hired Campbell McGrath, a critically-acclaimed writer whose achievements include six books of poetry, most of America's top poetry prizes, and a treasured MacArthur "Genius" grant. Blanco and McGrath connected from the start.

Blanco describes McGrath as "the little editor in my head." As for McGrath's teaching style: "Just enough praise to give you confidence," says Blanco, "but not too much to keep you from reaching."

The first assignment on Blanco's first day of class with McGrath was to write a poem about America. Blanco's effort, "America," later became the first poem in his first published collection, which won the prestigious Agnes Starrett National Poetry Prize in 1998 and was published by the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Blanco's next assignment became the second poem in that book, and

the pattern continued throughout McGrath's inaugural poetry class and the classes that followed until Blanco graduated in 1997.

McGrath says he's still impressed by Blanco's accomplishments. "When Richard's first book came out, it included every poem he wrote in those years," he says. "I don't get many students who will publish even one out of five of the poems they write for classes. What Richard did was remarkable."

And what Blanco has done since then has been no less so, with the PEN and Starrett prizes, poems in "Best American Poetry," and numerous other grants, fellowships, and awards. He has helped boost the FIU MFA program, already recognized for its prominent faculty, into the top tier of creative writing programs in America. And he has continued to see his alma mater—and McGrath—as touchstones for support in what can be the lonely business of poetry.

Blanco recently called McGrath for advice as he pondered the next phase of his career on the heels of the PEN Beyond Margins award.

"I call Campbell at least once a year when I'm freaking out," Blanco says. "We have lunch and he picks me up for another year of writing poetry." ■

Steve Watkins teaches creative writing, journalism, and Vietnam War literature at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Va. He is the author of a non-fiction book, "The Black O: Racism and Redemption in an American Corporate Empire," and the recent short story collection "My Chaos Theory."



Desperately Seeking...the Skunk Ape?

Alumni and students hunt for the elusive Everglades dweller

Claudia Echeverria, Kallie Burke, Maria Delgado and Luis Vale film "Footprints," a documentary about the Everglades "Skunk Ape" for an FIU film class. (Photo by *The Miami Herald*)

By Martin Haro '05

Just when you think South Florida could not get any wackier, someone, or in this case, some thing comes out of the swamp to prove anything is possible in and around the Magic City.

The sightings of it have all have been consistent: A really big, really hairy, Chewbacca-like man-beast lurking in the tall grasses west of Krome Avenue.

In other places he has been called Bigfoot or Sasquatch; the people of Everglades City call him the Skunk Ape. The name refers to his bad smell and to his "missing link" quality. (It stands on two legs like a human.)

Last fall, a group of former and current FIU students went seeking answers to the mystery of the 7-8-foot tall hirsute creature that may or may not dwell in the Everglades. They documented their findings in a 15-minute documentary film called "Footprints" as the final project of their advanced videography class

Claudia Echeverria '06, Juan Carlos Gonzalez '06, Lino La Rosa, Maria Delgado '06, Romy Santana '06, Luis Vale '06, Kallie Burke and

Kirmaya Cevallos wrote, directed and produced the film.

"I expected the group to create a broadcast-quality video production," associate professor Bert Delgado said. "The documentary is quite good and even better is the fact that people are talking about it and recognizing its merits. One of the goals of the class is to promote our students – and FIU – in the industry. "Footprints" is a great way to do this."

Aside from high marks in class, the film also has earned the group some unexpected national attention.

"We got an A on the project and everyone in class liked it," Echeverria said. "Next thing we knew NPR, *The Miami Herald* and *The Beacon* had picked up the story and a producer from "Good Morning America" called asking to talk to us."

The industry has taken notice, too. This winter the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival invited "Footprints" to play on opening night of its March line-up in Los Angeles.

Not a bad debut for an \$800 film paid for by students.



There are
die-hard
believers
and there are
skeptics; the
film presents
both sides.

The documentary presents an informative account about the elusive and legendary creature. There are die-hard believers and there are skeptics; the film presents both sides via video footage captured by those who have encountered the Skunk Ape, testimonies from scientific researchers and so-called experts and interviews with the people from Everglades City who know the legend well.

Burke, a television production major, is not sure under which category she falls.

"I change my mind every day," she said. "While I was doing research I'd find out something and I'd get excited and I'd be sure it had to exist. But then I'd hear someone tell a story about how it's just a man in costume, so I'd kind of get bummed out."

On the other hand, David Shealy, a Skunk Ape researcher and lifetime resident of the Everglades, is convinced the creature exists. After all, he argues in the film, failure to accept that there is something on this planet we don't know about is pure ignorance. ■

For more information about this film, visit www.footprintscrew.com.



By Deborah O'Neil

Preeminent diamond expert and FIU researcher Stephen Haggerty enjoys nothing more than trekking, Indiana Jones style, to far-flung locales for science. He has criss-crossed the globe doing geological research, but his latest breakthrough on the origins of the carbonado, or “black diamond,” ventures into the unknown.

While most diamonds form in the earth's mantle, carbonado has never been found in the world's diamond mines. The long mysterious genesis of this diamond, Haggerty believes, is outer space.

As Haggerty's theory goes, the carbonado diamond is the result of a miles-wide asteroid that impacted Planet Earth more than three billion years ago. These aren't the sort of diamonds you find in an engagement ring. Carbonados are coal-like rocks better suited as drill bits. His theory was published last December in the prestigious *Astrophysical Journal* and has been making headlines around the globe.

“Some people would look at these and say, ‘What an ugly rock,’” he said. “I say, ‘Let me tell you about them.’”

It is easy to appreciate that the odds

He is
fascinated
by the
secrets of the
universe that
diamonds
can reveal.

of diamonds falling from the galaxy must be small. This is precisely why Haggerty welcomes the scientific debate sparked by his theory.

“Singularities are unacceptable in our vocabulary because if this ever happened once it must have happened again and again and again,” Haggerty said. “The chances it happened only once are pretty remote. However, carbonado fits into that category.”

The findings are the latest developments in an extraordinary scientific career that has traveled from the Canadian hinterlands to NASA headquarters. Years ago, his fellow scientists named one of the world's 3,000 minerals in his honor: Haggertyite. Haggerty himself has named seven minerals which he discovered in his research.

Most recently, the researcher has loaned his expertise to the cause of cleaning up Africa's so-called “blood diamonds.” He spent two months in Liberia this spring consulting with Liberia's government on how to transform its diamond industry into one that is sustainable and conflict-free. During his visit, he presented a proposal he calls “Liberty Diamonds” to

a visitation committee from the United Nations, which has imposed sanctions on Liberia's diamond industry.

“We, as hard rock geologists, have the opportunity to express a view on the social implications of the materials we work with,” he said. “Diamonds are one of those super-sensitive materials that have brought out the best in science and the worst in social standing.”

Earth lessons

Haggerty grew up near the world's largest gold mine in South Africa, but back then, he dreamed of becoming a nuclear physicist.

His passion for geoscience came later, in a place about as far away from South Africa as possible – Canada's unmapped northern territory. Before college, he accepted a job as a geological assistant with a company that was scouting the Canadian forest for iron ore and gold. For one year, he lived in the Canadian bush with two Cree Indians, sleeping in tents, cooking on campfires and learning something of the earth.

“It was a maturing experience,” he recalled.

When Haggerty later went to London, he enrolled in the Royal School

DIAMONDS FROM ABOVE

The origins of the charcoal-colored diamond known as the carbonado has puzzled scientists for decades. A recently published theory by FIU geology researcher Stephen Haggerty suggests the answer lies heavenward.

Photo by Ivan Santiago and Michael Upright

of Mines at the Imperial College London, famous for its programs in geology and mineralogy. The 1960s were exciting years at the Royal School of Mines. The first rocks had been dredged from the ocean floor and scientists were examining their magnetic properties. The theory of plate tectonics – or continental drift – reemerged with compelling new evidence. Nobel physicist and Imperial College professor PMS Blackett was making scientific history with his theories about the origin of the earth's magnetic field.

Haggerty soaked it all in, attending lectures by leading scientists of the times at the Royal Astronomical Society and Geological Society. He completed a Ph.D. on the magnetic path of rocks in Iceland.

From there, Haggerty landed at NASA during the heady days following man's first walk on the moon. Haggerty won a Carnegie Foundation fellowship and became part of the planning committee that made recommendations on how to distribute the Apollo 11 lunar rocks within the scientific community. The burning question of the time was,

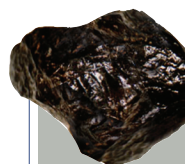
"Are there any new minerals on the moon?"

Indeed, there was a new mineral on the moon and Haggerty, to his surprise, was given the opportunity to name it. Wanting to recognize the historic nature of the moon walk, Haggerty decided to name the mineral "Armstrongite" for the three Apollo 11 astronauts, Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins.

Heavenly diamonds

Cracking the mystery of the carbonado has been a years-long effort that continues still for Haggerty. He is fascinated by the secrets of the universe that diamonds can reveal. "The present is the key to the past," he says.

Scientists have long puzzled over the carbonado, distinct from its diamond siblings in appearance, texture and location. Most diamonds are scattered across the globe, but carbonados have been found only in Brazil and Central African Republic. While the two countries are now on separate continents, they were part of the same land mass three billion years ago before the continents divided. The answer could be that the gems



"Diamonds are one of those super-sensitive materials that have brought out the best in science and the worst in social standing."

—
Stephen Haggerty,
FIU researcher

were deposited there after a meteor slammed into earth.

To test his theory, Haggerty and FIU Ph.D. student Jozsef Garai worked with scientists at Case Western Reserve University. They used a sophisticated piece of radiation technology to analyze the carbonado, a rock so hard it is nearly impossible to break. Haggerty and his team found more convincing proof of the carbonado's extraterrestrial origins in the rock's unique composition, particularly in its hydrogen content.

"The carbonado must have formed in a hydrogen-rich environment," Haggerty said. "Does such an environment exist on earth? Well, it does in water. Can you form diamonds in water? No."

What the experiments showed, in essence, was that the environment necessary to form a carbonado does not exist on earth. For Haggerty, this was a turning point. Yet questions remain.

The next step is pinpointing the carbonados' origins in the galaxy.

"We're at the point of the Darwinian evolutionists and creationists. Who designed the design?" ■



FIRST AND GOAL

By Karen Cochrane

It's the middle of the night, those hours between midnight and dawn when thoughts take on a translucent clarity, unfettered from the day's cacophony. Mario Cristobal is sitting in his home office, sifting through years of memories he's consigned to a box, just for this moment. He'd begun this exercise as a graduate assistant under coach Butch Davis at the University of Miami (UM) and continued it at Rutgers under head coach Greg Schiano and later when he rejoined the Hurricanes coaching staff in 2004.

In the hours following FIU's Dec. 19 press conference announcing the choice of the 36-year-old to lead its football program, this box and its contents were never far from his mind.

A man who refers to coaching as "a people business," Cristobal has played or worked for several notable college coaches: Jimmy Johnson, Dennis Erickson, Butch Davis, Greg Schiano and Larry Coker, among others. So when Butch Davis offered some advice years ago, Cristobal listened. Closely.

"He said to make notes from staff meetings and keep them in a big box. He told me when I became a head coach to go back and read them. 'Remember what you felt in those meetings. If it's worth writing down, it's worth remembering when you become a head coach,'" says Cristobal. "I did it for years."

And now, on the evening Cristobal's hiring was announced, the new coach was carefully poring through this cherished collection of wisdom.

"I stayed up until almost 5 o'clock in the morning reading every piece of paper."

When FIU hired Cristobal, the reaction was as intense as the Miami native. Acknowledged as one of college football's

Mario Cristobal became the first Cuban-American to lead a Division I-A football program when he accepted the head coaching position last December. Now he wants to be the first coach to bring a football championship to FIU.



best recruiters, his hiring generated a flurry of local and national press coverage.

A former UM offensive lineman, Cristobal was an up-and-comer in coaching circles. He had just finished his first season as UM's offensive line coach when FIU's new Athletic Director Pete Garcia contacted him.

The Golden Panthers were coming off the worst season of their young history – 0-12 – and the program was in danger of losing its forward momentum.

Cristobal couldn't wait to take on the responsibilities of a head coaching position.

"I've always been preparing myself for this moment," he says.

Bruce Feldman, a senior writer at *ESPN Magazine*, observes, "I don't know if there is anyone out there more suited for what FIU needs right now. He'll make [the program] relevant."

Cristobal wasted no time interviewing staff, hiring a team of assistant coaches and meeting with each player personally. Winter drills were more intense than in previous years, and returning players fully expect to compete for starting positions against impressive freshmen recruits arriving in August. And Cristobal has expressed his desire to lead a program that sports the highest graduation rate of any football program in the country.

Working 16 to 20 hours a day since signing a five-year deal with FIU, Cristobal and his team assembled a memorable class of 19 student-athletes in only three weeks.

While he now sells "building" vs. "tradition" to potential recruits, what Cristobal prizes most in players hasn't changed.

"Never compromise character," he says. "Someone who brings in negative energy will let down your team. And my number one responsibility is to the members of this football team."

All 19 recruits were captains or co-captains of their high school teams.

"They're all leaders. If I could choose another word, I'd say builders. They don't have the luxury of sitting behind a guy for a couple of years," explains Cristobal. "Six weeks after they arrive on campus they're going to be on a plane going up to Happy Valley [Penn State] to play against a fourth-year junior who's been running and lifting for four years. And that takes a lot of courage and a tremendous amount of determination."

Cristobal says "all the ingredients are there" for FIU to win a championship but stresses it won't happen overnight.

"The former staff did a great job in laying the foundation for a program, and now it's our job to build it. We want to build something to last," he continues. "We're going to face tough times, but we're doing this as a family, together. We need our alumni with us, together."

You can't help but believe Cristobal when he says the day will come when FIU home games "are the event of the week, every week" in the fall. "We're going to produce tough, disciplined football players who know how to win with class, who are going to be exemplary students. We're going to nurture the growth of these great, great young men."

And when FIU football reaches the top tier, Cristobal promises, "It's going to be one of the most beautiful stories in the history of sports." ■

ALUMNI

A Message from Alumni Association President Will Trueba, Jr., Esq. '90



Dear FIU Alumni and Friends of the University:

FIU's Torch of Knowledge, Understanding and Service burned brighter on Feb. 10 as we dedicated the FIU's College of Law's Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall. Enough cannot be said about the attractive building, its impressive teaching courtrooms, the library, study rooms and technology-ready classrooms.

However, as with many of our alma mater's accomplishments, the more impressive part of this success story involves our faculty, students and administrators. Collectively, they obtained full American Bar Association accreditation for our College of Law in the shortest time possible; they fulfilled the promise of providing a quality, affordable law school education; and significantly, they garnered national recognition for having among the most diverse student bodies of any U.S. law school.

These accomplishments made the dedication even more gratifying when keynote speaker U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg addressed the audience, which included many judges, legal professionals, deans of other law schools and government leaders – many of whom happened to be in Miami for the yearly meeting of the American Bar Association. If you have not been to the University Park campus in a while, I encourage you to visit – and make sure to see the new Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall.

More accolades abound: The Council of Alumni Association Executives (CAAE) in its most recently published survey recognized the FIU Alumni Association as No. 5 in membership growth during the past year and No. 1 in percentage growth for the last five years. Kudos to our Associate Vice President and Executive Director Bill Draughon, his dedicated staff and to our External Relations team led by Associate Vice President Terry Witherell, for helping us reach out to our alumni everywhere.

Finally, as alumni, friends and family of FIU, I encourage all of you to continue supporting our university, an integral part of our local community and beyond.

In the Spirit of Blue & Gold,

William R. Trueba, Jr.

Enjoying themselves at the fishing tournament are (left) Jorge Fernandez-Pla, (bottom) Sebastian Fernandez-Pla and (right) Juan Vergara.



Upcoming tournaments will raise dollars for students

Looking forward to tournament season? This spring join your fellow FIU alumni and friends at the annual golf and fishing tournaments as we raise money for scholarships.

These two tournaments have awarded more than 80 scholarships to Golden Panther students during the history of the events. All net proceeds are dedicated to the FIU Scholarship Fund. Participation opportunities range from sponsorships to foursomes or boat entries.

The FIU Alumni Association and FIU Athletics have partnered to host the 2007 Golf Tournament on Friday, May 18, at the beautiful Doral Golf Resort & Spa. This tournament is not for golfers alone as tournament day discounts for spa services will be available for spouses and other guests of the players and participants are invited to attend the awards ceremony luncheon. To register for the event please fill out the registration form online at www.fiu alumni.com.

Meanwhile, Father's Day weekend has become synonymous with the annual FIU Fishing tournament. This year, come celebrate Father's Day with fellow alumni, family and friends at the 2007 Fishing Tournament on Saturday, June 16.

Join us at the Miami Beach Marina / Monty's South Beach as fishing enthusiasts compete for more than \$10,000 in cash and prizes. Categories include: Largest Dolphin, Largest Fun Fish and Ladies & Juniors.

If you are not an experienced angler but still enjoy a good meal, join us for the private dock party at 3 p.m. To register for the event please fill out the registration form online at www.fiu alumni.com.

For sponsorship or registration information



Panther Sites

When in Rome: FIU alumnus Alberto Padron '98 with his wife Angela salute the Golden Panthers during their honeymoon in Rome.

Feel the Pride

Sasha Seco '05, Andy Hernandez '00 and Jorge Zurita '96 attend the CM Alumni Chapter Kick-Off Event.



Faith at Work Alumni Chapter members register guests at inaugural event.



Lifetime member Angela L. Diaz '90, MBA '04, Marlene Castillo, Robin Tellez and lifetime member Yvonne S. Diaz '91 of Baptist Health South Florida team enjoy their day at Doral.



about both tournaments, please contact Jennifer Restrepo at 305-348-0159 or restrepj@fiu.edu. ■

Volunteers needed for alumni chapters

From social networking events and game-watching parties, to community service projects and family picnics, FIU Alumni Association chapters help keep alumni connected to one another, their community and Florida International University. Alumni chapters locally and across the country need volunteers to carry on the FIU tradition.

Members of the FIU Alumni Association can help their local chapter in a number of ways:

- **Social planning coordinator:** Plan social events such as FIU athletic events, TV-watch parties, happy hours, road trips, chapter picnics and other social events designed to acquaint members with one another, the University, and the Alumni Association.
- **Service planning coordinator:** Plan service/academically-oriented activities and programs. These may include a scholarship program, student recruitment activities, career networking activities, community service projects and other activities and events designed to provide service to the University and the community.
- **Membership coordinator:** Recruit alumni and friends to become active participants in chapter programs and events. The Membership Committee also promotes membership in the Alumni Association.
- **Communications coordinator:** Promote all chapter events and activities. This may include editing a chapter newsletter, providing information to the Alumni Association for a chapter mailer, and maintaining a chapter web page.

If any of these volunteer opportunities interest you, or if you know of an alumnus/a or friend of the university who may be interested, contact the alumni chapter leader directly by visiting www.fiu alumni.com and clicking on the "Alumni Chapters" link. If none of the coordinator positions fits your skills or desires, contact the chapter to inquire about other opportunities for volunteers.

For a complete listing of alumni chapters visit www.fiu alumni.com and click on the "Alumni Chapters" link. ■

New chapters hold kick-off events

The Department of Construction Management Alumni Chapter hosted its first Construction Management Alumni Networking and Dinner Reception on Thursday, Feb. 8, at the FIU University Park Campus. The event helped kick off the new chapter, which will provide opportunities for the department's alumni to network and give back to the Department of Construction Management.

There were more than 100 alumni and friends in attendance. Everyone had a chance to participate in a raffle, share success stories and hear guest speakers Athletic Director Pete Garcia and head football coach Mario Cristobal. For more information about the chapter or to get involved, please contact Jorge Zurita '96, chair, at jzurita@odebrecht.com.

The Faith at Work Alumni Chapter partnered with FIU's College of Law for an inaugural event: "Faith, Ethics, and Success at Work" on Thursday, Feb. 15, at the College of Law Signature Room 1000 at University Park.

More than 75 FIU alumni and friends were

in attendance for the evening's program. The lecture featured David W. Miller, executive director of the Center for Faith & Culture at Yale University and assistant professor of business ethics at Yale's School of Management. It also featured Ralph L. Gazitúa, president and CEO of WTDC in Miami, who is a member of the Executive Committee of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Board of Directors of The Beacon Council and the Executive Committee of the Doral Business Council.

The chapter focuses on presenting nationally recognized and local marketplace leaders speaking about how they have achieved success. It provides networking events at both University Park and Biscayne Bay Campus; mentoring for current FIU students and recent graduates with successful FIU alumni; mentoring for foster children with chapter members; and unique faith-based alliances, including local youth groups, ministry missions and international trade missions.

The Faith at Work Alumni Chapter is open to all faiths and belief systems. Everyone is welcome to join or participate. For more information about the chapter please contact John Nardone '99, chair, at john@trinityi.org. ■


Send your travel photos to FIU Magazine


FIU alumni, when you travel, remember to demonstrate your Panther Pride with an FIU T-shirt, cap, flag or a copy of this Magazine and you may appear in the Panther Sites section of the award-winning *FIU Magazine*. Send your high resolution (300 dpi) photographs with a complete description to alumni@fiu.edu. ■

Feel the Pride

CLASS NOTES


1970s

 **Patricia E. Bradley '74** made FIU history again when she recently was inducted into the first FIU Athletic Hall of Fame. Three decades ago, she was the university's first-ever All-American. The only golfer to win all four major women's tournaments, Bradley has been recognized among the top 50 players and teachers by the Ladies Professional Gold Association.

 **Carlos A. Migoya, '74, MBA '76** was named CEO for Wachovia's Atlantic region in New York City. He left Miami after 17 years as regional president for Wachovia in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

Richard W. Glukstad, MS '77 has written a new book, "Nobody's Perfect! A Critique of Modern American Society," which offers a candid analysis of both the good and bad about America.

Brendan Foulkes '78, managing director of Hospitality Management Services Ltd., was featured in *The Nassau Guardian* newspaper in November as a distinguished alumnus of FIU and successful Bahamian entrepreneur.

 **Cesar A. Pizarro '78** has been promoted to vice president for "El Nuevo Herald". During his 32-year career with the Spanish daily, Pizarro has assumed several leading roles, including business manager and classified advertising director.

Rose Lee Archer '79, MS '02 is a women and family issues specialist and produces her own talk show, "The Rose Lee Archer Show".



Mikki Canton, Esq., MS '79 has been selected for the 2007 edition of Best Lawyers in America by her peers. Canton, who is an Alumna Torch Award recipient, practices administrative law in the Miami office of Gunster Yoakley & Stewart.

Lincoln E. Lopez '79 is the new chief financial officer for The Adler Group. With more than 20 years of experience in public accounting and commercial

real estate, Lopez oversees all aspects of accounting and manages the information technology and human resources functions.

Joy A. Satterlee '79, who works as executive director for the Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, was named 2006 Woman of the Year by the Atlantic chapter of the Association for Women in Communications. She received the award in the non-profit category.

1980s


Keith E. Ellenburg '80 has been promoted to a principal auditor in the accounting firm of Kaufman, Rossin & Company.

Roberto R. Pardo, Esq. '81 now is a member of the Board of Directors of the Cuban-American Bar Association.

Carlos M. Castellon '82 has joined the Community Advisory Board for the FIU Honors College.

Habib A. Chaudhry '84, an Internal Revenue Service employee, volunteers his time and tax knowledge to help the Hispanic community in Amarillo, Texas. Chaudhry was recently featured in *El Mensajero*, a local paper in New Mexico.

Guillermo J. Molina '84 has been promoted to senior vice president for Ocean Bank.

 **Jose M. Diaz '86**, a member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, is managing principal of Compass Office Solutions, which has opened its headquarters in the Miramar Park of Commerce.

Lester B. Law, Esq. '86 recently was appointed senior vice president for the Naples office of U.S. Trust.

Juan C. Padial '86, a real estate investor and investment manager, has been appointed president and interim CEO of Sol Sotheby's International Realty.

Luis F. Arrizurieta '87 is the new financial officer of J.I. Kislak, a real estate investment and management company in Miami Lakes.

Susan L. Schlepp '87 has published a religious book titled "Miracles In Our Midst – True Stories of Divine Intervention." She played multiple roles in the project, including contributing author, editor and publicist. The book was released in February 2007.

Amy E. Wagner-Pomares '87, MBA '89 was named vice president of investor relations for the Burger King Corporation.


Braulio L. Baez, Esq. '88, a Florida public service commissioner since 2000 and chairman of the panel, has joined Holland & Knight's public policy practice as senior counsel.

Jorge J. Gonzalez '88 has been named regional president of Wachovia for Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties.

George A. Torres '88 became senior director of corporate communications and development for Dolphins Enterprises last February. Torres was also named a Champion of Education in Miami Dade by the Education Fund.

Carlos E. Arguello '89 is the new managing director of institutional banking and structured financing at BAC Florida Bank.

Alberto F. Couto, C.P.A. '89, MBA '97, chairman of the advisory board for the FIU Chapman Graduate School of Business's International MBA program, recently was hired by The Easton Group to serve as executive vice president and chief operating officer.


 **Gayle E. Dietz '89, MS '93** is a registered dietitian and one of only a few dietitians in South Florida with a combined training in nutrition science and communications. In 2005 she served as president of the Florida Dietetic Association.

Robin L. Fraser '89, a two-time Major League Soccer's Defender of the Year Award recipient, is director of coaching for the Arizona Futbol Club. Since retiring at the end of the 2005 season, Fraser has been coaching and providing commentary.

Mercedes M. Sellek, Esq. '89 has joined Katz Barron in Miami as an associate in the real estate department.

1990s

Juan J. Martinez '90, M.Acc.'93 was promoted to vice president of finance, in addition to his role as treasurer, for the Knight Foundation.

 **Lisa A. Peniche '90** a former alumni Board of Director officer, has joined David Wood Personnel as a recruiter.

Wendy J. (Minsker) Ramer '90, MS '94 published her first novel, "Enzo's Mamma", in September 2006. The novel takes the reader on a journey that covers Bologna, Italy; Lugano, Switzerland; Syracuse, New York; and South Florida. From 1991-1995, Ramer lived in Seville, Spain, and Bologna, Italy, where she taught English. Her experiences later would become the inspiration for the fictional story. Ramer is currently a professor in South Florida at Broward Community College. She is also the mother of two children.



Donald J. Rifkin '90 of the Miami-Dade Police Department was promoted to major in 2004 and heads internal affairs. He commanded the Miami Gardens District until last year.

year, he signed on as a member of the Atlanta Falcons, becoming the first Golden Panther to play in the NFL.

Turnbull didn't even make his first NFL regular-season appearance until November 2006, playing in two games as a member of the Atlanta Falcons' special teams. The team put him on waivers in anticipation of signing him as a member of its practice squad, but the 6'-2", 222 lb. safety was claimed off waivers by Chicago on Dec. 12.

"I didn't even know at first which team wanted me because the computers were down for a couple of hours that day. I didn't find out I was going to Chicago until they

called me and said, 'Welcome. This is the Bears and we're your new boss,'" he said. A short time later, he stepped off the plane in Chicago wearing shorts and a t-shirt in 15-degree weather.

Turnbull, who maintains close contact with his former FIU teammates, remains realistic about his future with Chicago.

"The Bears have one of the best defenses in the league. There's no reason for them to fix something that's not broken," he says. "I'm just trying to learn as much as I can for however long I'm there so that I can help other young players down the road with my experiences." ■

ALUMNI

Jose A. Tillan '90 is vice president of music and talent for MTV Latin America and will lead the music programming and production of the MTV Tr3s (Three), a new channel that will recognize and celebrate Latino youth and their unique identity.

Rosamaria Bravo '91 has joined Morrison Brown Argiz & Farra, LLP as a partner in its tax consulting unit.



Nancy J. Castleman-Dion '91, who received a master's degree from the University of Miami in 2004, is the assistant dean for development for the UM Frost School of Music. She married her sweetheart Michael Dion in 1999 and resides in the Falls area.

Raul Incera '91 was recognized as a finalist in the 2006 South Florida Business Journal's "Up and Comers Award" in the Banking/Finance and Accounting categories.

Rosary C. Plana-Falero '91 has been promoted to managing senior vice president and manager of City National Bank of Florida's Private Lending Division for Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Nick P. Tootle '91 was named a principal in audit practice at Kaufman Rossin & Co. He joined the firm in 1993 and has extensive experience in public and private enterprises with a concentration in financial services.

Andrew P. Yap '91, MBA '97 is senior vice president and CEO of LEASA Industries. He is a College of Business Administration instructor and he was recently featured in the "Business Monday" section of The Miami Herald.

Kelly A. Blum '92 has joined Cole Scott's West Palm Beach office.

Janet Brill '92 is an adjunct professor of nutrition at FIU. Her new book "Cholesterol Down: 10 Simple Steps to Lower Your Cholesterol in 4 Weeks—Without Prescription Drugs," was published in December 2006.

Saul M. Mredi '92 has been hired by American Media as chief accounting officer.



Angel Medina, Jr. '92 was recently honored by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce's "A Salute to Miami's Leaders" awards program during its 2006 Goals conference. Medina is president of Regions Bank, Miami-Dade County.

Floriberto A. Puente '92 has joined Fairchild Partners as senior vice president for commercial sales and leasing.

Joy Venero '92 has been promoted to executive vice president and chief lending officer at Premier American Bank.

Isabel Blanco '93 has been named chief financial officer for the Miami Children's Museum.



Todd M. Ericsson, Esq. '93 joined Clawson & Staubes, LLC, a law firm headquartered on Daniel Island, S.C., in September 2006. Ericsson practices in the area of residential real estate. He also works actively with the Leukemia Lymphoma Society's fund raising arm, Team in Training, as a triathlon coach.

Nelson Hidalgo '93 has been promoted to senior vice president at Ocean Bank.

Barbara R. Morizot-Leite '93 has been promoted to senior vice president at Ocean Bank.

Suzanne E. Morrison-Williams '93 has been promoted to assistant dean of academic affairs at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale.

Esteban Nunez '93 has been named vice president of commercial real estate for Gibraltar Private Bank & Trust.

Daniel D. Diaz '94 was recognized as a finalist in the 2006 South Florida Business Journal's "Up and Comers Award" in the Banking/Finance and Accounting categories.

Daniel P. Johnson '94 has been promoted to chief financial officer for TIB Financial Corporation.

Steve Kerbel, Esq. '94 has accepted a position in Cole Scott & Kissane's Fort Lauderdale office.

Gabriel E. Nieto, Esq. '94 has joined Berger Singerman as a shareholder in Miami. He practices administrative and regulatory law with an emphasis on environmental and land-use matters.

Dwight E. Stewart '94 was recently inducted into FIU's first Athletic Hall of Fame. Stewart was perhaps the most productive men's basketball player in school history, finishing as the only male player ever to score more than 2,000 career points. He concluded his playing days as the solo holder of 30 school records and co-holder of five others. He was named a first-team All-Trans America Athletic Conference member twice and was a pre-season All-America selection of Street & Smith's magazine prior to the 1989-'90 season. On Feb. 27, 1993, Stewart became the first and only FIU male basketball player to have his jersey retired.

Aileen Izquierdo '95 recently was named vice president of communication and marketing at Florida Atlantic University, becoming the first Hispanic VP in FAU history. She was also named "Heavy Hitter in Public Relations" by the South Florida Business Journal.

Jose A. Marina '95, M.Acc. '96 was appointed senior vice president, controller and director of banking operations at TotalBank.

Peggy A. Navajas '95, MSF '02 has been promoted to senior vice president, controller for Premier American Bank.

Ivonne M. Perez '95 was promoted to vice president at Everett Clay and Associates.

Todd M. Schwartz '95 has been named head of front-desk service operations for Continental Group property management.

Melina I. De Rose '96 was promoted to assistant community news editor at the South Florida's Sun-Sentinel. She also contributes to FIU's The Beacon newspaper by participating on the school's media board.



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



Beatriz M. Alvarez '97 has accepted a position

as administrative assistant for Broadway Multimedia, Inc., which serves as two tourist channels: The Welcome Channel and The Broadway Channel. The company is located in Coral Gables.

David G. Barbeito '97, M.Acc. '03 has joined Morrison Brown Argiz & Farra as a new partner to its auditing and business advisory services.

Dayne Del Valle '97, EMBA '00 has been named chief financial officer of Century Homebuilders. Del Valle previously was chief financial officer at EFC Holdings.

David E. Hollander '97 has joined Morrison Brown Argiz & Farra as a new partner to its auditing and tax consulting practice.

Mike Lowell '97 was recently inducted into FIU's first Athletic Hall of Fame. Lowell was a Collegiate Baseball Freshman All-American in 1993, a three-time All-Trans America Athletic Conference selection, and the league's Student-Athlete of the Year and an Academic All-American in 1995. Since his collegiate playing days, Lowell has been a three-time MLB All-Star and a member of the Florida Marlins 2003 World Series Championship team. Mike was a 2003 Alumni Association Torch Award recipient.



Alberto C. Santalo '97, president and CEO of Avisena, was recently honored with the prestigious South Florida Business Journal 2006 "Business of the Year Award" for health services.

Oscar R. Solares '97 has been appointed director of imaging and cardiopulmonary services at North Shore Medical Center. Previously, he was director of pulmonary services.



Anna Cuba de la Fe '98 and husband Tony welcomed their first baby boy to their family.

Ana V. Navas '98 has been promoted to vice president and senior portfolio manager in the real estate financing division at The International Bank of

Miami.

Gloria M. Ruiz '98 was recently promoted to producer of Univision's primetime show "Aqui y Ahora".

Margarita Salas-Amaro '98 works for Telemundo Network as director for planning and strategy. She was awarded the NBC Ovation Award in July 2005 for the implementation of a new programming system at the network.

Joshua P. Heberling '99, MS '00 has been promoted to tax manager at Berkowitz Dick Pollack & Brant CPA & Consultants.

Lia R. Martinez '99, MS '01 has joined the Knight Foundation as an account manager.




Ricky R. Sant '99 was named coordinator of the Graduate Admissions Office at Florida International University.

Miguel Armenteros, Jr. '00 has joined the law firm Damian & Valori's business and employment litigation practice.

Demian M. Bellumio '00, chairman of the FIU Busi-

Feel the Pride


ness Alumni Circle, was selected by Business Week to share his day-to-day routine as the founder of entertainment company, Hoodiny.

 **Alejandro A. Crespo '96, MA '00** has been promoted to director at the accounting firm Morrison Brown Argiz & Farra, LLP has. He was a senior manager in the audit department.

2000s


Raul Garcia '00 was promoted to entertainment producer for Teletutur Network. He was awarded the 2004-05 Chicago/Midwest Emmy Award for a hard news feature series.

Allan S. Holder '00 was promoted to tax supervisor in the Tax Services Department at Berkowitz Dick Pollack & Brant Certified Public Accountants & Consultants LLP.

 **Misty Jo-Arencivia '00** has been named a board member to the National Society of Hispanic MBA's Phoenix Chapter. Jo-Arencivia will be fulfilling this role while concurrently completing her MBA at Thunderbird-The Garvin School of International Management.

Frank J. Lanza '00 was married on September 7, 2002, and welcomed his first child, a baby boy, on May 26, 2006.

Juan P. Poggio '00, MS '03 has joined Telefonía, USA, as a global service and project manager.

 **Luis Rodriguez, Jr. '00** has been named vice president of financial reporting at the main branch of Premier American Bank.

Madeline Valdes '00, MBA '03 was promoted from property manager to assistant director in October 2005, for the City of Miami.

Sergio Diego, III '01, MSF '02 has been promoted to assistant vice president of commercial real estate financing for The International Bank of Miami.

Denise E. Gaffor '01 is currently a doctoral student at Barry University, Fort Myers Graduate Center.



Nicole Shelley Greenidge '01 has started her own self-development and communications non-profit, specializing in written, spoken and body language for teens. Through the body language division, she now produces fashion productions.

Greenidge, who began modeling at age 13, speaks seven languages and is an ESOL instructor at FIU. She is active in philanthropic efforts for breast cancer research, self-development and the arts.

Kristina R. Jordan '01 has been promoted to vice president of the residential lending division for The International Bank of Miami.

Michelle M. Otero '01 recently joined the law firm of Houck Anderson, P.A., focusing on admiralty and maritime law.

 **Edward J. Redlich '01** was appointed to the Executive Advisory Council of Community Bank.


Christina M. Valdeon '01 works for Ryan Partnership as senior program manager and has recently joined Heineken's marketing agency to open up its Miami office.



Val M. Berry '02 has joined The George Washington University as the university's first chief human resources officer. Berry joined GW on Sept. 1, from Western Washington University, Bellingham, Wash., where he served as the chief human resources officer for

four years. Berry was the assistant vice president of human resources at Florida International University and managed labor relations at Columbia University.

Frederic F. Lafleur '02, MBA '03 is a consultant at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., where he joined the Finance, Private Sector and Infrastructure Group. He oversees its Energy Sector Management Assistance Program in Latin America and the Caribbean. His efforts have been instrumental in the approval of a \$6 million grant to improve the quality of electrical services in Haiti. Additionally, he is working on an off-grid rural electrification project of \$12 million with the government of Nicaragua.

 **Jair Longo, Jr. '02** has been promoted by Citrix to head its Brazil division.

Sunita Deshpande '03 was the first graduate of the Miami Ad School's Integrated Communications: Advertising and Public Relations master's degree at FIU. She was nominated for a 2006 Ceba Award for creative excellence in business advertising for the Ad Age campaign.



 **Michelle Irizarry Monnar '01** and  **Marcel Monnar '03** welcomed their first baby, Alexander Michael Monnar, on December 7, 2006.

Michelle C. Perez '03 works for NBC Universal as duopoly satellite coordinator. She received two Ovation awards, one for coverage of the 2005 Hurricane season and one in 2006 for outstanding teamwork for Miami Heat championship coverage.

Gabriel Pinedo '03 has been working within several different organizations in FPL for the last four years. He recently accepted a position as a business systems analyst in which he will work with various information technology projects.

Adriana S. Salazar '03 recently opened her own media company, Media Point LLC, in Miami. She formerly worked as the vice president for Americas Media Group.

Judy-Ann M. Allen '04 is the director of networking events for the Business Alumni Chapter and has joined Assurant Solutions as a compliance specialist.



Ana I. Feliciano '00, MS '04 has been appointed to oversee the account services advertising team at Miami-based Diaz Cooper Advertising. **Craig L. Kirsner '04** was named


volunteer of the year by Hands-On-Miami.


Melissa A. Melendez '04 was promoted to project manager at Crispin Porter & Bogusky. She is now in the Colorado office.

Danielle E. Dubetz '05 joined News Channel 5 as a traffic reporter in August 2006.

Eliecer Viamontes '05 is a project manager for Florida Power & Light and has opened his own online travel business, Viamont Vacations, Inc. He is also currently pursuing his MBA.



 **Francisco E. Saravia '06** was accepted at European School of Economics in Milan, Italy, where he will pursue an MBA with a specialization in finance.

 **Alfonso Duro '06** works for ESPN Deportes La Revista as associate editor and was chosen as ESPN's correspondent in Germany during the soccer World Cup 2006. He covered the 33 days of the event.

Eduardo D. Salinas '05 joined the team at The Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald as an account executive and has enrolled in the Chapman Graduate School of Business to earn an Executive MBA.



Evelyn A. Lopez '06 was married to Ralph Vargas on October 28, 2006, at St. Timothy Catholic Church.

PANTHER PERKS:

Panther Partner: SCJ Products International, an online business owned by alumnus Steve Massena '00, offers more than 400 products including gift items and novelties, electronics and automotive products, house wares and tools, and much more.

Panther Partner: SCJ Products International offers a discount of 15 percent or more to FIU Alumni Association Members on all regularly priced products. Act now and start saving today!

How to Take Advantage: Just go to <http://www.OnTVGiftShop.com> now and do the following:

1. From the homepage click on "My Account" at the top of the page.
2. Click on "Continue" at the bottom of the next page.
3. Fill in the short registration form and don't forget to type "FIU" in the "Company Name" field box. Otherwise you may not receive your discount code.
4. Your exclusive discount code will be emailed to you.

advancing FIU



Founders will build a legacy of excellence for new medical school

Florida International University plans to open a world-class medical school in August 2009 to train the next generation of physicians in our community.

Leading the way is newly hired College of Medicine Dean Dr. John Rock, 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.

Building a College of Medicine that radiates excellence in all aspects of teaching, research and service to the community cannot be accomplished through legislative funding alone. FIU needs strong support from the community to help meet significant start-up costs and secure operating funds for the college's formative years.

To achieve these goals, FIU launched in early 2007 the College of Medicine Founders Program. Through this program, South Florida's leading individuals, families, corporations and foundations can make a significant contribution toward South Florida's first public medical school. College of Medicine Founders will provide the University with essential, flexible funding for planning and implementing all aspects of opening and operating the new medical school.

Founders agree to commit \$50,000 or more paid in annual installments for up to five years to the College of Medicine Education Fund, which can be directed

to the College's most immediate and pressing needs during its formative period. Among the many immediate uses of the Education Fund will include recruitment of key instructional and research faculty, development and implementation of curricula, recruitment of the inaugural class of students, activities that cement relationships with leading local hospitals and other health care providers, and equipping of both teaching and research laboratories.

The support will come at a critical time in the development of the College of Medicine. Rock is already working with leaders from across the university and consultants to assemble a first-rate 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. The plan is to secure the college's provisional accreditation by the fall.

The FIU College of Medicine will accept its first class in 2008 and begin instruction the following year. It is anticipated that approximately 40 students will comprise this inaugural class.

Individuals and organizations making a College of Medicine Founders commitment will be recognized permanently as College of Medicine Founders and as members of the University-wide Society of Founders. All those who make a commitment and an initial payment by December 31, 2007 will be

permanently recognized as Charter Members of the College of Medicine Founders.

Additional recognition for College of Medicine Founders will include listing on a Wall of Honor to be installed in a prominent place in the building housing the College of Medicine; access to the dean of the College of Medicine and College faculty and administrators through participation in College of Medicine events and briefings and other presentations exclusively for College of Medicine Founders and a plaque commemorating membership in the College of Medicine Founders.

FIU's College of Medicine will be the cornerstone of a broader, university-wide Health Sciences Center that will include the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the Robert Stempel School of Public Health, whose programs have established reputations for excellence. The integration of these three schools – plus close relationships with the University Graduate School and departments such as Biomedical Engineering – will create a powerful educational, research and public service enterprise that will make valuable contributions to the health and well being of the South Florida community. ■

For more information on the FIU Medical Founders Program, please contact Roger Wyman in University Advancement at 305-348-3332 or Roger.Wyman@fiu.edu.



Very Important Panthers **v.i.p.**

Stewart Appelrouth MS '80

Year of Graduation: 1980

Profession: Principal of Appelrouth Farah & Co. Certified Public Accountants & Advisors, Certified Public Accountant, Certified Fraud Examiner, Certified Forensic Accountant, Certified Valuation Analyst, Accredited Business Valuator

FIU Degree: Master's Degree in Finance

FIU Affiliations: Alumni Association Board of Directors, Athletic Association Board of Directors, Council of 100, College of Law Dean's Council, Alumni Association Torch Awards Committee

What are your favorite memories of your time at FIU?
When I went to FIU, there were only three buildings and most of the students went to school at night. The professors were closer in age to the students than they are today. I also had some business experience, so listening to their life experiences was fascinating to me. Dr. Constantine Kalogeras was my adviser and we would sit and discuss finance along with the various financial crises that were arising at the time.

What advice would you offer to FIU students?
Look past the books. While grades are important, it is more important to be able to think and use your common sense.

You devote a significant amount of your time to FIU and the Alumni Association. Why do you think it is important to be involved?

I have always felt that you should never forget where you came from or how you got to where you are today. One should always give back to the community and people who helped you and your family get to where you are — not just by writing a check, but by giving the most valuable asset you have, your time and your energy.

What is your proudest accomplishment?
Making my parents and family proud of whatever I do.

Show your school pride every time you hit the road
with a **Golden Panther** license plate.



The Replacement Program allows you to replace your current plate with the new FIU plate at **NO EXTRA CHARGE**. Your new plate will arrive complete with a decal ready to attach to your vehicle and no additional charges will be incurred until your next annual license plate renewal.

To get your **FREE** plate today
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