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FIU

M A G A Z I N E

FALL 2008



Nursing without Borders

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on the cover



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Nursing without Borders

Karen L. Levin '95, MPH '97 redefines what it means to be a nurse with a unique public health career that has brought her from Ground Zero on September 11 to Ethiopia. On the cover, Levin is surrounded by children at an orphanage in Andhra Pradesh, India. The children's parents died from AIDS. In 2007, Levin was working as a disaster preparedness consultant and health educator in this region, which is vulnerable to tsunamis and cyclones. She visited an orphanage to further understand the impact of AIDS on families and communities in this region.

in the next issue



FIU Goes Green

We're going to tell you how the university is joining the

green movement as part of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. We will highlight the various initiatives of the campus-wide environmental task force, from the installation of energy efficient motion detector light switches to the addition of bio-diesel fuel buses to the campus fleet. We'll also share the eco-friendly accomplishments of alumni, students and faculty.

in this issue

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FIU is rolling out a new logo, new athletic mark and yes, a new Roary. And not only does FIU's beloved mascot have a new look, he's got a new soul after tryouts this spring.

FIU

M A G A Z I N E

FALL 2008 VOLUME 18

letter from the editor



Dear Readers,

On the afternoon when I sat down to write this letter, I had in mind to highlight the recent budget cuts and their implications for FIU's future. The changes will be significant. Inside, FIU President Modesto A. Maidique and Provost Ron Berkman talk about both in a candid Q&A.

I got sidetracked as I was writing, because, as it turns out, there was something else significant happening at FIU. It was the first day of Summer B classes. There was a buzz in the air as classrooms around the campus filled with students and faculty. My husband, a professor of international relations, was one of them. And he called as I began writing to tell me what a great first class he'd just had. The students were answering questions and asking questions and participating in the class discussion. His exact words: "It was awesome."

I've never been to one of my husband's classes, but I can picture just what he was describing. Those of us who went to school here know what it's like to leave class excited and inspired. It happens all the time. And it has been going on every day that our deans and administrators have been wrangling over budget cuts. We have been forced to eliminate programs and centers, lose employees and reprioritize. It's been disheartening. Yet none of that has diminished the magic of what FIU does so well. I bet the students leaving my husband's class would agree.

I share this with you as a balance to bleak headlines. I hope you are as proud as I am to realize that despite all of the challenges heaped on FIU, the heart of the institution remains intact. Inside, you'll read about even more reasons to be proud: our new Frost Art Museum is opening, our scientific research is delivering new promise for those at risk of macular degeneration and our alumni continue to shine.

Cheers,

Deborah O'Neil

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The León family gathered at FIU in May to celebrate a \$10 million gift to the College of Medicine. From left are: College of Medicine Dean Dr. John Rock, Benjamin León III, Lisa León, Lourdes León, Nancy Maidique '03, FIU President Modesto A. Maidique, Founder of León Medical Centers Benjamín León Jr., Silvia León, Katerina Maury, Albert G. Maury Jr. Back row: Steffany Maury, Alexandra Maury, Silvia Maury, Albert G. Maury '96, '02, Provost Ron Berkman and former FIU Foundation chairman Larry Kahn. Front row: Benjamin León IV, Sabrina León, Linette Romay.



León family gift to support new College of Medicine geriatric center

By Martin Haro '05

The College of Medicine received the single largest gift in the university's history in May from Miami's León family to establish the Benjamín León, Jr. Family Center for Geriatric Research and Education. The \$10 million gift also creates the León Medical Centers Eminent Scholars Chair in Geriatrics. The gift is eligible for a state match, making its total impact \$20 million.

At a press conference announcing the donation, FIU President Modesto A. Maidique praised the León family, its business model and its unwavering commitment to the South Florida community. Maidique called the gift not only a milestone for the university, but a milestone for the community.

"This gift brings out the best in two parts of our community," he said. "Today, León Medical Centers and FIU come together and this gift will make us a power in the field of geriatrics."

The León Family gift is among the largest ever made by a Cuban-American family to an American university. It is the first gift to name a

center within the nascent College of Medicine.

For León, Jr., making this donation was a way to give back to the community and the country that gave him a home.

"I come from a very humble background. I'm an immigrant. I came to the United States with \$5 in my pocket," he said. "I was a dishwasher. I did all kinds of jobs. I came to the land blessed by the Lord and I was blessed by the Lord in being able to become an American by choice.

"As a member of any society, we should be measured by the way we take care of the elderly, the people who paved our way. This is the beginning of a new era."

The Benjamín León, Jr. Family Center for Geriatric Research and Education will focus on health issues that affect the culturally diverse elderly population in South Florida. The research conducted in this center will be increasingly important beyond our community as the United States' population continues to grow older.

Noting that the Baby Boomer generation – the largest generation in

"As a member of any society, we should be measured by the way we take care of our elderly, the people who paved our way."

—
Benjamin León, Jr.

our nation's history – has started to enter its sixties, College of Medicine Dean and Senior Vice President for Health Affairs Dr. John Rock recognized this transition "is going to put incredible strain on an already overburdened health care system."

Rock said that it is important for FIU's new medical school to look for solutions to such emerging challenges.

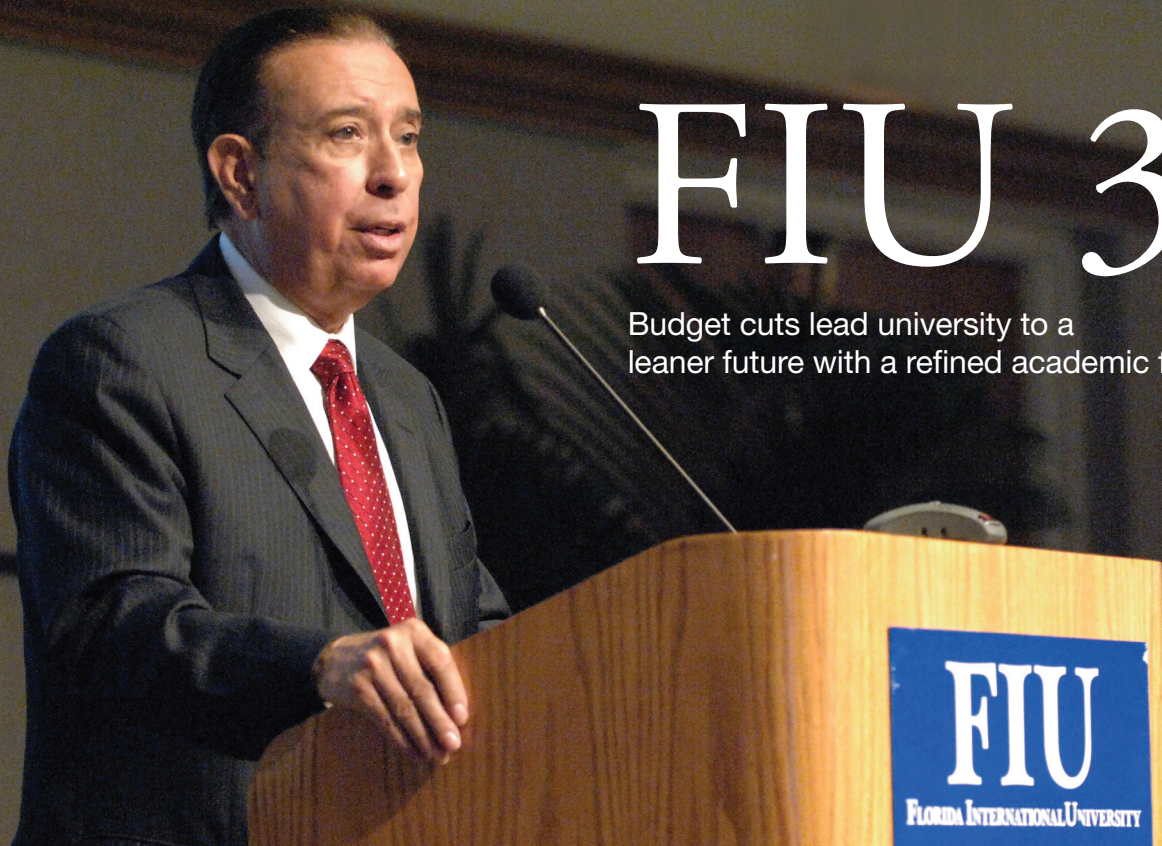
"Our goal is to train compassionate doctors who will treat our entire community, from babies to the elderly," he said. "In creating the Benjamín León, Jr. Family Center for Geriatric Research and Education we will be on the cutting edge of health care."

To meet this challenge, the new center will develop a state-of-the-art curriculum in geriatric medicine and establish clinical research programs addressing the care of the elderly.

"For more than 43 years I have been dedicated to serving the health care needs of the Medicare population, most of whom are over the age of 65," said León, Jr. "I remain wholeheartedly committed to improving the lives of our seniors." ■

FIU 3.0

Budget cuts lead university to a leaner future with a refined academic focus



By Deborah O'Neil

The most serious budget crisis in FIU's history prompted an intensive evaluation of academic priorities and daily operations this spring that resulted in program closures, employee layoffs and a freeze in freshman enrollment.

"It's very painful and very difficult," said Board of Trustees Chair David Parker as the trustees ratified the budget cuts on June 12. "I don't see any economic silver lining in the long term. I expect it to last in a challenging environment for a couple of years at least."

The downturn in Florida's economy forced the Florida Legislature to slash the state budget by more than \$4 billion. Virtually every sector of the state – from nursing homes to courts –

saw their state dollars dry up.

The state's 11 universities have spent months balancing their budgets with multi-million dollar shortfalls. The University of Florida is eliminating more than 400 positions and plans to reduce its undergraduate enrollment by 4,000 during the next four years. The University of South Florida is cutting or not filling hundreds of jobs and is shutting down for the last week of December, requiring all staff to use three days of their paid vacation. Florida State University will decrease its enrollment by 2,000 students and is eliminating 200 positions.

FIU will absorb the cuts by shutting down 25 degree programs, closing six centers and institutes and eliminating more than 200 positions through layoffs, attrition and unfilled vacancies. In addition, the university will implement consolidations, reductions and cuts throughout its operations.

"We have to make decisions now that are not band-aids, but that recognize it is a new world in our university," President Modesto A. Maidique said. "What I am talking about today is a shift in the paradigm at FIU."

FIU Magazine sat down recently with Maidique and Provost Ron Berkman,

the university's chief academic officer, to discuss the budget cuts and FIU's future, which the president calls "FIU 3.0." In this third phase of FIU's evolution, the university will become leaner and more academically focused. It will also rely more heavily on public-private partnerships and fund raising.

How are these budget cuts impacting what you have built at the university?

President: FIU 3.0 means the university can no longer be all things to all people. The university will be more focused on academic programs. It also means that the university will not continue to grow in enrollment at the pace we have grown over the past 20 years. But a reduction in the rate of growth and a narrowing of the scope of our offerings does not mean we will not continue to advance in critical areas like the medical school and public health school.

Provost: I actually think we are sharpening what we are trying to build. I think a solid foundation was certainly put in place and we're at a stage where we are not going to see expansion of state funding. Because of that, we have to refine and be much more strategic about where we make investments.

"We have to refine and be much more strategic about where we make investments."

—
Provost
Ron
Berkman

What will the freeze in enrollment mean for the community?

President: It means there are thousands of qualified students who are not going to have the opportunity to get an FIU-quality education. It also means the classes will be filled with the highest quality students we have ever had, with the incoming fall student having an average SAT of 1176 and a GPA of 3.6. It sounds great, but we left a thousand qualified students out there.

One criticism comes up again and again: How can FIU build a new football stadium when it is cutting academics and jobs?

President: Think of our funding as coming from three buckets. One is the education and general funding, the core funds for the university. That is where cuts have taken place. A second bucket is the medical school budget and that hasn't been cut, but rather increased significantly. Those funds also come from the Legislature but they cannot be used for anything other than the medical school. The budget for the stadium draws on stadium naming rights, sponsorships for the teams, sales of stadium advertising and stadium boxes. Athletics is a business onto its own that does not draw from the state or tuition funding of the university.

Provost: No matter how many times you explain it, the symbolic paradox of building something grand at a time when people are losing their jobs overwhelms any rational explanation. We are going to have to deal with that.

President: Ron is absolutely right. There is a public relations impact of a new stadium that trumps the reality of the three buckets. The football stadium is funded through a bond and that bond has to be paid off with the contributions to athletics and with the boxes we sell and with ticket revenue. It could not be used to pay staff salaries.

Observers have suggested FIU cut administrator salaries.

President: We are extremely worried

that because there hasn't been an increase this year and because there is no visibility of an increase for next year, we will lose some of our ablest administrators and faculty. We are not at the top end of the scale in either one. For staff, if we did salary cuts, we would lose some of the best people we have.

What's been the hardest part of making the academic cuts?

Provost: Each of the deans cares a great deal about their own colleges and were forced to make difficult decisions on the ground. The hardest part for me was working with the deans through the various iterations of how to make choices. FIU needs faculty so much. The idea of us diminishing faculty is really a very, very difficult reality.

The other piece that has really troubled me is to try the best we can to attenuate the impact this is going to have on the lives of students. They have to find classes and they have to make progress and graduate.

What will the continued decline in state funding mean for FIU?

President: One, we will add no more students than the level we are at now. Two, we will add no more new programs. Three, we will be scouting the FIU universe to scrounge up every dime we can. Existing programs will be cut, but that maintains the integrity and quality of the institution and it allows us to continue to invest in the programs we think are crucial to building a great public urban research university.

What role can alumni play as we move forward?

President: We need to rely on our alumni to identify potential opportunities for the university, to give back to the university in time and resources and to bring to the table folks who may not be alumni but have the ability to make contributions. This is the time for alumni to take ownership of the university.

“This is the time for alumni to take ownership of the university.”

—
President Modesto A. Maidique

What will be our academic focus in the future?

President: We want to have as our main strength health and the life sciences and as a complementary strength, the international dimension. Both of those are very inclusive. I include under health and life sciences, the environment, genetics, public health. The international dimension means we are on a world economy and our graduates are judged by their ability to compete on a global stage. There will be more international partnerships, more foreign investment in FIU and more FIU centers around the world.

What goals are on the horizon for FIU?

President: Build a major medical school as an integral part of the university. The task is not only to have a successful concept of the medical school, but to have a successful launch. On a much lesser scale, but important from an alumni perspective, is to have an equally successful launch of our new stadium with our football team. ■

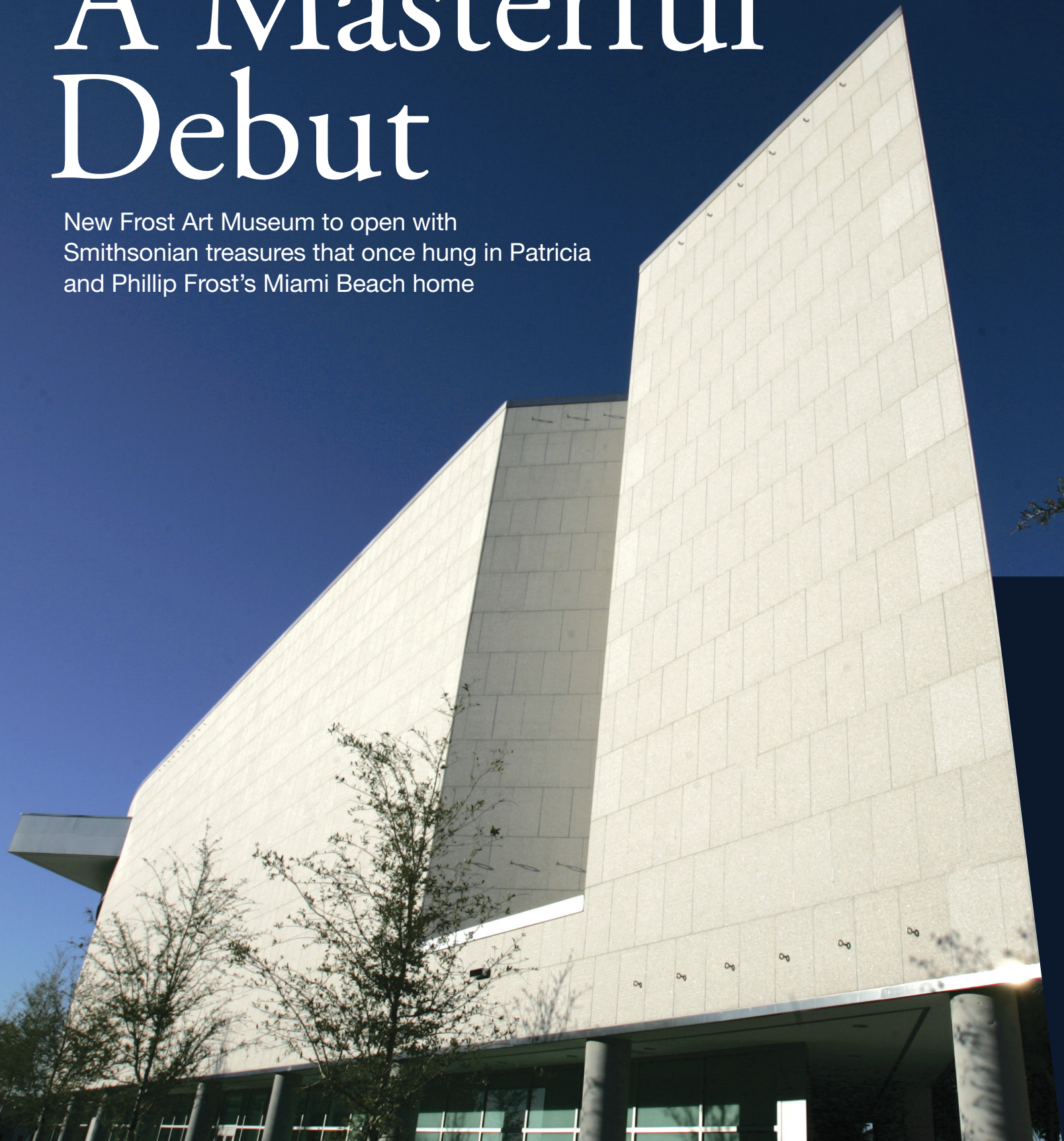
2008-2009 BUDGET CUTS

Program eliminations

- Dance, BA
- English Teacher Education, BS, MS
- Environmental and Systems Engineering, MS
- Exercise Science, BS, MS
- German, BA
- Health Sciences, BS
- Health Information Management, BA
- Humanities, BA
- Insurance and Risk Management, BBA
- Industrial Systems Engineering, BS, MS, PhD
- Logistics and Materials Management, BBA
- Mathematics Teacher Education, BS, MS
- Music Teacher Education, BS
- Science Teacher Education, BS, MS
- Social Science Teacher Education, BS, MS
- Technology Management, MS
- Tourism Studies, MS
- Travel and Tourism Management, BS
- Center for Economic Research and Education
- Center for Health Research and Policy
- Future Aerospace Science and Technology Center for Space
- Center for Ethnobiology and Natural Products
- Institute for Children and Families at Risk
- Intercultural Institute for Educational Initiatives

A Masterful Debut

New Frost Art Museum to open with Smithsonian treasures that once hung in Patricia and Phillip Frost's Miami Beach home



"Afterglow," Hans Hofmann, 1938, oil on fiberboard, from the "Modern Masters" exhibition of the Smithsonian American Art Museum



By Charlene Eberly MA '04

When the painting "Afterglow" by Hans Hofmann is hung in the new Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum in November, it will be a homecoming almost 25 years in the making. The painting was donated by the Frosts to the Smithsonian in 1986, along with 152 other artworks that made up their collection from the American Abstract Artists group from the 1930s and 1940s. It will return, along with four other works originally owned by the Frosts, as part of the museum's grand opening and the debut of the "Modern Masters" exhibit from the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

"I am very excited about the opening of the museum," said Patricia Frost, a longtime friend of FIU and member of the Board of Trustees. "We are

happy to know that some of the art we donated to the Smithsonian is being featured in the opening exhibition at the Frost Art Museum."

The Frost Art Museum is a Smithsonian affiliate, the first university museum to earn that honor. This exhibit is, in part, the brainchild of Patricia Frost and was created especially for the opening of the new museum. Virginia Mecklenburg, curator of the Smithsonian's "Modern Masters" exhibit explained: "We are always looking for venues to exhibit our treasures and Patricia Frost said, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to open the new Frost Art Museum with a show from the Smithsonian?'"

Mecklenburg and Smithsonian American Art Museum Director Elizabeth Broun both agreed to create

"It will immediately become known as one of the finest museum buildings in the entire southeast."

—
FIU President Modesto A. Maidique

an exhibit worthy of a museum's grand opening. "These are some of the museum's greatest treasures," Mecklenburg said, "and we don't lend lightly." This exhibition will travel to a host of other museums throughout the United States after it leaves Miami.

The Frost Art Museum will open with a week's worth of events, including the Nov. 29 opening and a Nov. 30 dedication reception. There will also be a university day for FIU students, faculty and staff, as well as the Art Basel Miami Beach "Breakfast in the Park," a Sunday morning brunch in the FIU sculpture park on Dec. 7 featuring artist Joel Shapiro as the guest speaker.

The 46,000-square-foot museum was designed by renowned architect Yann



"Wall Painting III," Robert Motherwell, 1952, oil on fiberboard and "Modern Cycle," Grace Hartigan, 1967, oil on canvas. Both from the "Modern Masters" exhibition of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Continued

Weymouth, design director of the firm HOK. "Art museums are always unique projects, but the Frost Art Museum and the programs and exhibitions the museum has put together are very special," Weymouth said. "They deserve a building that is worthy of them."

"The Frost Art Museum is a signature building on the FIU campus," said President Modesto A. Maidique. "It will immediately become known as one of the finest museum buildings in the entire southeast."

Patricia Frost proved to be a hands-on philanthropist when it came to the building's design.

"I love architecture," she said. "It was very important to Phillip and me that we have a world-class building. I spent weeks, months, going over the details with the architects – everything from the exterior's Chinese granite to the interior stair treads. I wanted the facility itself to be a work of art."

"The new museum provides a wonderful opportunity for the students and the faculty to be integrated into the life of the museum."

—
Provost
Ron
Berkman

A place of learning

Leading the opening is newly appointed interim director Carol Damian, a professor of art and art history and curator of the museum's permanent collection. An art historian, Damian merges academic and artistic sensibilities. Her vision for the museum involves the same combination. "As a university museum we have extraordinary resources available in the students and faculty," she said. "If we are planning an exhibit on Chinese art, African art, or a women's art exhibit, we have experts a phone call or steps away."

Students will take classes at the museum and the third floor features a gallery exclusively devoted to the art of students and faculty. Undergraduate and graduate fine arts students will show their work at the Frost Art Museum in annual exhibits. The museum will be an

integral part of the Museum Studies program too.

"We want to establish a really enthusiastic relationship between students and the museum because this is their museum and ultimately, they will be the ones who must support it," Damian said.

FIU Provost Ron Berkman anticipates a symbiotic relationship between the arts and academics that the new museum will foster: "The new museum provides a wonderful opportunity for the students and faculty to be integrated into the life of the museum," he said.

The Frosts also envision the museum as a place of learning. "One reason we wanted to construct a free-standing museum was so that the FIU community would have an independent center to study world history and culture through art," Patricia Frost said. "We are hoping that the museum will become a destination place."



"Nineteen Twenty-Nine," Nathan Oliveira, 1961, oil on canvas and "Untitled," Franz Kline, 1961, acrylic on canvas. Both from the "Modern Masters" exhibition of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Grand art for a grand opening

In preparing the Frost Art Museum for its grand opening, Damian has been cataloguing the 6,000-plus pieces that make up the permanent collection. She was drawn to the human figure and the many different ways it is expressed by various cultures and in a variety of mediums.

The human form is the inspiration for the permanent collection exhibit that will be shown during the opening. "Figures: Selections from the Permanent Exhibit" will feature work that represents a variety of media, techniques and styles from the international holdings of the collection. The exhibit includes pieces that come from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Highlights include Benin bronzes, the work of Cuban-American artist Jose Bedia, Haitian artist Edouard Duval-Carrié and Native American portraits.

The permanent exhibition will also dovetail with the Smithsonian's

"Modern Masters" exhibit. Many of the artists grappled with the psychological fallout of war and turned to depictions of the human figure as a way of addressing their profound moral and human concerns. Works by Robert Motherwell, Romare Bearden, Seymour Lipton and David Driskell feature the human figure in arresting and diverse ways.

The 43 key works of "Modern Masters" represent 31 of the most celebrated artists who came to maturity in the 1950s. Influenced by old masters, the modernism of Picasso and Matisse, Jungian and existential philosophy, and Greek and Roman mythology, these artists created abstract compositions that addressed current social concerns and personal history.

Among them is the 1948 work "Untitled" by Maurice Golubov. It once hung in the living room of the Frosts' 1936 art deco house in Miami Beach.

"That piece was special; you could

"These are some of the museum's greatest treasures, and we don't lend lightly."

—
Virginia Mecklenburg, curator, Smithsonian American Art Museum

see it as soon as you opened the front door of our house," Patricia Frost recalled. "Golubov was retired and living in Hallandale. We went to meet him and look at his work. When we admired that painting, which was hanging in his house, he took it right off the wall and sold it to us."

Reflecting on the path the art has traveled, Patricia Frost recalled how she bought the painting "Afterglow" at auction. "I was sitting at a Board of Directors meeting at FIU and had to excuse myself to bid on this painting, which then hung over our fireplace for years."

From the Frosts' fireplace to the Smithsonian to the Frost Art Museum, "Afterglow" will make a masterful debut as it returns to Miami for the grand opening. ■

Charlene Eberly is the coordinator of FIU's Center for Excellence in Writing and teaches writing for the political science and English departments.

Eye-Opening

RESEARCH

Scientists' invention sheds light on disease that can lead to blindness

By Deborah O'Neil

During your next eye exam, your optometrist may test you with a special machine that detects a potential risk factor for macular degeneration, your macular pigment. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in those over age 50. It's a simple and painless screening. Depending on the results, you might be advised to start eating more green vegetables.

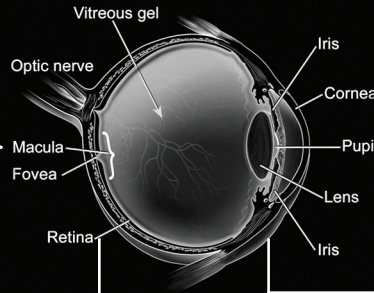
That device – now called MacuScope – originated with FIU biophysicist Richard Bone at the start of his research career. And that advice – eat more spinach – is emerging from the pioneering research of Bone and FIU chemist John Landrum.

Even a lifetime of groundbreaking research may not yield an immediate benefit in the lives of ordinary people. In the case of the research done by Bone and Landrum, there are big benefits. An estimated 1.8 million Americans suffer from advanced macular degeneration, an eye disease that severely impairs vision, mostly for those over age 65. Millions more are at risk as our population ages. There is growing evidence that for some individuals, changes in diet may reduce the risk of this debilitating disease or slow its progression.

"A friend told me once that if you have to become an expert in something very small it will pay dividends," Bone said. "John and I specialize in what was a little-known problem, study of macular pigment, that has blossomed into a widely recognized research area."

More than 30 years ago, Bone was working on his Ph.D. and needed to





measure levels of macular pigment in the human eye. A device for this purpose didn't exist. So the scientist got to work with a screwdriver, bits of metal, light bulbs and colored filters. The bench-top contraption he created didn't look fancy, but it worked.

Soon after, Bone joined the FIU faculty and partnered with FIU chemist John Landrum.

For more than 20 years, the scientists used the machine, modifying and improving it through the years as part of their research. Each generation of the machine became smaller and more compact. Landrum points to them in their lab: "This is the Porsche. This is the Chevy." The Ford was dismantled years ago.

Along the way, Bone and Landrum have become leaders in eye research. They were the first to determine that macular pigment is made up of the nutrients lutein and zeaxanthin, powerful antioxidants that give the macula its yellowish color.

They also studied whether intake of these nutrients affects the amount of a person's macular pigment. There appeared to be evidence for a relationship between the amount of this pigment and macular degeneration – the more pigment the lower the risk. Bone and Landrum were interested in exploring how to increase macular pigment levels with nutrients.

Macular pigment, by the way, has nothing to do with the color of your eyes. The macula is inside the eyeball and is the name given to the central part of the retina. It is responsible for your central vision. When the macula degenerates, individuals can experience visual distortions, blank spots, wavy lines and difficulty recognizing faces.

The pigment acts as a protective filter for the macula, absorbing blue light that can damage the retina. So, the theory goes, the more pigment you have, the better for your vision. That pigment is made up of lutein and zeaxanthin, which we consume when we eat green vegetables like kale, collard greens and spinach.

In one of their well-known studies, the two researchers experimented on themselves, swallowing large doses of the nutrients for nearly six months to see if it would increase the level of their own macular pigment. It did, dramatically. And the positive effect was sustained even after they stopped taking the nutrients.

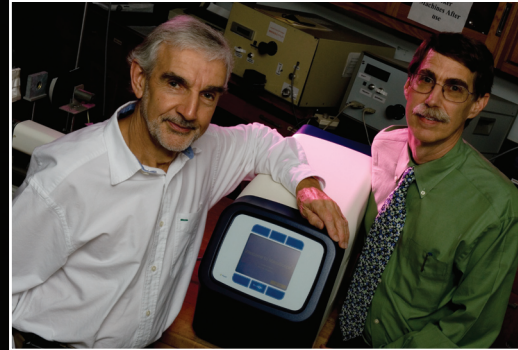
"They are really outstanding researchers in the field," said the National Eye Institute's Dr. Emily Chew, deputy director of the Division of Epidemiology and Clinical Research. "They have been pioneers in looking at specific nutrients."

A few years ago, an entrepreneur named David Segel caught wind of their research. When he visited their FIU laboratory, Segel, a Michigan podiatrist, immediately realized what the researchers had hardly considered: Their homemade device had great commercial potential as a tool for optometrists.

Segel licensed the invention from Bone and Landrum, then invested several million dollars to produce a commercial design. Last year, he unveiled the MacuScope to U.S. markets, the first commercially available machine that measures macular pigment density. Segel hopes the screening will become a routine part of every eye exam.

"All the research Richard and

An estimated 1.8 million Americans suffer from advanced macular degeneration, an eye disease that severely impairs vision.



Professors Richard Bone and John Landrum in their laboratory with the device they invented to measure levels of macular pigment in the human eye. The machine is now being sold commercially as the "MacuScope."

John have done has been kept in the closet," said Segel. "I've been accused of rescuing it from the researcher's bench. Doctors never heard about it. We're spending a great deal of time and energy educating doctors and making them aware of a tool they can use."

This technology doesn't diagnose macular degeneration; rather it provides a measure that can be an indicator of one of the disease's risk factors. Individuals with low macular pigment may be at increased risk for developing macular degeneration.

The relationship between nutrients, macular pigment and macular degeneration is still being studied. Researchers still don't know why some individuals with low macular pigment develop macular degeneration while others do not. They also don't know why an increase in the nutrients causes an increase in pigment levels in some people but not others.

However, having a way to examine macular pigment is, in itself, important. Sales of the MacuScope are going well here and abroad, says Segel. The government of Slovakia is putting them in hospitals around the country. ■



Juan
Gomez '99

Toast of the Town

Alumnus becomes the first Mexican to earn the prestigious title of “Master Sommelier”

By Martin Haro '05

Juan Gómez '99 grew up in the small town of Campeche in the south of Mexico, where family celebrations called for toasts with beer and tequila.

Today, though, 39-year-old Gómez's drink of choice is wine, especially dry rosés, sauvignon blancs from New Zealand and pinot noirs.

As one of three master sommeliers, the title given to wine experts in the restaurant industry, working at The Breakers in Palm Beach, Gómez is held to the highest standards by the Court of Master Sommeliers. Only 96 professionals hold that title in North America. Fewer than 50 candidates apply each year, and only about 5 percent of them earn the designation.

It was at The Breakers – a AAA 5-Diamond luxury hotel with eight restaurants and eateries – that this graduate of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management came to really learn about and appreciate a fine wine. Like most success stories, his begins at the bottom of the barrel.

Gómez joined The Breakers in 1999 as a food and beverage intern. He rose through the ranks, first as a server during breakfast at The Circle and a server, sommelier and head sommelier at L'Escalier. He is now a master sommelier at the hotel's Flagler Steakhouse.

“I worked everywhere,” he said. “I wanted to be involved and find the right department for me. I knew I had to make a decision.”

It was then that the classes he took at FIU began to play a role in his future. Gómez left the University of Alabama two years into his undergraduate career

when he decided on a career in the hospitality field. Without hesitation, he chose to become a Golden Panther and calls his time here “a great learning experience.”

“I looked for the best schools,” he said. “FIU's School of Hospitality and Tourism Management had one of the best programs in the country.”

While at Biscayne Bay Campus, he took wine classes he enjoyed but did not think wine would become his life's work. Once he joined The Breakers, and took another wine class offered to the staff, everything fell into place.

His mentor at work, Virginia Philip, the resort's wine director and a master sommelier, needed an assistant, and after he scored highly in the class, she saw him as an ideal candidate for the position.

“Juan is a sponge. Six years ago, he had little wine knowledge,” she said. “To accomplish what he has in such a short amount of time is not only unheard of, but shows his dedication to becoming a master sommelier and living the American Dream.”

For Gómez, the timing was perfect. He was inspired when Philip, who is one of fewer than 20 female master sommeliers in the world, won the title of Best Sommelier in the United States in 2002. “I took the wine class at FIU because it related to the fine dining experience, but I didn't know it would end like this,” he said.

Gómez began the rigorous process of becoming a master sommelier in 2002.

There are four levels of examination that candidates must pass to earn the designation from the Court. Before

“FIU's School of Hospitality and Tourism Management had one of the best programs in the country.”

—
Juan Gomez,
master
sommelier

passing the last exam in 2007, he faced three days of testing in three areas.

The first assessed his knowledge of aperitifs and his ability to serve them correctly, his positioning of glassware, and his ability to discuss menu content and wine list. He also had to demonstrate proficiency in wine serving and his knowledge of brandies, liqueurs and cigars, as well as his skills dealing with his patronage.

Then came the theory. To pass, Gómez had to become familiar with the entire process of winemaking, from the grape seed to the final product. This includes learning about grape varieties worldwide, international wine laws, vinification, storage and handling, methods of distillation and making of spirits and liqueurs, knowledge of cigar production, and the beer- and cider-making process.

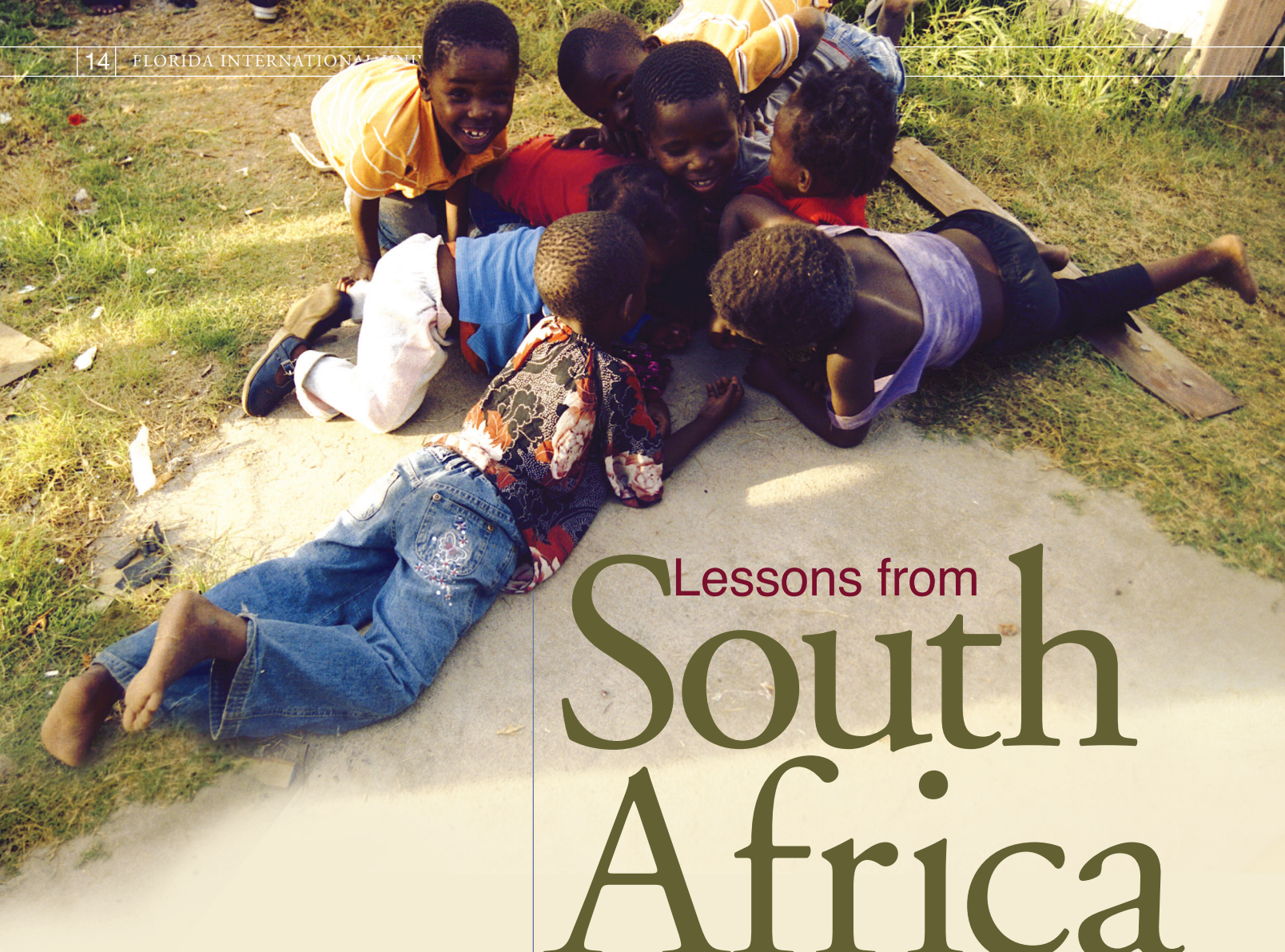
Last came the practical tasting, which was scored on his ability to describe clearly and accurately six different wines. Within 25 minutes, he had to identify, where appropriate, grape varieties, country of origin, district of origin and vintages of the wines tasted.

It wasn't easy but Gómez enjoyed it.

In the future, he would like to bring the Court's courses to Mexico and Central and South America. While the days of tequila and beer are behind him, he is still helping others toast their special occasions

“What I enjoy most,” he said, “is exceeding the expectations of our guests.” ■

Freelance writer Christina Bohnstengel contributed to this story.



Lessons from South Africa

“The patients’ eyes peered
straight through me and
I imagined they wished they
could trade places with me.”

—Tiffany Parkes

Journalism professor and students share their
experience of traveling to the epicenter of the
HIV/AIDS pandemic

By Allan Richards
Interim Associate Dean
School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Last April, I took two students – Jillian Simms and Tiffany Parkes, both winners of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication writing contest on HIV/AIDS – to South Africa to report on the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The trip was the outgrowth of a Web site I produced on HIV/AIDS with my multimedia journalism class in spring 2008. (You can read the students’ articles on their Web site: <http://www.fiuaid.com>.)

I thought the trip to South Africa would be about Jillian and Tiffany’s journey and transformation. I had been to southern Africa before – but on those trips I roamed game reserves to report on elephant conservation. But I too would be changed by this journey.

This trip had a human face – many human faces – and was about hope living side by side with tragedy, a first-world country living side by side with the remnants of apartheid and the third world. It revealed a society



suffering under the enormous strain of a pandemic, which is devouring, in staggering numbers, its women and children. Yet it also told the tale of social mobilization by the South African media – newspapers, television, radio, video, film and online – to raise public awareness about the disease and help those infected get treatment.

We traveled first to Cape Town, arriving at night. Jillian and Tiffany had no sense of what Africa looked like, but the following morning, when they stepped out on the terrace and realized we were nestled between a towering mesa, Table Mountain, and the Atlantic Ocean, they could only say: “Wow!”

That “Wow” would be muted the following day when we traveled to Khayelitsha, a vast sprawling suburbia of corrugated tin huts, home to one million people, on the outskirts of Cape Town. There, we followed a small band of media professionals filming a young HIV-positive mother

feeding her HIV-negative baby with a cup and going house to house to spread the word about HIV.

Several days later, we flew north to Johannesburg. Jillian and Tiffany said nothing about the razor barbed wire lacing the top of our guest house and the iron gate at the entrance – or the gates that separated living and dining rooms and dining room and patio – but they got the message.

USAID gathered us up and took us to Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto, where hundreds of infected mothers and children lined up for antiretrovirals while scores of others squeezed into halls to listen to seminars on HIV. South Africa’s tragedy hit us hard here but seared more deeply later that afternoon when we traveled through the seemingly innocent, rolling hills of the African countryside where one would never suspect that an insidious virus lurks and lashes out killing so many children, as Jillian describes in her essay.

I thought the trip to South Africa would be about Jillian and Tiffany’s journey and transformation.

But I too would be changed by this journey.

While the pandemic seems overwhelming, I returned heartened by the number of South Africans who are being educated and mobilized through the efforts of journalists like Susan Smuts, who started a community-driven section – “Everyone Knows Someone” – for *The Johannesburg Sunday Times*, in which readers share their experiences of the disease; or Criselda Kananda, an ex-nurse who is HIV-positive and hosts “Positive Talk,” a talk radio show devoted to HIV/AIDS awareness broadcast by the South African Broadcasting Company.

On the plane home I thought that South Florida media have much to learn in covering the disease from their South African counterparts. Our local media, which have greatly reduced its coverage of the disease, are not doing a quarter of the job the South African media are doing in spreading the word that, very simply, unprotected lovemaking can still kill. ■

This could be us

By Tiffany Parkes '07

Shalom and Johanna Ncala are sisters. They share the same smile and wear each other's clothes. They are positive role models in their South African communities and their homes. But there is a bond between them that cannot be seen by the naked eye. They use their positivity to help others stay negative.

Within a span of seven years, 2000-2007, both sisters tested HIV positive.

It should not matter how they contracted the virus, which each year claims approximately three million in their country. What matters is how they were forced to feel after diagnosis. Johanna, the older of the two and the first to be diagnosed, kept her status a secret for five years because of the social shame attached to the condition.

South Africa has among the highest rates of HIV/AIDS worldwide. Here in the United States, South Florida is in a constant ping-pong match with other metropolitan areas to rank highest in the nation for HIV/AIDS infection rates. And the disease is just as

South Africa
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HIV/AIDS
pandemic.

stigmatized here as it is there.

In both places, extreme poverty exists right around the corner from disgustingly comfortable wealth, HIV/AIDS contraction is stigmatized because of its sexual nature and the afflicted are rarely comforted. But where they differ makes all the difference – South Africa is highly mobilized socially in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

I walked through Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto, and the plague surrounded me. "Ninety-five percent of the patients in this hospital are HIV positive," explained Helen Struthers, a medical professional and media trainer.

The patients' eyes peered straight through me and I imagined they wished they could trade places with me. I realized that this could someday be South Florida; it may already be us. We just don't know it yet.

Like so many other places in this world, there is unrest in South Africa. HIV/AIDS is rampant, evidence of poverty is endless and the majority of people are in need. Despite this, I found beauty on mountaintops overlooking brilliant city lights, in valleys and in the sands of battered coasts. I noticed joy in the eyes of



Richards, Simms and Parkes traveled to Jericho, South Africa, to learn about the USAID's HIV/AIDS awareness effort, the Lighthouse Project. The head of the Lighthouse Project in yellow posed outside the organization's headquarters with Simms, Richards, Parkes and a coordinator from USAID.

children who appreciate all they have, even if it is meager. I also saw unimaginable creativity expressed on concrete canvases: graffiti as an art form.

South Africa is not the only country stricken with poverty, corruption and tragically, the HIV/AIDS pandemic. However, its media increasingly take a strong stand against stigmas, taboos and the overall ignorance surrounding the pandemic – an approach that the American media could learn from. ■



Everyone can make a difference

By Jillian Simms '08

Just outside of Pretoria, South Africa, there is an orphanage for HIV-positive children. You might expect this to be a sad place. In fact, it is an inspiring place and it helped me better understand the scope of the epidemic ravaging this beautiful country. Run by a retired couple, the orphanage is housed in an old farm house and is home to about 40 children.

In the family room stands a circle of chairs, Christian art, candles and a wall with three white sheets inscribed with the words “affected,” “infected” and “deceased.” On these sheets, the children write down the names of family members, friends and even their fellow orphanage brothers and sisters who fit each category.

Going through photo after photo of the children who have died from AIDS, the wife explained that they all come to her with hope. And, she said, if they die, they die feeling loved, instead of abandoned and with no treatment, as many other children do.

Standing in the house gave me the feeling that I was in the presence of greatness. Even after hearing stories of mother-to-child HIV transmission and statistics about sexual violence towards children that many times results in HIV infection, this home demonstrates hope still exists in the struggle.

There were many surprises on this trip to South Africa that professor Allan Richards, Tiffany Parkes and I took as part of an initiative to understand the HIV/AIDS problem there and media attention to it. People spoke English and a myriad of South Africa's 11 official languages. Their faces were like the ones we see here in South Florida, only more of them brown. And even the music rolling out of car windows was the same music that rattles car trunks here in Miami.



South Africa's cities felt like any other unfamiliar city, similar to how I felt the first time I walked around South Beach. There were some shady looking characters, some jolly tourists and everything in between. The landscape was beautiful, British and Dutch architecture, mountains to one side, ocean to the other. However, in both South Africa and South Florida, the postcard-like atmosphere hides a big killer with a little name. Yet unlike South Florida, HIV/AIDS in South Africa is in the forefront of people's minds as an issue discussed widely by media and local organizations. After conducting only a few interviews, the differences became clear.

The media in South Africa aren't afraid to tackle issues that are as taboo and stigmatized as HIV/AIDS. In Cape Town, one can open the *Cape Times* and see regular coverage on the issue of HIV/AIDS, everything from personal stories, to articles dealing with governmental and social issues. The editors said it can be difficult to come up with new material, but they do so because they believe something needs to change. Given the seriousness of the disease, the media attention to HIV/AIDS makes sense to me. However, even though South Florida's cities are consistently among the highest in the nation for HIV infections, our media seem to think there are no new stories

Going through photo after photo of the children who have died from AIDS, the wife explained that they all come to her with hope.

to tell, and thus do not cover HIV/AIDS in the same fashion.

The way South African media tackle the issue is diverse, including reality-style shows. One television series called “Siyayinqoba” (which means “Beat It”) concentrates on true HIV/AIDS stories. One of the producers said audiences get hooked and because they watch frequently, they are constantly getting a message about HIV/AIDS.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Johns Hopkins University created another show called “Tsha Tsha” (pronounced “cha cha,”), which has the popularity of our “Dancing with the Stars,” but a far deeper meaning. “Tsha Tsha” is a dramatic show revolving around people in their twenties who deal with HIV/AIDS in their everyday lives.

Through South Africa's media, millions of people are exposed to the issues. And with knowledge and information, any person can help the cause. The message that everyone can make a difference was definitely resonating with South Africans.

I saw a lot through South Africans living and dealing with HIV/AIDS: happiness, sadness, confusion, awareness (although still not enough) and a lot of hope that AIDS could be history one day. Here in South Florida, I see neither. Without awareness there is no hope. ■

alumni profile

Karen L. Levin '95, MPH '97

Nursing without Borders

Alumna combines nursing and epidemiology to build a distinctive career in public health

By Aimee Dingwell

Karen Levin '95, MPH '97 is not your typical nurse. She doesn't work in a hospital and rarely treats patients, at least not anymore. She does study diseases and improve people's health and lives. Levin is a nurse epidemiologist, a unique combination of clinical expertise and graduate training in public health research that has equipped her to work in the fields of bioterrorism emergency planning and natural disaster response.

Perhaps her education and training are better described as a professional passport.

Her departure from traditional bedside nursing has taken Levin from her native South Florida to New York, California, Ethiopia and India. Today, Levin is back in New York where she is part of a federal team of experts creating a post-disaster, public-health needs assessment.

It has been a little more than 10 years since Levin graduated from FIU with what she calls her "working papers" – a bachelor of science degree in nursing and a master's of public health in epidemiology from FIU's Stempel School of Public Health. For years, Levin worked as an RN, treating and caring for critically ill patients before attending FIU, knowing she wanted to advance her practice.

Her work represents the newest

"Because of my training, I easily moved in and among traditional emergency responders, state and local emergency managers, public health professionals and now academics."

—
Karen Levin

frontier in the field of nursing. Before her nursing graduation, Levin attended a symposium promoting the expanding role of nursing. The take-home message, Levin says, was a charge to advance nursing into non-traditional health-based roles. "I took this charge seriously. I changed my direction from nurse practitioner to nurse epidemiologist."

As such, Levin is formally trained in each discipline – clinical nursing at the individual level and epidemiology, or disease and injury surveillance and prevention, at the community or population level.

In 1999, after forming a program evaluation company to assess a federally funded, community-based teen pregnancy prevention program, Levin joined the New York City Department of Health. But before she left, on an almost prophetic whim, she expanded her training to include disaster preparedness and received her certification in Medical Response to Chemical and Biological Warfare. A fledging program offered by the U.S. Army, little did Levin know how useful it would be two years later on Sept. 11, 2001.

As acting director of Integrated Diseases Surveillance, Levin participated in the first 48-hour injury surveillance after the towers fell. While it was the second major

disaster she experienced personally and professionally (she lived through Hurricane Andrew), the attacks on the towers were intentional, and Levin found herself thrown into the world of bioterrorism and public health emergency planning. But she was prepared.

"Because of my training, I easily moved in and among traditional emergency responders, state and local emergency managers, public health professionals, and now academics," said Levin. "They all respond together in a complex disaster."

As Hurricane Katrina showed, how well they respond makes all the difference. Now at Columbia University's National Center for Disaster Preparedness at the Mailman School of Public Health, Levin is project director for the Center for Public Health Preparedness where she is researching and developing methods to improve public health preparedness and responses to disasters.

As part of that effort, Levin sits on a Centers for Disease Control panel whose purpose is to develop a post-disaster, community-level rapid needs assessment tool that can be applied in any environment. Levin, who also is leader of the panel's education and training sub-group, says the assessment tool they are creating must quickly identify a community's



Levin served as a communicable disease surveillance officer in 2004 for the World Health Organization in Ethiopia where she taught workshops to rural health staff, shown here with staff and villagers, on polio and acute flaccid paralysis surveillance.

survival and public health needs and integrate the results into the overall state and federal disaster response. The assessment, known as CASPER (Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response), produces a public health community snapshot post-disaster so that critical resources can be deployed to the most needed areas and populations, says Levin, regardless of the hazard.

A key component of making that successful, however, is making sure the assessment and response are culturally relevant. Last year, Levin took the CASPER draft program to India to adapt and test it in the country's marginalized coastal communities who are at high risk for cyclones, tsunami and monsoon flooding. "The assessment

had to be culturally specific," said Levin. "People in this population are from the lowest caste, dalits or untouchables, tribes, and fisher folks."

As a result, these communities have a very low literacy rate – around 55 percent, Levin says. Levin learned enough of the native language, Telegu, for specific needs and relied on her own artistic abilities to create pictorials.

The result was a surprising success. The area had a tsunami and two cyclone alerts that allowed Levin to assess training efforts. Working side-by-side with non-profit, non-governmental organizations and India's government, "we did a lot of training," said Levin, "Now they have a culturally-relevant mechanism to assess and report a disaster's impact on their community

Her work represents the newest frontier in the field of nursing.

– essential information for relief organizations."

But the nurse in Levin was also at work. At a retreat for vulnerable children led by the partnering non-profit group, Levin was asked to teach the children something about art, in addition to her health education program. Only three of almost 50 children knew what art was. After showing them how to make mobiles from garbage and greeting cards with pressed flowers, the children spoke about how they felt. Overcome with their astonishment and joy, Levin says the program director told her, "You have taught us what public health means, and that art is part of public health." ■

Aimee Dingwell is a freelance writer in Miami and holds a master's degree in public health.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

FIU



HOMECOMING 2008

NOVEMBER 3RD - 8TH

www.fiu.edu/~hc

HOMECOMING SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Nov. 3 • Homecoming Premier / GC Pit • 12-2pm
- Nov. 4 • Panther Prowl Comedy Show
Pharmed Arena 8pm (tickets are required for this event)
- Nov. 5 • Lip Sync / PharmEd Arena • 8pm
- Nov. 5 • BBC SGA Alumni Reception
- Nov. 6 • Pep Rally / 12noon • GC Pit
- Nov. 6 • FIU Athletics & Alumni Association Golf Tournament
- Nov. 7 • Homecoming Parade / 6pm (around campus)
FIUUltra / 8pm • Between Blue & Gold Garages
- Nov. 8 • 5K Run / Walk student and alumni charity • 7am
25 Year Silver Pride Reunion • 11am
- Nov. 8 • Homecoming Tailgate / FIU Stadium • 4pm
FIU vs. Arkansas State / FIU Stadium • 7pm
- Nov. 9 • Student Athlete Alumni Appreciation Day

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WEEKEND**

NOVEMBER 7 - 9

A BOLD NEW LOOK

Redesigned logo and athletic mark emphasize unity, strength

By Sissi Aguila '99

FIU is unveiling a bold new look with a redesigned logo and athletic mark. After years of disparate logos, icons and sub-brands on stationery, business cards and Web sites, administrators felt it was time to speak with one voice.

“Creating a recognizable and consistent logo will generate a message of pride and community to both our internal and external audiences,” said FIU President Modesto A. Maidique.

The move to unify FIU’s look comes as FIU enters a new era of its development. With the establishment of a law school, medical school and a Division I-A football team, the university will now place less emphasis on growth and greater emphasis on strengthening existing academic and athletic programs.

The new FIU logo – which is actually the lettering – was created in-house by a group of designers in the Office of Publications led by Oscar Negret.

In the new logo, F-I-U is in dark blue Princetown font customized with a gold border. Negret also chose a more vibrant gold color for the logo and the panther in the athletic mark. The word international was emphasized in the sub-text of the logo to reflect FIU’s culture and aspirations. Also, as part of the process, a decision was made that the FIU seal will be used only for official documents.

“The idea is to have a clean, streamlined identifier for use in today’s diverse media,” said Negret. “The new logo has a stronger presence.”

The new logo will also serve to unite the various units of the university. For the first time, FIU will have a comprehensive branding system that includes personalized logos for each academic and non-academic department that are consistent with the university-wide logo. The personalized logos incorporate the name of the school, college, center or institute in place of Florida International University.

No more Mr. Nice Guy!

FIU’s logo redesign includes a new athletic mark. Roary is out of the grass and ready to pounce. He is fiercer, more aggressive. His claws are stretched out, reaching for his prey.

Roary was made over by the same firm that designed the original, Zebra Dog Studios in Madison, Wisc. Designers dropped the shield and added fangs to “reflect FIU’s confidence in the future,” said Maidique.

Athletics marketing director John O’Meara said the previous logo needed to be strengthened to truly represent FIU’s developing identity.

“The new FIU Athletics logo represents the new FIU brand,” O’Meara said. “Strength, aggression, dedication, and determination. This new logo represents our tenacious desire to succeed on all levels including on the field, in the community and in the classroom.”

Although dissemination will begin immediately, faculty and staff have been asked to use up all material with the old logo and athletic mark before transitioning.

Eventually, the new mark will be on all facilities, uniforms and helmets. Five new Roary costumes, sponsored by Athletics, SGA, Alumni and BBC, will also debut this fall. One will be a friendly Roary for the kids. The others, fierce Golden Panthers. ■



FLORIDA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY






ROARY # 68

Birth Date:	Sept. 6, 1987
Birth Place:	Miami, Florida
Hometown:	Florida International University
Age:	20
Weight:	190 lbs
Height:	6'1"
Position:	Mascot
Next Opponent:	University of South Florida's Rocky Sept. 20

Big Fluffy Shoes to Fill

By Sissi Aguila '99

Name the game. Football. Baseball. Basketball. Roary, FIU's beloved mascot, has worked them all.

Since Roary was a cub, he dreamed of standing on the sidelines. He imagined leading the fans in the wave. The stadium would shake with applause and cheers. He would keep his team motivated and help bring home the win.

Roary was born on Sept. 6, 1987, in Miami, into a family with pep in their blood. His parents and five siblings would spend Saturday afternoons in the backyard coming up with skits. As a teenager, he trained hard – aerobic workouts to keep up stamina and Pilates for agility.

His dream became reality when FIU recruited him.

The athletic department, last year, unofficially named Roary "Player with the Biggest Heart."

"He leaves it all on the field," says Travis Stokes, Athletics marketing assistant.

This summer was a turning point in Roary's career.

He was issued five new 10-pound uniforms complete with a 5-pound head and fluffy feet, a new addition to the Panther persona. Shedding his rookie

A four-judge panel waited eagerly to see who would strut their stuff in fur and get the opportunity to be Roary in the new season.

status, Roary bulked up and revamped his public image to reflect his physical prowess and maturity. But there was still something missing: a Golden Panther to breathe new life into him.

Spring Tryouts

Tryouts were held at the end of the spring semester to find Roary a new soul.

The contenders assembled in the Pharmed Arena on a Sunday morning in May for their shot at glory. A four-judge panel waited eagerly to see who would strut their stuff in fur and get the opportunity to be Roary in the new season. Among those gathered was celebrity judge, former Billy the Marlin, John Routh.

Props were laid out and the boom box was ready to go. One after the other, candidates swaggered into the arena to the hip-hop beats, "Shawty got low, low, low." But wait – one Roary brought a girlfriend? Panther girl!

Panther girl is the creation of Evan Lewis, junior and frontrunner for the role of Roary.

With red-stained lips and curled eyelashes she was not easily won over by Roary, who tried showing off his dance moves and athleticism to impress her. What

finally melted her heart? Well it seems ZZ Top was right, "Every girl crazy 'bout a sharp dressed man." Roary put on a red necktie and it was love.

The tryouts were exhausting. Lewis needed a gallon of water to rehydrate before the next round: the question and answer period. Roary typically loses 5 pounds each game from sweating.

"It's like facing a firing squad," joked Lewis of sitting across the table from the judges posing a slew of scenarios to him and fellow competitors. "How will you motivate the crowd if the team is losing the game?" "What would you do if a fan was rude?" "What would make you a good Roary?"

In the end, Lewis was the No. 1 draft pick, the "lead Roary." Anthony Barbato and Edward D. Selgas will be part of the replacement team required to meet Roary's hectic schedule.

Former Billy the Marlin, John Routh, was in charge of working Roary into shape this summer. First on the agenda was learning the "pep arts" and the three E's of mascotting: entrance, exaggeration and emotion – and Lewis has a lion's share of that. The new Roary sold himself with his energy and enthusiasm: "I'm a naturally excited person." ■



Feel the BEAT

FIU's Golden Panther Band will debut a new sound at the Sept. 20 stadium opener

By Martin Haro '05

They take command of a football field dressed head to toe in white.

Their helmets and plumes dance with the wind, their blue-banded jackets reveal a blazing sun and their shoes shine as they make their way onto the green.

But they are not chasing after the pigskin. They are chasing a beat that will bring FIU football fans to their feet.

They are the Golden Panther Band, the university's own, 100-plus strong marching band. Founded in 2002 during FIU Football's inaugural season, the band now is under the direction of Carla Geiger, director of Athletic Bands and associate director of bands.

"This is a tremendously talented group of individuals," Geiger said. "Our main purpose is to support all sports, especially football."

This year, as the Golden Panthers football team kicks off their first game in the new FIU Stadium on Sept. 20 against the University of South Florida, Geiger's student-performers will debut a new set of tunes selected to boost school spirit.

The director plans to build on the excitement generated by last year's '80s- and Latino-inspired shows. The band will debut a '90s show and adapt newer songs to help the FIU family "Feel the Pride."

"The season opener is going to be a spectacular extravaganza," Geiger said. "Our '80s show, with songs like 'Thriller,' worked very well last year, so this year we're mining the '90s. We'll also incorporate some of the music played during the inaugural season."

The student-performers who comprise the Golden Panther Band meet three times a week for two hours as part of the marching band class Geiger teaches during the fall. They also meet during the summer for an intense, 12-hours-a-day, week-long band camp.

"It's really time-consuming, but we make it work," said 20-year-old junior Francesca Constantini, who has played the piccolo with the band since her freshman year. "I'm looking forward to playing songs from the '80s show again – it's really fun – and I'm hoping more people will go to the games."

Geiger is one of only six female directors or co-directors leading marching bands at the NCAA Division I-A or Football Bowl Subdivision level. She arrived at FIU last fall, one-and-a-half weeks before the season started, and says she was impressed with the quality of the band.

A veteran of the marching band world, Geiger was a clarinet and saxophone instrumentalist for six years in the U.S. Navy and has performed with the Pacific Fleet

"This is a tremendously talented group of individuals."

—
Carla Geiger,
director of
Athletic
Bands

Band at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and the Atlantic Fleet Band in Norfolk, Va.

To take the job at FIU, she left the University of Washington two years into her Ph.D. program in music education and moved to Miami. (She has bachelor's and master's degrees in music education and conducting from the University of Florida.) The move, she says, was worth it.

She says the Golden Panther Band plays a huge role in setting a winning mood for a game. The marching band's goal is to court the audience when the team does well and to bring the audience back into the game when the team does not do well.

Among the student-performers in the band is 18-year-old Ernesto Fernández, who is double-majoring in music performance and music education. He is one of the marching band's two drum majors and in this role serves as an on-the-field band conductor with fellow Golden Panther Giovanni Alfonso.

"I think we have relatively new athletics programs and are still developing, but little by little we're getting better. We have new coaches and better teams playing better games, so I'm looking forward to performing at the new stadium and getting feedback from the audience." ■



**A Message from Alumni Association
President Jose M. Perez de Corcho '93**

Dear FIU Alumni, Family and Friends,

It is truly an honor to address you as the new president of the FIU Alumni Association. Like many of you, I attended FIU when there weren't nearly as many buildings, programs or activities as our great university now offers. At that time, the idea of having an active Alumni Association was far from becoming a reality.

Today, however, we have an active Alumni Association that is ranked No. 1 in the country in growth. This growth did not happen overnight, though. It is the product of the long-standing diligence and dedication of the Alumni Relations staff, supported by our university's management and Foundation, along with the commitment of our FIU Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Several years ago, our Alumni Relations staff and Board of Directors started exploring the idea of building an Alumni Center. During this year's Torch Awards, we took our first step toward funding the Alumni Center as Betty Perry '74, wife of FIU's first president, the late Charles E. Perry, challenged those in attendance to match her \$10,000 pledge for the Alumni Center. Within minutes, more than \$90,000 had been raised, and the Alumni Center is now on its way to becoming a reality for our thriving university.

Our alumni have many outstanding achievements to be proud of: The establishment of our College of Medicine, the accreditation of our College of Law, our internationally renowned School of Tourism and Hospitality Management and all the accolades received for all of our colleges and schools. Also, this year we will see our first football game at a new on-campus stadium. With the leadership, dedication and energy provided by coach Mario Cristobal, it won't be long before FIU becomes a football powerhouse.

Therefore, we would like to hear from you. I encourage you to get connected with our Alumni Association at 305-348-3334.

In the Spirit of Blue & Gold,

Jose M. Perez de Corcho '93



New Alumni Association President Jose Perez de Corcho '93 makes his first address at the annual meeting while past-president Will Trueba, Jr., Esq. '90 looks on.

New president elected for Alumni Association

Newly elected Alumni Association President Jose M. Perez de Corcho '93 says alumni need to roll up their sleeves in the years ahead. "We still have a lot of work to do," said Perez de Corcho in his inaugural address at the annual Alumni Association meeting in May.

More than 150 alumni, administrators, faculty, staff and friends gathered in the Ronald W. Reagan Presidential House's courtyard – sipping wine and munching on hors d'oeuvres – to look to the future, welcome the new president and celebrate the Alumni Association's success during the past year.

The evening opened with news of a record-breaking year as the Alumni Association surpassed 15,000 members. FIU's alumni have exceeded expectations with more than 10 percent of them active, significantly higher than the average for urban public research institutions. "Affinity is growing for this university," said Bill Draughon, associate vice president of Alumni Relations.

The 2008 Torch Awards Gala in March exemplified the growing affinity when alumni donated \$90,000 for the Alumni Center in one evening without even seeing a rendering. Among the priorities for the coming year will be a fundraising campaign for the new center. Dealing with deep budgets cuts imposed by the state will also be high on the new board's agenda.

Outgoing alumni association president Will Trueba, Jr., Esq. '90 noted, "Fundraising is key to turning dreams into blue-and-gold paint."

The 2008-2009 Alumni Association Board was sworn in at the annual meeting in May. Gathered for the meeting were, back row: Ralph Rosado '96 '03, Michael Mendez '03, Ana Martinez '92, Raymond del Rey '97, Jose M. Perez de Corcho '93, FIU President Modesto A. Maidique, Alumni Relations Associate Vice President Bill Draughon, Justo Pozo '80, William Trueba, Esq. '90 and Jose Manuel Diaz '86. Front row: Gus Alfonso '02, Jason Scott Hamilton '89 '93, Susan Webster '87, Jack Gonzalez '98, Ariana Fajardo, Esq. '93 and Gonzalo Acevedo '91.

Feel the Pride



For more information contact Vanessa Baldomero, assistant director at 305-348-1613 or alumni@fiu.edu.

Alumni inducted into CBA Hall of Fame

The College of Business Administration inducted two of its most accomplished alumni into its Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame during a ceremony on May 8, the event's ninth year. The college also presented a third non-alumnus executive with its South Florida Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

The three honorees, recognized during a luncheon ceremony held at Jungle Island on Watson Island were: Malcolm Butters MBA '83, president and co-founder of Butters Construction & Development, Inc.; Ignacio Urbietta Jr. MBA '85, co-owner and CEO, Urbietta Oil Co.; and Sergio Pino, president

Continues on next page

Perez de Corcho '93 proudly recounted a moment at a Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce meeting a few years ago. FIU President Modesto A. Maidique asked FIU alumni to stand up, then family and friends of graduates and then family and friends of faculty and staff. In the end, 80 percent of the room was standing.

"FIU is going to succeed because the community needs us," said Maidique. "We educate the leaders of this community."

At the end of the meeting, Alumni Association members Gonzalo Acevedo '91, Gus Alfonso '02, Ralph Rosado '96, MA '03, George B. Brackett, Jr. '77, Raymond del Rey '97, Isabel C. Diaz '01, Adriana Fajardo '93, Samuel C. Jackson MPA '97 and Ana L. Martinez M.Acc '92 were sworn in as the newest members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

"I am excited to bring new blood to the board," concluded Perez de Corcho. ■

Alumni invited to annual career fair

Grab your best business suit and bring plenty of résumés. The Alumni Career Fair: Panthers for Hire is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 30, from 11 a.m.-9 p.m. in the Graham Center Ballrooms at University Park. Conference registration begins at 11 a.m.

The Career Fair will feature a lunch program on the Greater Miami job market starting at 12:30 p.m. The luncheon is open to job seekers and employers at a cost of \$15.

Break-out sessions from 2-5 p.m. include: Conducting Your Job Search – Job Seeker, Succession Planning for Your Career – Job Seeker, Developing Recruitment Strategies – Employer Workshop.



Taking part in this year's Hall of Fame induction ceremony were: Mike Blaimonte '86, the voice of Miami HEAT; Joyce Elam, executive dean of the FIU College of Business Administration; Sergio Pino, president of Century Homebuilders, LLC; Ignacio Urbietta Jr. MBA '85, CEO of Urbietta Oil Co.; Malcolm Butters MBA '83, president of Butters Construction & Development; Nicholas Bustle MIB '88, president of SunTrust Bank, Miami-Dade County.

BRICKS WILL BUILD STADIUM LEGACY

Administrators, faculty/staff, students, alumni, family and friends now can leave their mark at the new FIU Stadium and show their support for years to come. For \$125, everyone can purchase a personalized 4"x 8" brick custom-engraved with their name, family's name or a special blue-and-gold memory.

"This is a great opportunity for everyone to take ownership of our new stadium and FIU Athletics," said Athletic Director Pete Garcia. "The bricks will literally pave the way to the new stadium

while contributing to all FIU Athletics programs through generous donations to the Athletic Association."

The bricks will be placed around the concourse level of the FIU Stadium for all to see. Each brick will be a permanent part of the university's future starting with the first game in the new stadium, scheduled for Sept. 20, which will see the Golden Panthers face off against the University of South Florida.

To order your brick online visit, <https://web.fiu.edu/brick>. ■



UPCOMING EVENTS

<p>ALUMNI EVENTS</p> <hr/> <p>Panther Pit Football Tailgate: FIU vs. USF</p> <p>When: Saturday, Sept. 20, 5 p.m. Where: Alumni Tent outside FIU Stadium Contact: Office of Alumni Relations, at 305-348-1009 or alumni@fiu.edu.</p> <hr/> <p>Panther Pit Football Tailgate: FIU vs. Middle Tennessee</p> <p>When: Saturday, Oct. 11, 5 p.m. Where: Alumni Tent outside FIU Stadium Contact: Office of Alumni Relations, at 305-348-1009 or alumni@fiu.edu.</p> <hr/> <p>Panthers For Hire: Alumni Career Fair</p> <p>When: Thursday, Oct. 30, 11 a.m. – 9 p.m. Where: University Park Graham Center Ballrooms Contact: Vanessa Baldomero in Alumni Relations at 305-348-1613.</p> <hr/> <p>FIU Ghost Tours</p> <p>Halloween event sponsored by the Student Alumni Association When: Wednesday, Oct. 29, 8 p.m. Where: University Park Housing Quad Contact: Dianne Cordova, Alumni Association assistant director, at 305-348-9050 or alumni@fiu.edu.</p> <hr/> <p>Silver Pride 25-Year Reunion (1972-'83)</p> <p>When: FIU Homecoming, Saturday, Nov. 8, 11 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Where: University Park Contact: Office of Alumni Relations, at 305-348-1009 or alumni@fiu.edu.</p>	<p>Panther Pit Football Tailgate: FIU vs. Arkansas State</p> <p>When: Saturday, Nov. 8, 5 p.m. Where: Alumni Tent outside FIU Stadium Contact: Office of Alumni Relations, at 305-348-1009 or alumni@fiu.edu.</p> <hr/> <p>Panther Pit Football Tailgate: FIU vs. Louisiana-Monroe</p> <p>When: Saturday, Nov. 22, 5 p.m. Where: Alumni Tent outside FIU Stadium Contact: Office of Alumni Relations, at 305-348-1009 or alumni@fiu.edu.</p> <hr/> <p>Panther Pit Football Tailgate: FIU vs. Western Kentucky</p> <p>When: Saturday, Dec. 6, 5 p.m. Where: Alumni Tent outside FIU Stadium Contact: Office of Alumni Relations, at 305-348-1009 or alumni@fiu.edu.</p>	<p>Wolfsonian-FIU exhibit</p> <p>“American Streamlined Design: The World of Tomorrow” features 180 examples of furniture, ceramics, metalwork, plastics, graphic design and archival design books. When: Oct. 23-May 17, 2009 Where: The Wolfsonian-FIU, 1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach Contact: For more information, call 305-531-1001 or visit www.wolfsonian.org.</p> <hr/> <p>Theater Department presents “Spring’s Awakening”</p> <p>When: Nov. 6-16 Where: Wertheim Main Stage at University Park Contact: For more information, call 305-348-0496 or visit http://carta.fiu.edu.</p> <hr/> <p>22nd Annual Festival of the Trees Opening</p> <p>Sponsored by the School of Architecture to benefit FIU Interior Design Endowed Scholarship Fund When: Tuesday, Dec. 2, 6 p.m. Where: One Brickell Square (801 Brickell Ave., Miami) Contact: For more information, call 305-348-0496.</p> <hr/> <p>5th Masters’ Mystery Art Show</p> <p>Annual display of postcard creations by community and university artists benefits the FIU MFA in visual arts program. When: Saturday, Dec. 6. Display viewing begins at noon; reception at 7 p.m. Where: The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach (One Lincoln Road, Miami Beach) Contact: For more information, call 305-348-0496 or visit www.mastersmystery.com</p>
<p>UNIVERSITY EVENTS</p>		
<p>Theatre Department presents “The Cook”</p> <p>When: Sept. 25-Oct. 18 Where: Wertheim Main Stage at University Park Contact: For more information, call 305-348-0496</p>		
<p>FIU Big Band & Jazz Faculty concert</p> <p>When: Thursday, Oct. 16, 8 p.m. Where: Wertheim Concert Hall at University Park Contact: For more information, call 305-348-0496</p>		
<p><i>Qualified individuals with disabilities as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act who need special accommodations for any FIU-sponsored event can request assistance by calling the phone number listed for the function or via Florida Relay Service at 800-955-8771. Requests must be made five working days before the event.</i></p>		

TOP 10 Reasons to Feel the Pride

1. FIU ranked first in the nation among four-year colleges for awarding the bachelor's and master's degrees to Hispanic students in the 2008 annual survey conducted by The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine.
2. FIU senior track star Ronald Forbes qualified in June to compete in the 110-meter hurdles at the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. He will compete for his native Cayman Islands.
3. FIU's College of Medicine received more than 1,000 applications from 45 states in the first month that it began accepting applicants for the inaugural 2009 class of medical school students.
4. FIU Board of Trustees member Cesar L. Alvarez was recognized as one of "The 50 Most Influential Minority Lawyers in America" by the National Law Journal. Alvarez is the chief executive officer of Greenberg Traurig LLP in Miami.
5. Senior first baseman Jorge Castillo was selected by the Chicago White Sox in the 26th round of the 2008 Major League Baseball First Year Player draft in June. He is the 97th Golden Panther to be drafted.
6. Professor Akin Ogundiran, director of African-New World Studies, has received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition, signed by Congressman Kendrick Meek, "in recognition of outstanding and invaluable service to the community."

Feel the Pride

Continued

and CEO, Century Home Builders, LLC.

The Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame Luncheon and Induction Ceremony takes place annually in May. The call for nominations of potential alumni inductees into the EHOFF occurs during the winter months. For more information visit <http://business.fiu.edu/>. ■

Annual tournament catches fish and fun

More than 200 alumni, faculty/staff, students, family and friends of the university supported the 6th Annual FIU Scholarship Fishing Tournament on June 14.

This year, a total of \$10,000 was awarded in scholarships to Golden Panthers. Elizabeth Arenas, Cassandra Capote, Carlos Manrara, Jenesis Negron, Richard Penuela, Sara Rasekhi and Darcelle Skeete each received a Legacy Scholarship of \$1,000, awarded to family of FIU alumni. Meliza Frias, Melissa Gaviria, Alejandra Maruri and Katherine Napuri each received a Panther Pride Scholarship of \$750, given to students who are involved in campus life.

Among the tournament's participants were Athletic Director Pete Garcia, head football coach Mario Cristobal and the Alumni Association's new president, Jose M. Perez de Corcho '93, who was impressed by the unwavering support of alumni and friends.

"Considering the tough economic times, the support we got from the FIU community this year has not changed," he said of the 30 boats



More than \$10,000 in scholarships was awarded at this year's Fishing Tournament. From left are Duane Wiles, associate executive director of Alumni Relations; Bill Draughon, associate vice president of Alumni Relations; scholarship recipient Elizabeth Arenas; Roary, Manny Matalon '01 and Ramon Ferran '79; and scholarship recipients Sara Rasekhi, Katherine Napuri, Meliza Frias, Melissa Gaviria, Cassandra Capote, Jenesis Negron and Darcelle Skeete.

that went out to sea on June 14. "It's a fun time. Coach Cristobal went out with us and we caught five dolphin. We're happy Athletics joined us this year. Together we can achieve great things."

Although it was a rainy day, Golden Panthers came out in full force to enjoy a day of fishing, followed by a ceremony with great food, drinks and blue-and-gold camaraderie.

"I loved it," Juan Andres '97 said, "even though we only caught one dolphin." "And one heck of a good time," added Andres' friend, Carlos Fernandez.

Attendees also tried their luck in a raffle featuring prizes such FIU gear; fishing equipment; two American Airlines roundtrip tickets for the continental United States, the

Bahamas, the Caribbean, Bermuda, Canada or Mexico; a Sunday brunch for four at the Biltmore Hotel; and an all-inclusive four-day, three-night stay for two at any Sandals Resorts or Beaches Resorts.

This year's tournament winners were:

- Most Aggregate Dolphin Weight: Team Panga 2600 (\$2,500 and Gary Traczyk sculpture)
- Largest Dolphin: Team Zurgui (\$1,000 and trophy)
- Largest Ladies Dolphin: Cristina Hernandez of Team BlackJack (\$500 and trophy)
- Largest Fun Fish: Team Bottom Line Foods (\$250)
- Largest Junior: Richard Rodriguez of Reel Hard (\$100 gift certificate to Dave & Busters and trophy)

Continues on next page

7. FIU alumnus Janet Dacal held a lead role in the 2008 Tony Award winner for Best Musical "In the Heights."
8. Creative writing alumnus and novelist Dennis Lehane will see two more of his novels adapted for the silver screen. This summer Martin Scorsese directed actor Leonardo DiCaprio in an adaptation of his 2003 novel "Shutter Island." Most recently, "Spider-Man" Director Sam Raimi was tapped to bring Lehane's 2008 historical novel "The Given Day" to the big screen.

9. FIU has launched a new "Go Green" website to showcase its campus-wide green initiative. Check it out at: <http://gogreen.fiu.edu>.
10. Professor Ellen Brown in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences was named an Exceptional Reviewer for the journal Medical Care, one of the top journals in health care administration. This designation is given to the top 5 percent of all Medical Care peer reviewers who were chosen on the basis of quality and timeliness of reviews, as well as the number of reviews conducted. ■

Paul Petani, Pedro Gonzalez, Luigi Simone and Rahim Nahim, members of Team Panga 2006, took the prize for Most Aggregate Dolphin Weight.



ALUMNI

Continued

- 2nd Place Most Aggregate Dolphin Weight: Team Reel Hard (\$500)
- 2nd Place Largest Dolphin: Team The Scholars-ship (\$250),
- 2nd Place Junior: Anthony Perez of Team Reel Hard (\$50 gift certificate to Dave & Busters)

Jorge Maklouf, the winner of the Second Place Largest Dolphin, gave back his prize money to the Scholarship Fund.

TotalBank was the presenting sponsor of the event. Other sponsors included GEICO, Oceania Cruises and University Credit Union. ■

2009 FIU Alumni Association continental travel adventures

The Alumni Association is pleased to announce a trio of spectacular educational voyages for our 2009 travel season with marquee destinations in the Baltic, Mediterranean and Black Sea. You'll enjoy your cruise vacation aboard Oceania Cruises' luxurious mid-size flagships, the *Regatta* and *Nautica*.

Scandinavian Splendors, June 29, 2009: This 14-day Stockholm to London (Dover) cruise provides a wealth of opportunities to explore Northern Europe and Scandinavia with ports of call such as St. Petersburg, Helsinki, Tallinn, Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

Black Sea Serenade, July 11, 2009: Delve into a region of the world that has fascinating culture, captivating beauty and mystique on this 12-day cruise that begins in Istanbul and ends in Athens. You will visit the folklore-rich countries of Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and the Greek isle of Santorini on this voyage.

Roman Revelations, Oct. 31, 2009: Your senses will come alive with a kaleidoscope of sights, sounds and tastes on this 14-day grand voyage as you discover ancient wonders of the world. Your journey begins in Istanbul and takes you to Cyprus, Israel, Egypt, Crete, Malta, Tunisia and your final destination of Barcelona.

As a special bonus, there will be FIU receptions on board and each cruise will have an FIU professor to provide educational

lectures that will enhance your understanding of the various countries you will visit.

Oceania will continue its legacy of generous donations to FIU by making a contribution representative of each traveler's participation on one of the above cruises. The donation will be made to the FIU Alumni Association for student scholarships and support of programming. So, while you are extending your lifelong learning you'll also be assisting students with their education – a combination that's hard to beat.

Visit the Alumni Association's travel web site at <http://fiualumni.com/travel.htm> or call Oceania at 800-404-6313 to learn more about these FIU alumni cruises offered through Oct. 31, 2008. ■

Silver Pride Reunion honors Class of 1983 and before

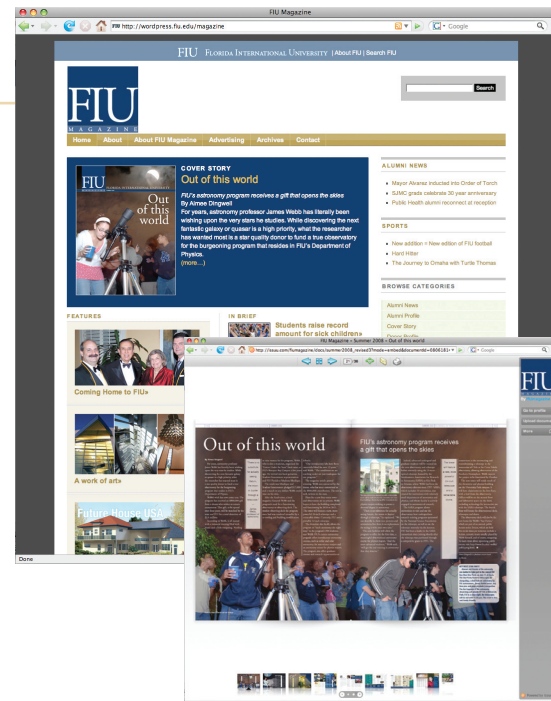
If you graduated from FIU in 1983 or any year before then, please join us at the 2008 Silver Pride Class Reunion to meet old friends, fellow alumni and former professors and take part in FIU's homecoming traditions.

The reunion takes place during Homecoming weekend on Saturday, Nov. 8. The highlight of the reunion will be a brunch with guest speakers and the Silver Pride Induction Ceremony. Alumni will be presented with a medallion and commemorative pin representing 25 or more years since graduation.

The afternoon will also feature meetings with faculty and staff from your college or school, as well as a campus tour. Those of you who haven't visited FIU in a while are sure to be amazed at the university's impressive growth.

Afterward, alumni are invited to experience the university's exciting athletic traditions at the Panther Pit Tailgate Tent with entertainment and giveaways, followed by the Golden Panther football game. The Golden Panthers will take on Arkansas State at 7 p.m. in the new FIU Stadium. The alumni tailgate begins at 5 p.m.

To take part in this year's Silver Pride Reunion or learn more, call the Office of Alumni Relations at 305-348-3334 or e-mail your RSVP to alumni@fiu.edu. ■



FIU Magazine launches new online Web site

Alumni can now access the *FIU Magazine* online in a new, dynamic format at <http://magazine.fiu.edu>.

FIU Associate Director of Marketing Eddie Merille '97, MBA '00 led the project to transform the magazine website from a static archive of stories to an interactive Web site. He chose WordPress software for its built-in community and article sharing features and its ease of content management. "The new magazine Web site will allow online readers to enjoy our great content and interact with one another and the editors," Merille said. "We're going to continue making it better every issue so I hope alumni will visit the site often, bookmark it, subscribe to the RSS feed and make comments."

The new site displays the magazine articles in a flash viewer as well as regular HTML formatted pages. Readers can also post comments on each article and interact with other readers. In addition, users can subscribe to a magazine RSS feed and easily post *FIU Magazine* stories to their social networking sites such as Facebook and Digg with the click of an "add" button located on each page of the site.

The current issue, along with the last two issues, are available in this new format. Earlier issues are being converted but remain

Feel the Pride



The CBA Alumni Chapter inducted its new board members on May 30: Front row: President Juan Carlos Hernandez '02, Betty Alvarez '97, Isis Roque '95, student liaison Michael Jadoo. Back row: Michael Fenton '07, Ervan Hernandez '03, Dawn Lazar '06, Dianne Cordova '06, Lesline McKenzie and Christopher Davila '07. Not pictured: Scarlett Carballo '04, Martin Rivas '02, '04, Jennifer Sanchez '03 and Michelle Vautier '06.

available in the *FIU Magazine* archives page. Visit the new site and let us know what you think at alumni@fiu.edu or comment on a particular story. ■

Alumni chapter news and events

Here are the latest announcements from your Alumni Association chapters:

YUPA!: FIU's young alumni chapter, YUPA! (Young Urban Professional Alumni) hosted a networking happy hour at the Biltmore on May 15. The event was the kick-off to the group's monthly networking socials. Alumni enjoyed complimentary appetizers, drink specials and jazz sounds near the hotel's swimming pool.

College of Law: The College of Law Alumni Chapter hosted a pre-commencement reception, sponsored by BNY Mellon Bank, at Mellon Bank's Brickell location on May 13. The 2008 graduates were presented with achievement awards, sponsored by Bernard and Esther Probst, Mikki Canton in memory of professor Ray O'Keefe, Alex Alvarez, Esq. of DeMahy Labrador Drake Payne & Cabeza, Fowler White Boggs Banker, and Jackson Lewis LLP.

The law school commencement took place on May 18 with 91 graduates. Graduates Javed Rahman, Sarah Disparano, Diane Carames and Oscar Flores were presented with the Excellence in Service to the Clinical Program Award for service to the College of Law Clinics.



YUPA! board members Frank Peña, Nathan Berlinski, George Corton, Ramon Cue, Esq., and Oscar Grau enjoy themselves at a recent YUPA event.

Washington, D.C.: FIU alumni living in the greater Washington, DC area are invited to get involved with their chapter. The Washington D.C. Alumni Association Chapter hosts a variety of activities year round. For more information on these and other D.C. chapter events, visit their Facebook page at FIU Capital Panthers – D.C. Alumni Chapter.

Public Health: The Robert Stempel School of Public Health is organizing an official alumni chapter. Alumni interested in joining the chapter's steering committee should contact Saul Sztam, assistant dean, or Carrie Sanchez, assistant director, at 305-348-7777 or sztams@fiu.edu or csanchez@fiu.edu for more information. ■

Discount Dolphins tickets available to members

The Miami Dolphins and the FIU Alumni Association are partnering to provide an exclusive discount ticket offer to Alumni Association members for the Sunday, Oct. 26 game vs. the Buffalo Bills. Game time is 1 p.m. at Dolphin Stadium. The Alumni Association will host a special FIU alumni tailgate two hours before kickoff. The discounted cost for game tickets is:

- \$45 for upper corner end zone seats (tickets come with free voucher for 16 oz. Pepsi and hot dog);
- \$65 for upper corner end zone loge seats in the first four rows;
- \$75 for upper sidelines (tickets come with free voucher for 16 oz. Pepsi and hot dog);
- \$91 for upper prime seats.



College of Law Dean Leonard P. Strickman (centered) honored graduates Javed Rahman, Sarah Disparano, Diane Carames and Oscar Flores.

The FIU tailgate will feature beer, wine, soda, bottled water and food for an additional \$70.

The offer expires three days before game day. To purchase your tickets and reserve your spot at the tailgate visit: <http://www.miamidolphins.com/FIUAlumniAssociation.asp>

For more information, please contact Tyler Kreigh at 305-623-6114 or TKreigh@DolphinStadium.com. ■

PANTHER PERKS:

Panther Partner: Affordable Travel of Orlando has been helping clients plan their vacations for more than 30 years, specializing in Orlando and Walt Disney World vacation packages since 1991.

Panther Perk: All alumni members will have access to exclusive discounts from Walt Disney, Universal Studios, Sea World, other theme parks, dinner shows like Medieval Times, Arabian Nights, the Wonder Works Extreme Dinner Show, Pirates Adventure Show, and many others. Alumni are also going to receive special rates on all Orlando hotels and vacation packages.

How to take advantage: To get your Orlando entertainment discounts, visit: <http://www.orlandoemployeediscounts.com> and login with [fiualumnisave](http://www.fiualumnsave.com).

ALUMNI

MEET THE STAFF

Sylvia Pozo targets membership, marketing

The Office of Alumni Relations recently welcomed Sylvia Pozo to its growing staff as assistant director of Membership and Marketing.

Pozo, the daughter of alumni Justo L. Pozo '80 and Sylvia E. Pozo '82, received a bachelor's of business administration degree in sports management from St. Thomas University and an MBA from Nova Southeastern University. She comes to Alumni Relations from FIU Athletics.

In her new role, Pozo is tasked with identifying businesses to serve as Panther Perk partners, increasing and retaining membership within the Alumni Association and helping Duane Wiles, associate executive director of Alumni Relations, with marketing strategies and development of collateral materials. She also serves as liaison between Alumni Relations and Athletics.

"We are excited to have Sylvia in our staff to lead us in the areas of membership and marketing," Wiles said. "Her enthusiasm and motivation is a perfect fit for Alumni Relations."

Pozo has an affinity for FIU that runs deep. Her parents are among FIU's most active alumni. She said she looks forward to growing with the Alumni Association.

"My parents met here," she said. "My brother is an alumnus and my sister is currently a theater major and my little brother wants to play baseball here. We're an FIU family."

To reach Pozo, call 305-348-3595 or e-mail [pозos@fiu.edu](mailto:pozos@fiu.edu). ■



Sylvia Pozo

CLASS NOTES

1970s

Carmen Alvarez Brown '75, MS '80 began her duties as vice president for enrollment management at the University of New Mexico this summer. Until recently, Alvarez Brown was the assistant vice president for enrollment management and director of undergraduate admissions at FIU.

Robert "Bob" E. Kranz, Jr. '78 played Florida Attorney General Bob Butterworth opposite Kevin Spacey, Laura Dern and Ed Bagley Jr. in "Recount," an HBO film about the 36 days of recounting Florida's votes in the 2000 Bush vs. Gore presidential election that premiered last spring.

1980s



• **Raul O. Serrano, Jr. '82** was selected and featured as one of the "Top 50 IRS Representation Practitioners of 2008" in the April-May issue of *CPA Magazine*.

Serrano was one of only three Florida practitioners selected and the only one from the South Florida area.

Patricia Ornelas Henry '84 has earned Class A certification as a member of the Ladies Professional Golf Association's Teaching and Club Professional membership. Henry, a multi-year veteran of women's professional golf and one of the LPGA's foremost teaching professionals, is the director of instruction and head golf professional of O. Henry Golf at the Jimmy Clay/Roy Kizer Golf Complex in Austin, Texas.

• **Carlos J. Martinez '85** recently was elected public defender for the 11th Judicial Circuit without opposition. Martinez, who has been one of Public Defender Bennett Brummer's top assistants for many years, will take office in January 2009.

Edwin R. Rojas '85 recently became entertainment director at Spotlight Entertainment/Barry Ball Artists, the largest supplier of talent to the cruise industry, civic centers around the country and corporations for events and conventions. Rojas also sits on the Board of Directors to the Theatre League of South Florida.

1990s

Susan M. Santiago '91 has been appointed general manager for Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort & Casino. Santiago most recently served as general manager at sister Caribbean property Hyatt Key West Resort & Spa. In her new position, she will oversee all aspects of resort operations, including food and beverage, staff service training, public relations and marketing.

Gary M. Kroll '92 has published a second book titled "America's Ocean Wilderness: A Cultural History of Twentieth Century Exploration" with University of Kansas Press. He is a history professor at SUNY Plattsburgh.

Neil S. Plakcy '92 has published his third novel, "Mahu Fire," with Alyson Books. The book follows a gay Honolulu homicide detective as he investigates a bombing at a gay marriage charity event and falls in love with an arson investigator.

Jennifer A. Curtis '94, MS '98 has launched Logicreative Design, her own Web and graphic design firm. Prior to her Web and graphic design career, Curtis was a senior academic advisor at the University of Maryland and an instructor at FIU. She is engaged to U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Paul Curtis.

• **Ivan J. Parron '94**, a recipient of the Charles E. Perry Young Alumni Visionary Award in 2000, has left his position as in-house attorney at Universal Music Group in Miami Beach to focus on his private, Miami Beach-based entertainment, media sports and technology law firm, Parron & Associates.

Michael R. Wolf '95 has been promoted to vice president of land acquisition for Toll Brothers' East and Central Florida divisions in Delray Beach.



Rita Maria Martinez '96, MFA'03 recently published "Jane-in-the-Box," her first book of poetry, with March Street Press. In the book, the literary Jane Eyre is unleashed into the 21st century, where lured

by designer clothing and cosmetics, her consumerism is driven by the need to heal emotional wounds in poems like "Fashion Remedy" and "Jane Eyre: Heiress, Avon Lady, Plastic Surgery Junkie." Martinez lives in Fort Lauderdale with her husband and is an Academic Services writing consultant at Nova Southeastern University's Kendall Campus.

Feel the Pride



Jaime A. Castaño '97, MBA '03 recently joined CNLBank in Miami-Dade County. Castaño serves as vice president of commercial lending for CNLBank, South Florida division. The Miami

resident also is a member of the board of directors for Junior Achievement of Greater Miami and a member of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce.

Amanda Alexandrakis '99, MIB '04 is co-founder of SMBP, a top radio promotion company in secondary markets in the adult contemporary genre. SMBP recently launched marketing services in Australia.

- **Andrea Celina Saucedo '99**, construction management administrator in the Broward County Public Works Department, has been recognized as one of "12 Hispanic Women of Distinction" by Bank of America and *Latina Style* magazine. Saucedo has been involved in several community organizations with diverse interests, such as the Broward County Women's History Coalition, the City of Hollywood's Hispanic Affairs Council and the Hollywood Beach Latin Festival, and has volunteered for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Southern Florida.

Jose F. Velasco '99 has passed all education, examination, experience and ethics requirements by the CFP Board of Standards, Inc. to use the highly recognized Certified Financial Planner credential.

2000s

Lisa M. Arneaud '00, a.k.a. "Lisa Lee" Campbell-Arneaud, is the host of Miami HEATv. Arneaud provides live in-arena commentary and videotaped segments and interacts with celebrities and Miami Heat fans attending the team's games at the American Airlines Arena. She also is the voice of the Miami Heat's 20th anniversary special one-hour documentary. She lives in Pembroke Pines with her husband and two kids.



- **Phoebe L. Moll '00** recently settled in Germany where she will work for two years at BBDO Dusseldorf as vice president, global account director. The move fulfills Moll's lifelong dream of living and working overseas.

Maribel Alvarez '01 graduated with honors from NSU in 2004 with a master's degree in accounting and tax. Alvarez owns an accounting firm along with her family and is pursuing the CPA state exam.

- **Denis J. Fajardo '01** recently completed his master's degree in social and organizational psychology at Columbia University and has started his next assignment in the Army as a West Point company tactical officer.

Dipak Parekh 'MS 01 has been appointed chief financial officer of ChildNet. The Kenya native brings more than 20 years of experience in finance, information technology and public administration to his post. As CFO, Parekh oversees the company's finance, information technology, purchasing, revenue maximization and facilities management.

Courtney R. Young MS '01 recently married Jami Heather Turner at the Woodfield Country Club in Boca Raton. Young is the founder of Court's 1-on-1 Sports, a sports camp in Miami that helps improve the coordination and basketball-playing abilities of children.

Zameer Upadhyia '02 and **James Rivera '01** have founded BabySpot.com, a social networking Web site for parents, grandparents and other family members and friends to connect and share photos, videos of their young ones in a free and secure manner across the world.

- **Ronaldo A. Calonje '03**, board-certified family medicine practitioner, began a fellowship in sports medicine at Lutheran Hospital in Chicago this summer.

- **Lazaro A. Mederos '03** was hand-picked and recruited for IBM Global Business Services' supply chain management strategy team after being ranked as one of California's 2007 Top 5 upcoming leaders. His new position as senior consultant responsible for innovation and business transformation in global strategy has brought Mederos back to South Florida.

- **Michelle Nuñez-Mendoza '03** recently received her MBA from Nova Southeastern University. Nuñez-Mendoza works as a marketing copywriter for Assurant Specialty Property in Miami, and is married to Nestor Mendoza '96. The couple has a 2-year-old daughter, Zara Michelle.

Sandra Rodriguez Barron MFA '03 recently was selected by the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture to receive \$2,800 for the 2007-'08 cycle of the NALAC Fund for the Arts. The award will support Barron's travels to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic to research her second novel (tentatively titled "The Islanders"), due out in 2009. Her debut novel, "The Heiress of Water," received the 2007 Latino Book Award for Best First Book and recognition as a Borders Original Voices Selection.

Pedro Pavon '04 joined the Army after college and graduated with honors from officer basic training. Pavon then served as a paratrooper in Special Operations Comma and now is an officer in the Army Reserves. He recently accepted a federal clerkship with the U.S. Department of Justice Attorney General Honors Program. He will work for the Executive Office of Immigration Review in Miami.

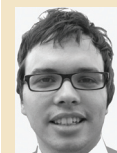
Margarita Benítez '05 has been selected as one of the five winners of the first *Leonardo* Art/Science Student Contest. *Leonardo* is the journal of the International Society for the Arts, Sciences and Technology. Benítez presented her winning project, "Circadian Capital," at the Berkeley Big Bang 2008 conference in June.



- **Karina M. Peña '06, MSF '07** married Alexander Peña, a firefighter with the City of Miami, on May 17, at St. Kevin Catholic Church in Miami.

- **Lori B. Burstein '07** is a head-start pre-k teacher at South Dade Childcare Center. Burstein also teaches at Huntington.

- **Lourdes Cortizo '07** has been named a 2008 Phi Kappa Phi Fellow. The Honor Society's Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship will support Cortizo's pursuit of a law degree at the University of Florida.



Gustavo A. Garcia '08 participated in the 2008 summer internship program at EDAWIAECOM, one of the world's leading design firms. Garcia took part in a two-week workshop in

Los Angeles, followed by a three-month internship at EDAW's L.A. office.

donor profile: Carnival Cruise Lines Foundation



Gerry Cahill, president and CEO of Carnival Cruise Lines

A World Class Partnership

By Sissi Aguila '99

The School of Hospitality and Tourism Management has brought on board Carnival Cruise Lines in its efforts to meet the demand for globally oriented hospitality and tourism programs.

In May, Carnival Cruise Lines pledged a \$900,000 gift to the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management for a student center and scholarships. The gift's total impact will be \$1.6 million after it is matched with \$700,000 by the state of Florida.

"FIU is a vital and important part of our community," said Gerry Cahill, president and CEO of Carnival Cruise Lines, which is headquartered in Miami.

Carnival has been a part of the South Florida community since the beginning. It began operation in 1972 with a single ship. The *Mardi Gras*, a converted ocean liner, cruised from Miami to San Juan, Puerto Rico. Since then, Carnival has grown into a global cruise company operating 22 ships and one of the most profitable vacation corporations in the world.

In the past five years, Carnival and the "Friends Uniting Neighbors" (F.U.N) team – an employee-driven service group

– have contributed more than \$27 million to a variety of local and national charities. Members of the F.U.N team annually participate in the Bayanza Beach Clean Up Initiative that clears debris from Biscayne Bay.

Carnival sees its gift to FIU as an investment. "We are proud to be associated with this fine institution," said Cahill, "both through these scholarships and the new student center that will bear our name."

The Carnival Student Center will be located at Biscayne Bay Campus next to the bayside terrace. A 2,600-square-foot space in the school's building will be renovated to create a formal and informal gathering place for students. Student organizations and industry representatives scouting prospective interns and employees will be able to meet in fully equipped conference rooms.

Within the Carnival Student Center, there will also be an advising center and a reading room equipped with books, industry periodicals, audio-visual resource materials and computer workstations.

"It will be an amazing facility for our students," said Joseph J. West, dean of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

The School of Hospitality and Tourism

Management already has one of the highest rated programs in the United States with a 100 percent placement rate for graduates. The school's alumni hold prominent positions throughout the hotel, travel and food service industries, including Carnival Corporation. At least a half-dozen alumni hold high-ranking jobs within Carnival, including vice president and chief audit executive Richard Brilliant MS '93.

Carnival Scholarships will help the school continue to recruit and educate the best and brightest for the industry. Awards will be used for tuition, books and other expenses related to students' course of study.

"Education is critical to our community's continued growth," Cahill said. "With Carnival and FIU each having a strong focus on hospitality, we felt it was only appropriate to support this prestigious institution of higher learning."

The feeling is mutual. FIU has had a great relationship with Carnival for many years, West added.

Cahill said FIU has provided exceptional upper-level education to students for more than 35 years. He emphasized, "Carnival is very pleased to make this donation." ■

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

VIP: Philip Goldfarb '79

Profession: President and chief operating officer of Turnberry Associates Real Estate Development and Property Management.

FIU degree: Hospitality and Tourism Management

FIU affiliations: Alumni Association Lifetime Member, member of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management Industry Advisory Board, speaker for the Distinguished Hospitality Leaders Lecture Series and sponsor of the Food Network South Beach Wine & Food Festival.

What are your fondest memories of FIU?

The great camaraderie in the School of Hospitality, as well as the knowledgeable and caring faculty. Both created lifelong friendships and business relationships.

What advice would you offer to your fellow Golden Panthers?

To always follow your passion. Even though there will certainly be obstacles, they will make the ultimate success that much more important.

In what ways have you been involved with FIU and why is it important to be involved?

Engaged alumni are vital to the ongoing strength and development of FIU. As a member of the Industry Advisory Board I am a liaison to the university's administration on matters related to the School of Hospitality's direction, in addition to alumni relations and communications. As a hotelier, I was given the opportunity to speak to the 2007 graduating class when I was presented the FIU Medallion at Commencement and share my experiences with our industry's future leaders. And as a SoBe sponsor it gives me great personal and professional satisfaction to see our student body afforded the opportunity to work side by side with the finest talent in what is now the most prestigious wine and food festival in the country.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

Receiving the FIU Medallion and addressing the graduating students of 2007 and, on a professional level, having the opportunity to lead Turnberry Associates to even greater heights. ■



OCTOBER 30, 2008
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
FIU / GC BALLROOMS

11200 SW 8TH STREET • MIAMI, FL 33199

PANTHERS FOR HIRE

ALUMNI CAREER FAIR

2 pm - 5 pm Break-out Sessions

Topics Included: Career Exploration and Management, Advance Job Search, and Developing Recruitment Strategies

Conference Registration begins at 11am

Key Note Speaker Presentation and Lunch starting at 12:30 pm / \$15

To register please visit www.fiu.edu/~career

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