IT’S EASY TO GET EXCITED ABOUT ANIMALS WITH THIS NAT GEO WILD STAR. Page 20

THIS GATOR’S A WILD ONE!

GATOR INVENTORS TO THE RESCUE
Plastics that decompose in landfills? Seriously, these new UF ideas are game changers. Page 26

AND THE AWARD GOES TO ... Find out who won this year’s Academy of Golden Gators. Page 44
In early March, due to the spread of COVID-19, all state universities including UF moved all classes online and asked students to return to their homes. Around the world, this pandemic has created uncertainty and will surely be remembered as an inflection point that challenged all members of our community to rethink the way we approach our daily lives and work. I thank everyone for their efforts, patience and flexibility as we navigate this complex situation together. The strength of our university and Gator Nation is built on its people, and I am grateful to be surrounded by individuals who embrace new challenges with optimism and demonstrate grace under pressure each day. This issue, which was going to press as the crisis unfolded, includes a revised letter from President Fuchs (pg. 5), as well as photos from campus as staff and students headed home (pg. 74). Your summer issue will include complete coverage. Until then, remember “in all kinds of weather, we all stick together.”

— Matthew Hodge, Executive Director
UF Alumni Association

UF CHAMPIONS
THE PROGRAM THAT GENE BUILT
Retired UF finance professor helps secure his department’s prowess well into the future

UF’s finance program in the Warrington College of Business has been ranked in the top 10 among public universities nationwide for some time. This is due, in part, to the efforts of finance professor Eugene Brigham (UF faculty 1971-2009), pictured below, who literally wrote the textbook in his field. In addition to launching UF’s Public Utility Research Center (PURC) in 1972 and serving as its founding director, Brigham was a pillar of UF’s Department of Finance, Center (PURC) in 1972 and serving as its founding director, Eugene Brigham finance professor nationwide for some time. This is due, in part, to the efforts of has been ranked in the top 10 among public universities years with UF — and since — he also advised numerous companies and government agencies, including the Federal Reserve Board.

Since 2015, Brigham has invested in the college: creating a research endowment for PURC, an endowed faculty chair in finance and a transformational endowment that will enhance the finance program well into the future. This spring, Brigham announced that he intends to give even more funds to ensure the department can offer the best undergraduate finance experience to students. UF and the Gator Nation are humbled by his generosity and honored to rename the department he helped make famous after him. Because of his passionate advocacy and expertise, UF has become a destination for students who want to learn about this critical business field that influences every community around the globe. THANK YOU.

FLORIDA GATOR
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THE Untamable Filipe DeAndrade
This Nat Geo Wild filmmaker’s images are getting humans psyched about protecting the many wild creatures in their own backyards.

Gator Inventors to the Rescue
From plastics that decompose in landfills to smarter energy solutions, check out these UF technologies to improve our environment.

Smiles as Big as Their Hearts
Southwest Florida children suffering from severe dental problem have hope, thanks to a UF partnership with a generous Naples charity.

In Search of Amelia
Allison Fundis (MS ’10) is paying tribute to one of her role models, Amelia Earhart, by setting out to solve the 82-year mystery of her disappearance.

And the Academy Award Goes to...
Find out who won this year’s Academy of Golden Gators.

ON THE COVER
Inspired by the late animal expert Steve Irwin and backed by Nat Geo Wild, UF’s own Filipe DeAndrade (pronounced FEEEP DEH-on-DRAH-dee) is using his telecommunications degree to encourage the conservation of animal species in your back yard and around the world.
When physicians reference Florida’s #1 research hospital, they’re talking about us.

Home to the state’s #1 research hospital, UF Health is consistently ranked among the best in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. Our discoveries advance care for millions of patients each year. So, it’s not surprising that physicians send patients to UF Health from every county in the state and every state in the nation, and from dozens of countries around the world. We conduct landmark translational research that changes lives and moves medicine forward with innovative treatments.

Best in Florida for pediatric cardiology and heart surgery
Trauma and emergency patients transported to UF Health from all 67 Florida counties
More than 8600 patients from 33 countries treated at the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute
More lung transplants than any other Florida hospital
More than 1,300 patients with movement disorders treated with deep brain stimulation

Milestones such as these are made possible by unmatched research advances at UF Health—with 10 hospitals, 9 research centers and institutes, more than 1,400 College of Medicine faculty physicians and a comprehensive team of health care professionals. The quest for answers begins here. Put the power of research to work for you and your patients.

President Fuchs received hundreds of emails from students after UF announced it was shifting to all online classes in March. Below is his response to one student.

Dear Meghan, thank you for your thoughtful email and kind words. I regret that you’re not able to play women’s club soccer or to be a part of your active club, and that you’ve been separated from your best friends. Nothing I can say right now can replace those joys or those friends, or bring you back to our campus and the classrooms you love.

I know from other emails that you are among many students doing your best to cope with many unexpected hardships. Like you, most students are struggling to make a rapid switch to online classes, keep up with their studies and move back home, all at once.

Thousands have learned that the spring graduation they’d looked forward to for years has been postponed and they may not be able to attend.

We have students who have already lost jobs and others whose family members have been laid off due to the closures aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19. Every student has reason to worry about their health and the health of their loved ones since the virus is now everywhere.

These are unprecedented times. And without meaning to be discouraging, the days and weeks ahead are likely to be tougher — with more hardships.

Just over 100 years ago, in the fall of 1918, UF was hit hard by the “Spanish Influenza,” the worst pandemic in modern history. Then, as now, all athletic events were canceled, along with most university activities. Fully a third of our students and some faculty got sick. Floyd Hall (today Griffin-Floyd Hall) was turned into a makeshift hospital — but there were still not enough beds, doctors, nurses or drugs to give everyone adequate care.

Several students and at least one faculty member died. Yet “classes continued through the crisis even if there was only a single student present,” according to Gator History, by the late President Fuchs

“Your generation — which came into the world with 9/11 and goes out into the world as adults in a global pandemic — is being tested in a way that no generation globally has been tested in my lifetime.”

— PRESIDENT FUCHS TO A UF STUDENT

UF history professor Samuel Proctor and co-author Weight Langley. Those who survived went on to flourish and helped create UF as we know it, including, in 1924, the first Homecoming.

When I picture what it must have been like to fight the 1918 pandemic at UF with few tools of modern medicine, in rudimentary facilities, in an impoverished era for UF, I take heart. With the help of our amazing UF doctors and nurses, and with so many working around the clock to find a way to battle COVID-19, I know that we will win this fight, too.

You write of the difficulty of switching to online classes while living in a new city where you don’t have any friends. It’s hard to focus on school when you are figuring out “how to do a 180 of everything in my life,” as you write.

Meghan, it’s clear to me that you and your fellow students are being tested. Indeed your generation — which came into the world with 9-11 and goes out into the world as adults in a global pandemic — seems to be being tested in a way that no generation globally has been tested in my lifetime. No doubt, this pandemic will change you. I believe it will make you more resilient just as happened with those who survived and flourished at UF after the 1918 pandemic.

Meghan, again, I am deeply saddened that you and our other students are seeing your studies and lives upended. When this ends — and it will end — I pray that you and UF will flourish.

I look forward to seeing you on campus again. Warmest regards,
Kent

Read the full exchange between President Fuchs and UF student Meghan Rodríguez in the March 20 Independent Florida Alligator at https://bit.ly/33EyRZW or by searching www.alligator.org.
LAST YEAR, the Gator Nation blew past all expectations, with 11,535 gifts and $12.6 million coming from all over the country and around the world. This phenomenal outpouring of support on giving day, in part, fueled UF’s rise to No. 7 among public universities.

THIS YEAR, in true Gator fashion, you surpassed UF’s expanded goal of 15,000 gifts and $15 million.

2020 Results

16,993 gifts
$23.6M

UF COLLEGES HOLLERING THE LOUDEST:
College of Journalism and Communications: 1,263 gifts
College of Design, Construction and Planning: $10,941,279

GEORGE EDMONDSON JR.
The Stand Up & Holler: Gator Nation Giving Day campaign is named in recognition of the beloved Gator football game cheer made famous by George Edmondson Jr., better known to fans as “Mr. Two Bits.” Edmondson’s iconic orange-and-blue striped necktie was used as a symbol to promote the campaign, with replicas as large as 30 feet long strategically placed throughout the Gainesville campus.

SEE MORE ABOUT GIVING DAY ON PAGE 68
VENTURING FORTH
UF INNOVATE LAUNCHES FOURTH BRANCH OF TECH TRANSFER OPERATION

In March 2019, Brammer Bio, a UF spinoff company, was sold for $1.7 billion to Thermo Fisher Scientific. Brammer’s story is a prime example of UF’s strength in the tech transfer market, fostering the commercialization of UF research developments. Now, UF’s tech transfer enterprise, UF Innovate, has launched a new division called Ventures to continue and further perfect UF’s efforts.

“Our hope is that with the new Ventures group and director, we can either find or create the next 10 Brammers,” said Jim O’Connell, assistant vice president of commercialization at UF.

Ventures joins UF Innovate’s existing divisions: Tech Licensing and two business incubators, The Hub and Std Martin Biotech. While the incubators provide infrastructure support — such as facilities, resources, education and advising — to promising companies, Ventures will provide an entrepreneurs-in-residence program, startup grants and leadership from a man who has vast experience in the venture capital world, Ventures Director Jackson Streeter.

Streeter invented more than 20 patented technologies and founded or led (as CEO) multiple startup companies, including UF startup Banyan Biomarkers. He served as CEO and executive director of the Florida Technology Seed Capital Fund. And, he was the first naval flight surgeon selected as a U.S. Navy TOP GUN staff instructor.

O’Connell says Streeter “has a well-connected network,” “the ability to … ID those companies with potential and get the VCs (venture capitalists) behind them.” O’Connell says Streeter’s contributions could mean more UF startups go to market, which means more jobs and more investments in Florida.

Brammer Bio can trace its start to a $10 million Florida grant UF received in 2003. Today, it is still located in Progress Park near Gainesville and to date has created almost 325 biotech jobs. UF’s hope is that with Streeter in place, armed with a $1 million venture fund from which he’ll dole out grants, UF will spark more Brammer Bio-type startups to boost and grow Florida’s economy.

UNIVERSITY CLOSE TO FACULTY HIRING GOAL

UF’s new lead guitar studies instructor in the School of Music, Silviu Ciulei (pronounced Sil-vee-oo Chew-lay), is a classical and flamenco guitarist who won first prize in the Romanian National Music Olympics. He’s also a three-time first prize winner and gold medalist in the George Georgescu International Music Performance Competition.

Ciulei is an example of the professors UF is hiring to improve its student-to-faculty ratio and strengthen its interdisciplinary programs. UF set a goal in fall 2018 to add 500 new faculty. Since then, 458 professors have been hired, and 25 more have accepted offers (483 total).

See and hear Ciulei perform at www.silviuciulei.com/Videos.html.

PHARMACISTS OF THE CARIBBEAN

UF pharmacy scientists (from left) Michelle Bouquelet, Hendrik Luech and Fatma Al-Awadhi discovered and claimed yet another treasure in the waters off Florida’s coast. This time it’s a marine grass that contains anti-inflammatory properties shown in a lab to prevent Crohn’s disease, inflammatory bowel disease and other digestive tract precursors to colon cancer. “This is an exciting finding because colon inflammation impacts so many health conditions,” said Luech, who holds UF’s Debbie and Sylvia DeSantis Chair in Natural Products Drug Discovery and Development within the College of Pharmacy.

Further studies are needed to determine potential dosage and side effects, among other considerations. The researchers collected this grass off the coast of Boca Grande Key near Key West.

NUMBERS OF NOTE

Length of a new $97 million National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration rescue effort in which UF researchers will breed long-spined sea urchins in their Tampa labs for eventual release onto coral reefs. Urchins eat — among other things — the thick, slimy algae that kills reefs. A mysterious and massive urchin die-off in the 1980s is mostly blamed for reef declines. Scientists have tried for years to breed the sensitive creatures, but this summer UF perfected the tricky process.

Reduction in agricultural pesticide use, thanks to UF/IFAS researcher Nathan Boyd, who trained computers at UF’s Gulf Coast Research and Education Center near Tampa to identify weeds and help growers know when, where and how to control pests.

90%
Vanilla likes it humid; vanilla likes it hot, so South Florida is a "Vanilla likes it humid; vanilla likes it hot" paradise. A man with a camera walks amid a South Florida neighborhood, capturing the essence of the area. Oklahoma Historical Society – PHOEBE STUBBLEFIELD, OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A man with a camera walks among a burned-out block after the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre in Oklahoma. "We want them to be reinterred respectfully and not in a museum somewhere on a shelf."

— PHOEBE STUBBLEFIELD, UF FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST

who serves on the 1921 Mass Graves Investigation Public Oversight Committee and is helping to shape a plan that could confirm the location of buried riot victims in Tulsa, OK. The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre is still considered by the state's historical society to be "the single worst incident of racial violence in American history."

Expect to see more unconventional and eco-conscious plants in gardens this year, according to UF/IFAS horticultural experts. Below are 10 of the hottest landscaping and gardening trends identified by agricultural researchers and staff, as compiled by UF/IFAS writer Samantha Murray (MFA ’15).

1. NATIVES ARE BEST

How can you know which plants are natives and best suited to your area? Ask your local UF/IFAS extension experts. Kate Rotindo, an urban horticulturist for UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County, said native plants are generally lower maintenance, require less water, pruning and fertilizer, and grow best in their native range.

2. PLANT FOR WILDLIFE

Homeowners are also focusing on plants that attract butterflies, bees and other pollinators — making them good for the environment, said Wendy Wilber, state coordinator for the UF/IFAS Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program. For example, plants with berries attract birds, and layering plants of various heights provides hiding places for other species.

3. TRY DWARF VARIETIES

Residents without a lot of space for gardening are choosing dwarf versions of their favorite varieties, said Beth Bolles, horticulture agent for UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County. "This technique dictates gardeners reduce their control of the landscape — encouraging beneficial insects, reducing herbicide and pesticide use, pruning less and planting more native plants. However, those interested should first talk with their neighbors and homeowner associations about their intentions.

5. MAKE LANDSCAPES EDIBLE

Fruit-bearing plants, ornamental vegetables and edible flowers can add style and taste to a landscape, said Wilber. "You get the double benefit of having a landscape that looks nice and provides nutritious food."

6. ADD ART WITH SUCULENTS

Though succulents and cacti have long been popular low-maintenance plants, consumers are looking for less familiar varieties. "People are discovering the immense variety that is the world of succulents," Bolles said. “Their interesting shapes and growth habits seem to offer a form of living art.”

7. DIVERSIFY WITH NOVEL GREENS

Vegetable gardeners will be looking to diversify their plots with leafy greens commonly grown outside the United States, such as mizuna, bok choi and komatsuna, according to Bolles.

8. GET LEAFIER

Though a dozen roses will likely never go out of style, arrangements featuring flowers and foliage are gaining popularity, said Karen Steuderman, commercial horticulture agent for UF/IFAS Extension Volusia County. "Florida greens with leatherleaf ferns are making a comeback in floral arrangements, garlands and other plant decor."

9. GET COLORFULLY DARK

Plants with red, purple or "black" leaves are a striking addition to any landscape, making them more attractive to gardeners, says Margaret Beckett, commercial horticulture agent for UF/IFAS Extension Brevard County. Examples are the black zinnia, ZZ plant, the Black Diamond cope myrtle and red Aglaonema.

10. PLAN FOR NATURAL DISASTERS

“Folks are hesitant to have trees near their homes after witnessing the damage wrought by hurricanes,” said Mark Tancig, horticulture agent for UF/IFAS Extension Leon County. “We recommend that people replant wisely by choosing species that UF/IFAS has documented as being more resilient to wind.”
“That’s my end goal: Just to be able to say I’ve helped and made a difference.”
— BRISTOL BIGBY, U.S. NAVY VETERAN

and a UF Wildlife Conservation and Ecology undergrad, who is working with researchers to document sea turtle population dynamics in the Gulf of Mexico and create better plans to protect them.

“It’s about quality and yield. It sounds simple, but a lot goes into it.”
— SHINSUKE AGEHARA, PLANT PHYSIOLOGIST

Chinese cabbage, lettuce, strawberry and tomato expert, who is part of a team of UF researchers working to write the book on Florida hops farming techniques.

FROM ANTS TO AWARDS

UF entomologist Andrea Lucky is one of two professors nationwide whom the U.S. Department of Agriculture has recognized with a 2019 Early Career Teacher Award. Lucky teaches an introductory insects and classification course for undergraduate students, as well as a graduate class for budding professional entomologists. Her win further strengthens UF’s record of employing more national and regional USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture award-winning teachers than any other institution (19).

1ST PLACE

Rank of UF’s online master’s in mass communication degree, on Intelligent.com’s list of Best Online Master’s in Media Communications Programs and its Top 40 Master’s in Communications Degree list. The College of Journalism and Communications’ program features specializations in audience analysis, political communication, web design, digital strategy, public relations, global strategic communication, public interest communication and social media.

Don’t miss out on sales and new arrivals - visit our homepage and join our email list!

$102,000
Annual savings per crop when farmers plant in taller and narrower soil beds, as recommended by UF/IFAS agricultural and biological engineering professor Sanjay Shukla.

At 6 inches taller and 1 foot narrower than conventional beds, Shukla found this shape helps reduce the amount of water, fertilizers/nutrients, pesticides, fuel and plastic mulch needed to grow tomatoes, peppers and other crops. Early results show less damage from nematodes, as well. Savings calculations are based on a typical 250-acre farm.

“‘Terrorum’ and ‘He was part of my dream’ at left.
Open April 5 - Jan. 3, 2021
harn.ufl.edu/dreamingalice

QUARTER-CENTURY CELEBRATION OF ART

UF’s Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art turned 25 in September. Staff and patrons are celebrating this milestone, in part, with the exhibit, “Dreaming Alice: Maggie Taylor Through the Looking-Glass.” Taylor’s imaginative photo illustrations include the work, above, titled “Terrorum” and “He was part of my dream” as left.

“In today’s world, we can’t prevent it, but we can at least analyze it. Long term, our goal is to be able to do this analysis in real time.”
— SANJAY BANNA, A UF COMPUTER SCIENCE PROFESSOR

whose team won a $2 million National Science Foundation grant to study traffic patterns and safety hazards at high-risk intersections in order to reduce pedestrian fatalities. His team’s results will be used to redesign the intersections.
UF HEALTH

COOL TECH:
A FEW OF THE LATEST UF INNOVATIONS

More details at innovate.research.ufl.edu

FASTER ETHANOL FUEL PRODUCTION
UF’s new low-pressure fermentation process enables yeast to convert sugars to alcohol more rapidly, resulting in reduced time to complete each fermentation batch. Yeast fermentation of sugars derived predominantly from corn is the main source of ethanol used for transportation fuel.

SAFER DENTAL IMPLANTS
An antibacterial coating for the titanium screw that attaches the new implant to the bone of the jaw reduces the progression of peri-implant disease, which can lead to bone loss and eventual failure of the implant.

UF HEALTH

SAVING THE CITRUS INDUSTRY
A new laser wax exfoliation process for citrus plants increases the uptake of treatments applied to the foliage without causing any lasting damage. Citrus greening disease continues to cause great economic harm to Florida’s citrus industry.

TESTING ... TESTING ...
A multidirectional microphone combines a small silicon piezoresistive microphone with an instrumentation amplifier to produce a modular “all-in-one” microphone chip that enables faster, cheaper, more accurate acoustic noise testing.

GATORS TO THE RESCUE
From agriculture to plastics to energy, read about specific contributions by UF innovators that will make the world a better place.

Page 26

Florida AGRICULTURE

BY THE NUMBERS

9.8% Decline in the amount of Florida land used for agricultural purposes over the past 20 years, down from 265,000 acres to 239,500.

73% Increase in agriculture revenue during that same time frame, up from $500 million to $865 million.

“How do we maintain our agriculture base in Florida?” One way is by improving the economics of the industry ... increasing efficiency, decreasing environmental impact and increasing the economic prosperity ... maintaining profitability.

— STEPHEN GRAN, director of Hillsborough County’s Extension Office in Seffner

Florida AGRICULTURE

BY THE NUMBERS

92,046 Patients (excluding newborns) admitted to UF Health hospitals during fiscal year 2018. This figure pales in comparison to the 1.64 million people who visited UF Health physicians in during fiscal year 2018. This figure pales in comparison to the 1.64 million people who visited UF Health physicians in the 1.64 million people who visited UF Health physicians in the 1.64 million people who visited UF Health physicians in the 1.64 million people who visited UF Health physicians in the 1.64 million people who visited UF Health physicians in the 1.64 million people who visited UF Health physicians in the 1.64 million people who visited UF Health physicians in the 1.64 million people who visited UF Health physicians in Florida — and for the many brain cancer patients — past, present and future — we must remain diligently committed.”

— CHRIS VASQUEZ, Businesswoman Anita Zucker inspired personal stories.

“The journey toward a cure will be a long and winding one,” she said. “But for Jerry, and for the many brain cancer patients — past, present and future — we must remain diligently committed.”

— JUAN GILBERT, UF’s COMPUTER INFORMATION SCIENCE & ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT CHAIR

“Cybersecurity touches nearly every aspect of our daily lives. An educated workforce is needed to address issues and threats.”

— JUAN GILBERT, UF’s COMPUTER INFORMATION SCIENCE & ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT CHAIR

uf/iaf/TVoTk

30 Years John Kraft (above) has been dean of the Warrington College of Business. He retires in May.

38 States from which university researchers are participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s blueberry industry improvement study.

$82M Estimated worth of Florida’s blueberry industry, which encompasses only about 5,000 acres. UF scientists aim to strengthen Florida’s market position against global competitors.

130-PLUS Years Florida farmers have been producing blueberries. UF scientists have aided these growers for 80+ years.
Mothers of Nature

“Who owns Cross Creek? The red-birds, I think, more than I, for they will have their nests even in the face of delinquent mortgages... It seems to me that the earth may be borrowed, but not bought. It may be used, but not owned. It gives itself in response to love and tending, offers its seasonal flowering and fruiting. But we are tenants and not possessors, lovers, and not masters. Cross Creek belongs to the wind and the rain, to the sun and the seasons, to the cosmic secrecy of seed, and beyond all, to time.”

— Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS

• Inspired people to preserve the environment by encouraging them to take pleasure in it. Her descriptions of native landscapes are still beloved today in “The Yearling,” “South Moon Under” and “Cross Creek.” The passage at left is from the latter.
• Served as a regular visiting professor at UF in Anderson Hall, sharing her insights with scores of UF students.
• Influenced her writer friends, such as Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Robert Frost and Margaret Mitchell.
• Arranged in her will to donate to UF her manuscripts and notes, which continue to inspire generations.

MARJORIE STONEMAN DOUGLAS

• Spent years documenting all aspects of the wetlands in South Florida, culminating in the acclaimed book “The Everglades: River of Grass,” which focused national attention on the need to preserve its unique ecosystem.
• At age 79, she established Friends of the Everglades, a group that continues to defend this marshland against developers and preserve natural habitats for wildlife.

“I am an optimist. I also believe that Floridians care about their environment. If they are educated about its perils, if they are never lied to, they will become stewards of the wild places that are left.”
— Marjorie Harris Carr

MARJORIE HARRIS CARR

(MS Zoology ’42)• Helped establish the Florida Defenders of the Environment, a group of hydrologists, geologists, economists, zoologists and other concerned citizens to protect natural spaces. The group blocked the Cross Florida Barge Canal project, among other successes. Carr served as FDE’s president for about 30 years.
• Led efforts to clean up the Ocklawaha River.
• Helped initiate the Paynes Prairie Wildlife Refuge, now a state preserve.
• Worked to save and restore Lake Alice at UF.

“Be a nuisance where it counts, but don’t be a bore at any time... Do your part to inform and stimulate the public to join your action... Be depressed, discouraged and disappointed at failure and the disheartening effects of ignorance, greed, corruption and bad politics, but never give up.”
— Marjory Stoneman Douglas

For more information about these collections, contact Environmental Collections Curator Florence Turcotte at turcotte@ufl.edu or visit bit.ly/39TOPTP

PHOTOS COURTESY OF UF SMATHERS LIBRARIES
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings crab gigging at Salt Springs with Norton Baskin
Marjorie Harris Carr on the Ocklawaha River
Marjory Stoneman Douglas touring the Everglades in a pirouge.

Marjory Kinnan Rawlings crab gigging at Salt Springs with Norton Baskin
Marjorie Harris Carr on the Ocklawaha River
Marjory Stoneman Douglas touring the Everglades in a pirouge.
Do you see your work as battling nature’s effects 24/7?
They say the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. This is a “battle” we inevitably lose. Instead, FIBER (Florida Institute for Built Environment Resilience) is working to better accommodate natural systems where we can and buffer ourselves from risk when we cannot. In either case, helping people to make better informed decisions about where and how they live drives my work.

How does FIBER make communities more resilient to changes?
Resilience is simply the capacity of a system to survive and adapt to change. FIBER is a collection of researchers from a broad range of academic pursuits who are connected through our shared focus on the built environment. FIBER’s diversity of thought and methodology is its greatest asset when thinking about the complexity of whole communities.

Has your work uncovered any surprising revelations?
I have spent the last 12 years in the deep South, the last two in Florida. Despite warnings about climate change denial in this region, I can cite very few face-to-face encounters where a conversation has gone there. Most people are fully aware the environment has changed dramatically within their lifetime. They are concerned and want to do what is right for their families and communities. This should come as no surprise: People are quite rational, but it made me ponder the messaging around climate change. Specifically, does the story of climate change leave people out? In our efforts to help people adapt, do we sometimes inadvertently disempower them? What I’ve learned is trust goes both ways. It is important that we trust people to do the right thing when empowered with knowledge. On the flip side, it is essential that the information we disseminate is actionable and relevant.

Do any other researchers at UF collaborate with your team?
Yes! FIBER is collaborating with medicine, psychology, computer science, Latin American Studies and other disciplines. I teach a class called Florida Resilient Cities (FRC) in conjunction with the Florida Climate Institute that hosts more than 21 faculty members across UF to share their research with students before we conduct a one-week field course. This year, our students spent spring break helping Port St. Joe recover from Hurricane Michael. In terms of research, the FRC program, led by FIBER, has partnerships with faculty and students from more than eight departments and four colleges driving research to parts of the state in need.

What should Floridians consider before building/buying a home?
Coastal Florida is exceptionally vulnerable to climate change and sea level rise. But inland, communities are also exposed to hazards as creeks and rivers can flood and spills into constricted floodplains. Before buying a house, get to know the landscape conditions. Consider where flooding is possible now and in 10, 20 or 30 years.

Has climate change grown student interest in your field?
Yes! We know now that 35% of carbon pollution is produced by buildings, and our field’s role is more important than ever. Our architecture profession has rallied behind sustainability — and more recently, resilience — as we all have a strong sense of responsibility and urgency to make a difference.
Four minutes into “Staking Out the Elusive Mountain Lion,” a popular Nat Geo Wild video that was shot in New Mexico, its young host pauses. He points to grisly evidence of a mother lion’s proximity: a newly gnawed-off deer leg. “That is the aftermath of a mountain lion right there,” he whispers, his dark eyes scanning the horizon. “My heart is racing right now. We are definitely in cat country.”

Thirty seconds later, he and his crew stumble upon the rest of the fresh deer carcass. They quickly set up trap cameras and hightail it out before the hungry female lion returns.

By the video’s end, the team will have secured their prize: rare nighttime shots of a mountain lion family sharing a catch, plus footage of coyotes, red-tailed hawks and other animals benefiting from the mother lion’s determination to feed her two cubs — evidence, the host says, of how “apex predators keep the balance in their natural habitat.”

“She’s beautiful,” he enthuses, “a survivor.”

The mustached man chasing down big cats and endangered species is Brazilian-born, Cleveland-raised, UF-educated Filipe DeAndrade, pronounced fil-EEP Dee-un-DRAH-dee. Hailed as “America’s answer to Steve Irwin,” DeAndrade has channeled his outsized passion for wildlife into a career as an award-winning filmmaker.

In the five years since he won National Geographic’s Wild to Inspire film competition in 2015, DeAndrade has documented the exploits of elephants, lions and rhinos for the African Wildlife Foundation and gotten up close with sharks, humpback whales, jaguars and other critters for “Untamed with Filipe DeAndrade,” his renowned Nat Geo Wild digital series.
“They’re such solitary creatures,” says DeAndrade, “so intelligent and self-reliant. Those were traits I appreciated and aspired to.” Awareness of his family’s illegal immigration status constantly preyed on his young mind, says DeAndrade, who became a U.S. citizen at age 20. “When you grow up an illegal immigrant, you live in hiding, essentially,” he says. “I always connected with nature and wildlife because I was voiceless, and so were these creatures, and therefore misunderstood.

“That’s probably why I felt compelled to give a voice to the voiceless, through photography.”

DeAndrade’s subsequent standout work in Africa led to an offer to produce his own digital series for Nat Geo Wild, work in Africa led to an offer to produce his own digital series for Nat Geo Wild, the African Wildlife Foundation. Borrowing his mother’s Ford Taurus, DeAndrade spent the next five weeks photographing wildlife throughout Florida. He combined that with footage from the Appalachian Trail, along with time-lapse imagery shot out west with his former classmate, filmmaker Brian Moghrei (BSTel ’13). At the 2015 Sun Valley Film Festival, DeAndrade’s four-minute film “Adapt” beat out hundreds of competitors to win the second annual Wild to Inspire contest. In his emotionally powerful work, DeAndrade lays bare how he found his voice through the camera lens, stating, “If nature was my savior, then photography was my soulmate.”}

DeAndrade’s subsequent standout work in Africa led to an offer to produce his own digital series for Nat Geo Wild, a global pay TV network specializing in what the industry calls "personality-driven wildlife adventures.” Together with fellow UF grad Moghrai and McKenzie Barney (BSTel ’12), DeAndrade formed a production house called Comfort Theory. Ditching the New York lease, he repurposed a 2006 Dodge ambulance as a camper (nicknamed “Florence the Manbulance”), and the team crisscrossed the country in search of unexpected, beautiful and threatened animals.

“The biodiversity that exists in this continent is on fire,” DeAndrade told...
Up to four in April 2017. “There are things you don’t see anywhere else, like dolphins [strand-feeding in South Carolina].” (The dolphins’ hydroplane onto the beach, driving their prey forward on the sand.)

First airing in March 2017, “Untamed with Filipe DeAndrade” uses stunning HD cinematography to reveal the daily dramas unfolding among the many species in Central Florida, including mountain lions and raptors in New Mexico, and alligators and crocs in the Everglades. Set in Costa Rica, season 2 of “Untamed” finds the Comfort Theory team tracking endangered and misunderstood species, mixed with an unorthodox humor.

A brightly colored hummingbird is “eye-gasmic.” A male jumping spider who successfully wooed a cannibalistic female is “the Fabio of jumping spiders.”

It’s pretty crazy to think that he has to go through an onslaught of dead bodies just to get some action,” continues DeAndrade in his voiceover for “The Weird Sex Lives of Jumping Spiders.”

“If she likes him, she’ll let him mate with her. If not, she’ll eat him. And if she’s my kind of woman, she’ll do both.”

**A GATOR HOMECOMING**

Since wrapping his second season of “Untamed,” DeAndrade has made Costa Rica his permanent home and starred in the 2019 documentary “The River and the Wall.” The critically acclaimed film follows five friends as they journey from El Paso, Texas, to the Gulf of Mexico to explore the potential ecological impacts of building a border wall along the Rio Grande.

On Oct. 22, 2019, DeAndrade had an emotional homecoming when he returned to the UF campus to give an audience an unfiltered look at his adventures in wildlife filmmaking. He admits he was nervous.

“I’m not gonna lie,” he says. “That night I had more sip-ups, and I could feel the trembling in my voice; it was the least-smooth show I’ve done.”

The crowd loved it, though, including his former UF photography professor, who jokingly admitted in a Q-and-A session he was glad DeAndrade did not follow the advice he once gave him: “Don’t photograph any more frogs!”

Given his current predilection for chasing mountain lions and diving with sharks, it’s hard to imagine this fireplug slowing down for anything, but the comment reveals how much his alma mater means to him.

“My time at UF set the foundation for my life,” he says. “Instead of dreaming about the future, I give audiences an unfiltered look at my adventures in wildlife filmmaking. We base so many decisions off fear. More often than not, that fear is irrational.”

**FEMALES RULE**

“Females are the most formidable force in nature. In the animal kingdom, there is no strength, no determination, no fire like a mother’s love.

“I’ve witnessed some of the most dramatic storylines play out in nature around a mother defending her cub or trying to feed her chicks — and moms do the best for their offspring.

“Hard situations pull great strengths from us. We rise to the occasion.”

**NEW MEXICO: COYOTES AND MOUNTAIN LIONS**

South America, 2018

“On the third night, I awoke with a start because I was having a dream about her.”

DeAndrade was chased by a mother protecting her baby. “I realized sharks are like all animals; when you are patient and don’t chase them, after a while they get curious. Sharks aren’t these mindless man-eaters like they’ve been portrayed. We have to turn our decision off fear. More often than not, that fear is irrational.”

**FLORIDA: SEA TURTLES, RHINOCEROS MACAQUES AND GATORS**

**WHAT ANIMALS HAVE TAUGHT ME (AND WHERE THEY’VE TAKEN ME.)**

Photographing diverse animal species has taught Filipe DeAndrade valuable lessons, he says. Here are some of the most memorable.

**SHARKS: LET GO OF FEAR**

“The first time I ever got in the water with sharks was in Fiji. I had to get in the water with 12-foot-long bull sharks, notoriously the most aggressive shark. Honestly, I was afraid.

“So I entered this crystal-clear water to film these apex predators, and you know what? It was the most calming and meditative experience in my life. I realized sharks are like all animals: when you are patient and don’t chase them, after a while they get curious. Sharks aren’t these mindless man-eaters like they’ve been portrayed. We have to turn our decision off fear. More often than not, that fear is irrational.”

**JAGUARS: BECOME THE ANIMAL**

“I was fortunate to have my first National Geographic documentary be about jaguars because they’re my favorite animal. That experience taught me to capture the inherent essence of what an animal is, you have to mold yourself into the species.

“So, I slept all day and was up all night because I had to be alert when the jaguars were most active. I followed what they hunt and where they bait themselves. I realized jaguars are like all animals: when you are patient and don’t chase them, after a while they get curious. Jaguars aren’t these mindless man-eaters like they’ve been portrayed. We have to turn our decision off fear. More often than not, that fear is irrational.”

**CENTRAL AMERICA: HUMMINGBIRDS AND JUMPING SPIDERS**

**ELEPHANTS AND MEERCATS**

**TANZANIA: SEA TURTLES, RHINOCEROS MACAQUES AND GATORS**

**SEA TURTLES: KEEP THE FAITH**

For season 2 of “Untamed,” Comfort Theory went to St. Augustine to film baby sea turtle hatching. After 60 days of non-stop payout with nothing to show for it, DeAndrade was left alone on the beach.

“I thought, ‘If we don’t capture this moment, we don’t have an episode. And then we lose our contact with Nat Geo Wild, and I’d have to crawl into a hole and never come out.’

“So on that seventh night, this little tiny albatross comes up out of the ground… and starts darting toward the ocean. Then the Atlantic Ocean engulfed these turtles and takes them on the voyage of life.

“I was crying behind the camera the whole time. So worth the wait!”

**FROM LEFT ARE COMFORT THEORY TEAMMATES BRIAN MOGHARI (BSTEL ’13), FILIPE DEANDRADE (BSTEL ’12) AND FORMER UF SOCCER STANDOUT MCKENZIE BARNEY (BSTEL ’12). BARNEY HAS SINCE STARTED HER OWN TREK AROUND THE WORLD (SEE PAGE 52).**
WHO’S WORKING HARD TO IMPROVE OUR ENVIRONMENT?

FEEDING the world

Farming is one of the most complicated and risky occupations on Earth. For starters, the agriculture industry battles a plethora of threats each season, from biological diseases (citrus greening and white mold) to pests (armyworms and whiteflies) to natural events (floodings, drought and red tide). Profit margins are often thin, but without farmers’ hard work and passion, humans around the world would surely suffer. See how UF researchers are helping farmers through these new technologies and processes.

TO SPRAY OR NOT TO SPRAY

Disease-causing fungus is a prime nemesis of Florida’s strawberry farmers, who spend much of their profits on weekly chemical sprays from November to March to keep the mold at bay. Addressing this issue, UF scientists developed an online advisory system that can guide farmers on exactly when to spray fungicides, reducing the amount of chemicals, fuel and labor used. The UF system integrates local weather data, such as temperature and humidity, with best management practices, such as leaf wetness, to determine the optimal times to spray. For details, visit www.agroclimate.org/tools/strawberry.

Advantages
• Reduces amount of fungicide used and human exposure to these chemicals
• Saves farmers money (projections estimate $1.7 million over 10 years)
• Reduces instances of fungicide resistance, due to overseer

SUPER BEES THAT ARE IMMUNE TO TOXINS

Honey bees are the major pollinator for a variety of crops and contribute at least $15 billion to the value of U.S. agriculture annually through increased yields and superior-quality harvests. As such, maintaining bee health is a global priority. In 2019, losses in honey bee colonies were estimated at a record-high 40% due to 1) the spread of pathogens and pests, 2) the lack of a constant food source throughout the year, and 3) the widespread use of domestic and agricultural pesticides. Addressing this last cause, UF researchers invented a way to engineer bacteria that only live in bees so they have the ability to detoxify insecticides that might be on the pollen and nectar they collect.

Advantages
• Protects bee colonies, mitigating the harmful effects of low levels of toxins
• Protects the potential of food crops

Grape growers have come to fear Pierce’s disease, which is caused by a bacteria spread by insects as they hop from leaf to leaf. This bacteria blocks the xylem vessels, which conduct water around the plant. Once a plant is infected, entire grapevines will die within five years. (Healthy grapevines can live up to 100 or more years.) Addressing this scourge, UF researcher Donald Hopkins identified a naturally occurring, non-pathogenic strain of the bacteria that when used as an inoculation prevents or delays the development of Pierce’s disease. What’s more, he discovered that citrus trees inoculated with the strain appear to show resistance against the infection that produces citrus greening disease, which has decimated citrus production throughout the Southeast.

Advantages
• Prevents or delays the onset of Pierce’s disease and citrus greening
• Reduces the need for insecticides that farmers currently use to kill sharpshooter insects
• Reduces off-target pesticide killings of other insects, such as bees

REDA, AIM ... SPRAY

Vegetable farmers often cover their soil beds with plastic to prevent weed growth and improve their control of soil conditions. First, they spray the entire planting row with pre-emergent herbicide, then cover each row with plastic, punch holes through the plastic and into the soil, and plant vegetable transplants into those holes. However, the common broadleaf and grass weeds only grow in the holes punched for the transplants – meaning a far greater quantity of herbicide than is necessary is used. UF researchers developed a precision herbicide applicator that attaches to standard hole-punching equipment and delivers herbicide only to the exposed soil. What’s more, the device allows farmers to conduct every step of their planting process in a single pass, saving time and fuel.

Advantages
• Applies herbicide only to exposed soil, reducing its use by 45% to 85%
• Enables simultaneous hole punching and herbicide application, saving farmers time, labor and fuel costs

FIGHTING THE RESISTANCE

UF startup Curtiss Healthcare plans to release a vaccine for chickens later this year with the goal of helping poultry farmers achieve antibiotic-free health among their flocks. Historically, health threats such as salmonella, E.coli and cholera have plagued flocks. Chicken farmers responded by adding antibiotics to the birds’ feed. However, this long-term, broad-scale use is thought to contribute to antibiotic-resistant bacteria. UF’s Dr. Roy Curtiss developed a vaccine that protects birds against one of the more prevalent diseases, necrotic enteritis, which can kill 15% to 20% of a flock. Curtiss says other vaccines in development also address tuberculosis, typhoid, hepatitis and even a variety of diseases that affect aquaculture-raised fish.

Advantages
• Eliminates the overuse of antibiotics in animals
• Saves farmers money, increasing profits
• Provides a healthier product for human consumers

FROM AGRICULTURE TO PLASTICS TO ENERGY CONSUMPTION TO CHEMICALS, HERE ARE A FEW SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS BY GATORS TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.

BY SARA DAGEN (BSJ ’89, MED ’10) AND LIESL OD’DELL (BSJ ’92)
SPRING problems with plastics: researchers are doing about the reach 2.7 metric tons by 2023. The demand for bioplastics is expected to made from corn, usually rely on costly fermentation processes and have sub-standard thermal properties. Global demand for bioplastics is expected to reach 2.7 metric tons by 2023. Here’s what UF students and faculty researchers are doing about the problems with plastics:

**HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW**
One UF team developed a class of thermoplastics designed to decompose under the natural conditions of a landfill during a timescale of months to years. But unlike other biodegradable plastics on the market, it possesses properties in line with robust petroleum-based plastics. The result? Steady products that may give traditional plastics a run for their money.

**Advantages**
- Decomposes quickly and under natural conditions
- Can be shaped and remolded

**LESS LURKING IN LANDFILLS**
Until now, “bioplastics” have not had appreciable degradation benefits over petroleum-based plastics because they only decompose under conditions that are difficult to achieve in traditional outdoor landfills. They require significant microbial activity, which is typically only present in industrial composting facilities. Addressing this issue, UF researchers developed a system that produces polymers that degrade under abiotic conditions (no microbial activity), overcoming this obstacle.

**Advantages**
- Superior degradation properties provide a competitive advantage over decomposing plastics now available

**PLANT-BASED AND PLENTIFUL**
UF researchers designed a sustainable alternative to the form of petroplastics (also called PET—those produced from crude oil or natural gas) that companies demand most by using lignin, an abundant naturally occurring organic polymer found in plants. This bioplastic is the first truly viable substitute for PET.

**Advantages**
- Polymer is biodegradable and recyclable
- Cost effective because it’s made from potentially inexpensive raw materials

**JUST ADD WATER**
The packaging industry has traditionally relied on a handful of cheap and durable commercial polymers, such as polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and polyethylene to make its plastics. However, UF researchers developed a polyester from a bio-based acid that has a higher level of heat/cold resistance and degrades rapidly when in contact with water. This material can replace the plastics currently used to make such items as medical syringes and packaging containers.

**Advantages**
- Decomposes quickly and under natural conditions
- Can be shaped and remolded

**POWERING THE CLOUD**
All major companies, universities, banks and government institutions have data centers that store information and maintain their computer networks. These temperature-controlled centers house systems and components, such as servers, power supplies, backup power equipment, chillers, cables, fire and water detection systems, and security controls. A single large data center’s energy usage can exceed 30 megawatts, comparable to the energy usage of a small town. Available power management schemes cause slow job turnaround time and poor service. So, UF researchers developed a power management tool that makes these data centers more efficient in terms of energy usage and performance.

**Advantages**
- Harnesses energy generated on-site
- Takes advantage of energy loads, avoids supply tracking performance costs

**LOWER ELECTRIC BILLS**
A large percentage of U.S. electricity is spent heating water and cooling, heating and dehumidifying buildings. The average household spends more than $500 per year on water heating alone. One attempt to reduce energy use is the absorption cycle process, which captures and repurposes low-grade heat to dehumidify, heat and cool. However, existing absorption technology is not scalable and not feasible for residential water heating. Addressing this problem, UF researchers developed a compact, high-efficiency, open absorption cycle device capable of dehumidification, water heating and evaporative cooling. Plus, it uses a non-corrosive, non-toxic liquid that does not crystallize like traditional refrigerants.

**Advantages**
- Consolidates three devices into one machine, saving space and electricity
- Uses an environmentally friendly refrigerant

**SUN-POWERED TECH**
Experts predict that 15% to 20% of the world’s electricity will be supplied through solar options by 2040. But solar systems have inherent challenges, such as intermittent wear on system components. UF researchers developed hardware and software that significantly improve computer server energy efficiency and performance without the need for batteries. Called SolarCore, this hardware enables multicore processors to autonomously and efficiently harvest solar energy. Meanwhile, the team’s iSwitch software allows servers to switch from renewable power to traditional utility power (or another energy source), as needed. Together, SolarCore and iSwitch save money by optimizing renewable energy use.

**Advantages**
- Facilitates “green” computing, resulting in lower energy costs
- Maximizes solar energy use
MORE TRASH AND MORE BUILDING MATERIALS

The concrete and cement industry is expected to grow 8% by 2023. Cement plants worldwide utilize a rotary kiln to generate the clinker (stony residue from furnace-burned material) used to make Portland cement, the most common cement type that is a basic ingredient in concrete, mortar, stucco and some grout types. However, these kilns contribute to total greenhouse gas emissions and limit the efficiency of cement manufacturing. UF researchers invented a highly efficient plasma arc reactor that eliminates fuel-borne CO2 emissions and enables the use of recycled waste to make clinker.

Advantages
- Allows the use of nonorganic waste materials to produce clinker, reducing the carbon footprint of cement manufacturing
- Operates on grid power or renewable battery banks, cutting the fuel-borne CO2 emissions of cement plants
- Avoids clinker contamination by fuel combustion residues and refractories
- Forms clinker at temperatures above rotary kiln maximums, dramatically increasing cement production efficiency

BANISHING THE BLOODSUCKERS

Mosquitoes are prolific spreaders of diseases, such as malaria, Zika and yellow fever. Now that UF researchers working with Florida Insect Control Group have focused their sights on the source of mosquito populations — water sources where the insects rest, breed and deposit eggs — so humans can have a better chance of avoiding these nasty illnesses. Historically, the prime obstacle is that pesticides degrade in water. The UF group, however, identified a chemical that requires water to work and developed a polymeric coating that releases small amounts of the pesticide over long periods of time. What’s more, at concentrations that kill mosquitoes and their larvae, this pesticide is harmless to pets and wildlife who might consume the treated water. Marketed under the company name OO-ZZZero, scientists developed two complementary products to control mosquitoes: a chip that can be tossed into standing water and a container that attracts and traps mosquitoes and releases an insecticide into water inside the trap. Early tests in a Honduran village were remarkable: Untreated areas around the village had cases of dengue, Chikungunya and Zika viruses, while the treated areas of the village had no cases.

Advantages
- Controls mosquito populations at the source
- Low maintenance and long-acting
- Safe for pets and wildlife
- Prevents the spread of potentially deadly diseases

BETTER WAYS TO BOND

When making industrial chemicals, there are a few go-to compounds that chemists use as building blocks for complex molecules. The problem is that the process for combining these compounds (specifically nitroaromatic and heterocyclic derivatives) is not environmentally sound. It generates by-products and has other challenges, such as poor selectivity and low yield. UF chemists developed a biocatalyst system to address these issues. Their new process is more efficient and creates a higher degree of selectivity and a minimal impact on the environment.

Advantages
- Eliminates environmentally unfriendly by-products
- Enzymes increase selectivity and yield
- Expands use in making products with specific requirements

YESTERDAY’S TRASH, TODAY’S ROADS

When commercial or municipal incinerators reduce waste to ash, that ash must be stored in secure landfills — at significant costs — because it has the potential to leach concentrations of heavy metals. However, UF researchers developed a filtering and curing treatment that immobilizes contaminants in bottom ash and creates a properly graded and usable aggregate product for use in asphalt, an environmentally safe concrete or as a roadway base. As municipal waste combustion generates 7million to 8 million tons of ash in the U.S. annually, this process can save an enormous amount of containment money, as well as landfill space.

Advantages
- Removes environmental hazards and creates beneficial properties in recycled materials
- Encourages reuse of municipal debris, reducing waste in landfills
- Creates a low-cost alternative material for cement production

modern chemistry

Modern, sophisticated living is possible for humans in part because of available and affordable compounds used as food additives, pharmaceuticals, dyes, polymers, pesticides, waste treatments and a myriad of other uses. While chemicals provide a plethora of positives, they can also pose a threat to our natural environments. See how Gators are addressing these concerns.
Bridget Burton hugs her middle child, 5-year-old Carmelo Morales, who suffered from rampant tooth decay and had 11 crowns put on his teeth at Physicians Regional Medical Center in 2019. Now he can chew properly and no longer cries in his bedroom from pain.

FINALLY, SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

A BOY WITH BABY TEETH SO DECAYED HE NEEDS 11 CROWNS. A 2-YEAR-OLD ANESTHETIZED TO REMOVE FIVE ABSCESSED TEETH. CHILDREN WHO CAN’T EAT, CAN’T SLEEP, CAN’T CONCENTRATE IN SCHOOL BECAUSE OF DENTAL PAIN. A 2005 STUDY FOUND A “CATASTROPHIC CRISIS IN ORAL HEALTH” AMONG COLLIER COUNTY CHILDREN. A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP WITH UF HAS RESTORED HEALTH AND HOPE.
They enter the sunlit lobby of the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center, in Naples, clutching a parent’s hand, suffering from some of the most severe dental problems ever seen. Third graders who have never held a toothbrush, their jaws aching with pus-filled abscesses. Toddlers with baby teeth rotted down to the gums. Four-year-olds with so much decay, their mouths are pitch black when they open wide to say “ahh.”

Most dental providers in Collier County can’t or won’t treat these young children. Few accept the Medicaid many of their families rely on, if they have insurance at all. Nor do most pediatric dentists have access to an anesthesiologist to fully sedate children needing many teeth extracted or capped in one sitting. But not at the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center. Since opening in late 2008, this world-class facility has provided top-rate, highly affordable care to tens of thousands of at-risk and underprivileged youth from Collier and neighboring counties — transforming children’s smiles and well-being.

It is all due to a remarkable partnership forged more than a decade ago between the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF) and the UF College of Dentistry, with support from Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW), area hospitals and state and local agencies. Parents, of course, are deeply grateful — like Bridget Burton, a mother of five whose middle child, 5-year-old Carmelo Morales, had rampant tooth decay mainly from eating too many sweets. A patient since 2017, Carmelo bravely underwent general anesthesia at Physicians Regional Medical Center in November 2019 to have seven stainless steel crowns put on his back teeth, plus four white crowns in front. Now he can chew properly and no longer cries in his bedroom from pain, said Bridget.

“They’ve never had the level of care he’s had here, with any of my kids,” said Bridget. “I’ve been taking kids to the dentist for 12 years. This clinic is a lifesaver.”

Closing the Oral Care Gap

The beautiful seaside town of Naples boasts multimillion-dollar mansions, luxurious yachts and arguably more golf holes per capita than anywhere in the United States. But head inland in Collier County and you encounter low income and impoverished communities, including those of seasonal farmworkers in Immokalee, where families live on $9,496 to $24,556 a year, according to U.S. government data.

To address this wide income gap — borne so heavily by the county’s children — local philanthropists founded the Naples Children & Education Foundation in 2000. Supported with proceeds from the high-profile Naples Winter Wine Festival, NCEF has invested more than $191 million in programs that “significantly improve the physical, emotional and educational lives” of local children, according to its mission statement. A 2005 study commissioned by NCEF revealed a “catastrophic crisis in oral health” among Collier children. More than a third (17,000) had no access to basic dental care. At one elementary school, nearly 70% of students had untreated decay, and 18% had abscesses, swelling and other problems requiring immediate help.

The youngsters’ poor oral health affected nearly every aspect of their lives, explained Dr. Lauren Governale (BS ’80, DMD ’85, MPH ’91), director of the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center: “It wasn’t just that these children weren’t able to eat well, sleep well or even smile; their self-esteem was actually impacted negatively by having severe dental decay.”

To solve these problems, NCEF had to go big — and it did. The foundation granted more than $9 million to the UF College of Dentistry to build a 20,000-square-foot state-of-the-art dental center with a $6.5 million endowment.

The NCEF Pediatric Dental Center...
Dr. Kelly Magher (BA '97, DMD '02), who noted many are uninsured, or they have language barriers," explained faculty due to a tangle of factors. "It's been fun and wonderful and very rewarding," she said. "We have completed about 145,000 patient visits to date, a couple thousand operating-room cases, and 1,500 IV sedation cases. "We even have referrals from pediatric dentists from the community for work that is too extensive [for them]," she added. School for Smiles

Collier County’s sky-high incidence of childhood tooth decay is due to a tangle of factors. "Many families have socioeconomic barriers to care — they are uninsured, or they have language barriers," explained faculty member Dr. Kelly Magher (BA '97, DMD '02), who noted many clients are Hispanic or Latino.

On top of that, only 9% of Collier County’s 212 dentists accept Medicaid, as compared to 18% of dentists statewide. Even fewer
dentists may be actively seeing Medicaid patients, especially young children. As youngsters’ names are added to long waiting lists, small cavities turn into full-blow errors. Feeding the crisis is ignorance of good oral hygiene practices. "With very young children, I will say the main cause [of decay] is the prolonged use of a baby bottle with high-fructose beverages — chocolate milk, juice," said Susan Gorman, the college’s dental outreach program coordinator. In the center’s education rooms, parents — many of whom speak Spanish — receive instruction from community health educator Dr. Maria Elena Davila, who effortlessly switches between discussions of teeth and dentates.

Gorman also oversees the community outreach program, which provides free dental screenings for third graders in 34 Collier County elementary schools. Fourteen schools participate in a preventative dental-sealants program. The outreach program also travels to six early learning centers to screen and treat children 6 months to 5 years. From 2017 to 2019, untreated decay among children at the Guadalupe Center, in Immokalee, declined from 48% to 38%; the number of youngsters with untreated dental needs dropped by more than half. "I don’t think, I know we are definitely making a difference," said Gorman proudly.

Cream-of-the-Crop Residents

The center’s heart is its residency training program, run by the UF College of Dentistry. About 200 applicants compete for six coveted openings each year; when their specialized training is up, it is not unusual for some residents to score in the top 3% of the national pediatric dentistry boards. Unlike typical residencies, where student doctors may see only two or three patients daily, the center’s residents each see up to 24 patients in a day. That experience gives them the edge. "We learn how to work at 100% capacity," said Dr. John Tawadrous, a second-year resident, "doing everything the best way possible, but efficiently." "You are exposed to challenging things here as a resident," added Magher, a former resident herself. "After your two years here, you are pretty much prepared to take on any situation."

Residents also get to work on unusual conditions that, if left untreated, can crumple a child’s self-esteem.

On a recent weekday, first-year resident Dr. Emily Ross, deftly performed an oral exam on 2-year-old Shiloh Travis, who sat on the lap of her mother, Michele Travis. Dressed to impress in a pink plaid top and metallic-pink cowgirl boots, Shiloh gave a big ‘ahh’ so Ross could peer inside her tiny mouth. "Any situation" can include rare and even life-threatening conditions. In 2019, mom-of-two Stacia Lynne Wilkin noticed her youngest, 2-year-old Grayson Valdez, fought her every time she tried to brush his teeth. The boy’s gums were red and swollen; his
teeth near the gum line were yellow. She quickly scheduled an appointment at the center. Tawadrous ruled out poor hygiene as the cause of the boy’s dental problems; rather, they resembled symptoms of a rare autoimmune disorder, and he referred the boy to a hematologist.

It turned out Grayson has cyclic neutropenia, which is the inability to produce enough white blood cells to fight off infections; symptoms often first show in the mouth, which is normally full of bacteria. Grayson, now 3, is receiving medical treatment for this extremely rare disease and uses special rinses to keep his mouth free of infection. "I don’t think, I know we are definitely making a difference," said Gorman proudly.
mastered how to smile naturally without showing any teeth. But little Shiloh won’t have to learn that skill.

In mid-November, second-year resident Dr. Lauren Melendez extracted five abscessed teeth from her gums and put crowns on the rest of her teeth. Now Shiloh has a beautiful white smile. And no more pain.

“You have all these princess crowns on your teeth!” cheered a dental assistant, handing Shiloh a pink-and-purple toothbrush with a bunny head.

Shiloh’s face lighted up.

The little girl now collects toy medical kits and plays dentist with Mom and Dad. They say the center’s positivity has rubbed off on Shiloh’s willingness to take good care of her teeth. "The staff at the center has been awesome," said Ken. "They continue to be warm and inviting.

Distractions and Extractions

The clinic also has carved a niche for children with special needs. On a Friday morning in November, Deisy Morales Gomez, 9, flicked back her long dark hair, hopped onto the examination chair, and grinned for the camera as her mother, Maria Gomez, stated the obvious: “Deisy likes it here.”

Given that Deisy recently had three teeth extracted, two cavities filled and two stainless steel crowns placed, her parents’ help to brush.

Deisy has Down syndrome, which complicates her dental care, explained second-year resident Dr. Kristen Dreyer (BS ’13, DMD). “It’s all the more impressive.

And no more pain.

First-year resident Dr. Emily Ross shows 2-year-old Shiloh Travis a fun way to brush with a new bunny toothbrush.

‘18). Children with DS are prone to crowded teeth and often need their parents’ help to brush. In addition, children with special needs are often unable to verbalize when they are in pain. Parents must carefully watch for physical and behavioral clues: a child touching his or her face, for example, or not eating.

The center also offers a drill-free way to stop cavities: silver diamine fluoride. The clear liquid, which turns black on contact, painlessly arrests decay. The unsightly color can be tolerated until the baby tooth falls out or can be filled.

In four minutes flat, first-year dentistry resident Ashley Daniels gives Ashton Jeanbaptiste, a 7-year-old with severe autism, the dental care he needs while staff distract him with a red toy helicopter and encouraging conversation.

Highly choreographed procedures like this one have become routine for this skilled team of dedicated professionals.

One Thursday morning in November, first-year resident Dr. Ashley Daniels demonstrated the product’s usefulness with Ashton Jeanbaptiste, a 7-year-old with severe autism. As helpers distracted Ashton with a toy helicopter, Daniels swiftly dabbed the liquid onto a decayed tooth. In minutes, Ashton’s treatment was over. His mother, Marie Jeanbaptiste, sighed with relief. “I am happy to be in the clinic because they are the only ones who can help me with him,” she said. “Other places were only able to do X-rays. But here they can do the cleanings and the treatments. They are so kind and nice with him.”

“Open Big Like a Lion”

Whether a child has special needs or not, all pediatric dentists face the same challenge: getting their young patients to cooperate.

On a Friday morning in November, 5-year-old Carmelo sat on his mom’s lap in the exam room, bawling. It had been two weeks since his big operation, and now Tawadrous was going to fit him with an orthodontic spacer. But Carmelo was having none of it, so

The resident announced a change of plans: Just an oral exam today.

“Can you look up for me?” he said to Carmelo, pointing to the ceiling. “Do you brush your teeth at home?”

Carmelo nodded, tears drying on his face.

“Good job. Can you open very big like a lion? Can you stick your tongue out at me? Can you say ‘nah nah nah pooh pooh’?”

The child dissolved in giggles. A few minutes later, he was standing calmly in the hallway, marveling at his new Thor sticker.

He would return next week for the spacer.

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Little Carmelo Morales came to the clinic crying and left smiling — another example of the way UF dentists are striving to change children’s healthcare experiences.

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“He came in crying; he left smiling. A successful dentist visit,” said Tawadrous.

“Right, buddy?” he asked Carmelo, holding up his palm.

NCEF, the UF College of Dentistry and thousands of happy patients and their parents would definitely high-five that.

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IN SEARCH OF AMELIA

GATOR ALUM ALLISON FUNDIS FOUND THE PERFECT WAY TO PAY TRIBUTE TO ONE OF HER ROLE MODELS, AMELIA EARHART, BY SETTING OUT TO SOLVE THE 82-YEAR MYSTERY OF HER DISAPPEARANCE.

In 1937, the U.S. government spent two weeks and $4 million searching for Earhart and her crew. Her husband, George Putnam, financed subsequent search efforts.
While a team of archaeologists from National Geographic looked for skeletal evidence of Earhart on land, Ballard and Fundis circled the island five times aboard the 211-foot-long Nautilus, a state-of-the-art exploration and research vessel. In shallower waters, they employed ROVs (remotely operated vehicles), aerial drones and even scuba teams, looking for any sign of Earhart’s airplane, particularly its giant Pratt & Whitney engines.

“TO IMAGINE … STRANDED THERE AND PERISH AS A CASTAWAY, I WAS PRETTY TAKEN ABACK AT MY EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO IT.” — ALLISON FUNDIS

“As Fundis walked around the island, she thought about Earhart, who was 39 at the time and married to publisher George Putnam. "To imagine what it would be like to be stranded there and perish as a castaway, I was pretty taken aback at my emotional response to it," says Fundis. As a bit of a barrier breaker herself, Fundis can clearly relate to Earhart’s story. "She reminds me a lot of Amelia," says Ballard. "She sees no boundaries to where she can go and takes others with her on that journey."

TAKE US BACK

Growing up in Nashville as the daughter of Country Music Hall of Fame record producer Garth Fundis, who worked with Trisha Yearwood, Alabama and other top acts, Allison Fundis was more likely to become a country star than a “rock” star, but being tone deaf put an end to that notion. Music’s loss was science’s gain. As Fundis walked around the island, she thought about Earhart, who was 39 at the time and married to publisher George Putnam. "To imagine what it would be like to be stranded there and perish as a castaway, I was pretty taken aback at my emotional response to it," says Fundis. As a bit of a barrier breaker herself, Fundis can clearly relate to Earhart’s story. "She reminds me a lot of Amelia," says Ballard. "She sees no boundaries to where she can go and takes others with her on that journey."

Earhart’s twin-engine Lockheed 10-E Electra

"It was really the catalyst for me going back to school at UF," says Fundis, who worked as a camera technician aboard the trip. "I just totally fell in love with it. Seeing geologists and biologists and engineers and chemists in the field come together to create this really unique environment, I loved the interdisciplinary nature of it."

With her then-boyfriend (now husband), Stein Servick ('07), headed to UF to pursue a doctorate in botany, Fundis reached out to Mike Perfit in the Department of Geological Sciences at Fornari’s recommendation to see about becoming a lab assistant. It just so happened that Perfit needed someone to go out to the East Pacific Rise aboard Woods Hole’s ship to assist with its deep-towed camera system. Fundis later went on four more missions to the area while she began pursuing her master’s in marine geology.

"She was smart, mature and really didn’t need any guidance," says Perfit, who served as her mentor. "She was just one of those ideal graduate students. She was also really good at getting along with people, which allowed her to be able to send her out on these other cruises that we might not have been involved with."

After Fundis graduated in 2010, her people skills helped her land a job as the education and public engagement liaison with the University of Washington’s Ocean Observatories Initiative. That’s the same position Ballard hired her to perform in 2013. Five years later, she was OET’s chief operating officer.

“I came to realize just how many areas of responsibility Allison could cover as I piled more and more work upon her shoulders over the last six years,” says Ballard. “But Allison has more than a broad range of skill sets, she also has the critical leadership skills needed to lead a team onshore and at sea and bring them home safely.”

Fundis, who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Servick is the brewmaster at Napa Smith Brewery, spends about two and a half months at sea each year. With more than 50 expeditions under her belt, she says some of her more memorable OET missions include looking for shipwrecks in the Black Sea and World War II wrecks in the Pacific.

“I love what we are doing because we have such varied interests,” she says. “We’re doing biology, geology and archaeology. I’m fortunate to have been able to travel all over the world mapping and leading expeditions. Each one provides a unique experience.”

That was especially true of the search for Earhart’s plane, and even though she and Ballard didn’t find direct evidence, their desire to solve the mystery has only deepened. They plan on picking up the search when the Nautilus is back in the South Pacific in 2021. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration just awarded OET and four partners $94 million to essentially become the nation’s ocean exploration center. OET’s focus will be to map and characterize the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone: 200 miles of territorial islands and waters, which include Howland Island, Earhart’s original destination before she went missing.

“We’re going to be very attentive to those mapping efforts, for sure,” says Fundis. “The disappointment of not finding [evidence of Earhart there] has really fueled us to keep looking.”

FUNDIS’ ADVICE FOR BUDDING WOMEN SCIENTISTS

As you progress through your education and career, seek out mentors along the way who are going to champion you, challenge you, and help you find new experiences and passions. The right mentors will open doors to new opportunities and experiences that you might not even be considering as a career path today.
THE SCHOLAR
Phuong Nguyen (BSBA ’14)
Young Philanthropists Award
Phuong Nguyen’s odds of graduating college weren’t on her side. English wasn’t spoken in her home and her parents worked minimum wage jobs. But oddsmakers rarely encounter families like hers. Nguyen’s father, a Vietnam War POW survivor, had taught her that obstacles are opportunities. Machen Florida Opportunity Scholar, Nguyen went on to earn a business degree, with the intent to pay it forward to support other first-generation students — which she’s done with annual gifts.

ASPIRATION: “I want to emulate things I admire. The Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars program has shaped my life for the better and has inspired me to help those in similar situations.”

THE ALTRUISTS
Hyatt (BSBA ’59) and Cici Brown
Lifetime Philanthropy Award
Fifty years ago, Hyatt Brown’s father insisted his two sons earn their college diplomas at UF because it made smart business sense. But for the Browns, it was a good decision for far more than that. The semi-retired Daytona Beach couple’s bond with the university is also tied to their lifelong Gator friends, their own three sons’ UF degrees, memories of football games and fraternity shenanigans. It’s the reason the Browns invest so generously in UF’s professors, students and programs.

GIVING BACK: “When it comes to education there’s no better place to give back to than UF. That’s our future.”

THE ACTIVE ADVOCATES
Chris (BSBA ’88, MBA ’88, JD ’91) and Kristine Boyett (BA ’88)
Volunteers of the Year
Chris and Kristine Boyett of Miami are among UF’s most passionate Gators. Among their many UF activities, they recently completed two terms as co-chairs of UF’s Parent and Family Leadership Council. They’ve also invested in the Levin College of Law and Office of Student Affairs, funding Machen Florida Opportunity Scholarships and the Career Connections Center. Chris Boyett is a law partner with Holland & Knight in Miami.

OUR FUTURE: “We have a passion for helping students. You want the best for them, and that includes helping them put their best foot forward when they apply for jobs.”

THE GAME-CHANGER
Mori Hosseini
Transformational Award
When it was announced this fall that UF had climbed to No. 7 on U.S. News & World Report’s list of best public schools, Mori Hosseini was front and center. It made sense. Hosseini, chairman of UF’s Board of Trustees, is a driving force behind UF’s ascension. He’s helped lead a bold initiative to hire 500 new faculty, a campaign to raise $3 billion in private investments and a six-year graduation rate that’s up to 90 percent.

UF’S RISE: “It clearly demonstrates that UF is on an unstoppable trajectory. . . . The rankings are also an indicator of the quality of the education our students are receiving and the steadily increasing value of a UF degree.”

AND THE WINNERS ARE ...

UF ONCE AGAIN CELEBRATES DIE-HARD GATORS THROUGH THE ACADEMY OF GOLDEN GATORS

By David Finnerty | Photo by Eric Zamora

WHAT DO A YOUNG ACCOUNTANT, AN INSURANCE GURU, AN ATTORNEY AND A REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER HAVE IN COMMON? All are among the latest inductees into one of UF’s most prestigious societies: the Academy of Golden Gators. The academy honors Gators whose support and leadership are driving UF’s rise to the top of the nation’s best universities.
OH, THE PLACES SHE’S GONE

In the seven years since McKenzie Barney (BSTel ’12) left Gainesville — where she scored 32 goals in 91 UF soccer games and graduated with academic honors — this Gator said she’s discovered who she really is: a “wayfarer on a non-linear, cross-cultural journey.” So far, she has traveled through Thailand, Indonesia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Australia, Sri Lanka, Europe, Morocco, India, Nepal, Iceland, South Africa, Costa Rica and Chile. Her inspirational journey and life lessons are chronicled through her Instagram account @McKenzieBarney.

“Experiencing eastern culture on foot, where possessions are small and possibilities are large,” she posts. “It’s the best way to measure health, by holistic happiness, not by economic gain. It’s being with who you’re with right where you are, not where you think you should be. It’s going far, which usually means going slow and fully appreciating each new environment. It’s being grateful to experience more of this world together.”

Photo courtesy of McKenzie Barney
VETERAN MARKS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

In 1942 not long after Pearl Harbor was bombed, William “Bill” Ebersole (BAJ ’49, MA ’57) was a freshman at UF. As many young men did back then, he and two classmates decided they should volunteer for military service, even though Ebersole was convinced an eye injury would preclude him from joining. To all of their surprise, his two friends were denied, and Ebersole was accepted into the Army Air Forces. Ebersole eventually flew P-51 fighter planes, providing long-range protective escorts to bombers in the Pacific. He completed 10 of the longest fighter pilot missions on record at that time (each were seven to eight hours long). Ebersole’s last flight was the day before the atom bomb was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan. At that time, he was the youngest pilot in his squadron. He won five air medals, including a Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the war, Ebersole finished his UF journalism degree while working night shifts in the Gainesville Sun newspaper’s production department. He eventually became the newspaper’s publisher from 1971 to 1985 before leaving to start a commercial real estate company.

In March, the National World War II Museum in New Orleans planned to honor the veteran by taking him and his wife, Anna, on a 10-day tour to revisit all the places he was stationed from Hawaii to Iwo Jima. The trip is part of the museum’s 75th anniversary of the end of the war. The Gainesville retiree says he’s deeply honored by the gift, which will give him more to talk about at his next birthday celebration in September, when he’ll turn 96.

“I’ve always been a question-asker in my head. Research is just a way to satisfy that curious nature.” — ALAN SAMS (BSA ’82, MS ’84, PhD ’87), WHO COMPLETED HIS FIRST YEAR AS OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY’S COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES DEAN. HE PREVIOUSLY HELD THE SAME ROLE AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.

PERSONAL PRODUCTION

Andrew Reid (BSADV ’12) produced a short film called “ASIA A,” about a young man who mysteriously becomes paralyzed and must cope with his newfound disabilities. Available on Amazon Prime Video, the story is partly based on Reid’s own experiences as a UF student, when he became paralyzed. The film won in the 2018 Directors Guild of America’s Student Awards and was a semifinalist for the 45th Student Academy Awards. Reid is working to turn the story into a full-length film. See trailer at @ http://uff.to/vmqb07.

HAVE YOU BEEN SERVED?

Michele Stumpe (BFA ’90) of the Taylor English law firm in Atlanta is an attorney specializing in alcohol licensing and permitting. The Daily Report named her a 2019 Georgia Trailblazer for her work in the restaurant industry, as well as for her creation of the nonprofit, the Giving Kitchen. This program provides emergency funding and educational resources to local food service workers. Since 2013, the kitchen has provided crisis grants and community resource referrals for more than 4,000 people.

CAREER BUILDER

Natalie Smith (MA ’03) of Houston, TX, is a senior manager of workforce development at KBR, an engineering and construction corporation that specializes in defense and space projects. Her work focuses on the company’s craft and supervisory personnel in U.S. construction and maintenance projects. Smith says she takes pride in advocating for veterans and middle-school girls through vocational education, construction camps and local outreach programs.

MR. PRESIDENT

Damian Fernandez (MA ’16) is the fifth president of Eckerd College in St. Petersburg. The Cuban immigrant who grew up in Puerto Rico has more than 30 years of higher education experience, most recently serving as the chancellor at Pennsylvania State University Abington.

TOP BIZ

Blake Dowling (BSR ‘97) is CEO of Aegis Business Technologies in Tallahassee, which Florida Trend magazine named one of the state’s 2019 “Best Companies to Work For.” The magazine staff scored companies based on workplace policies, practices, philosophy, systems, demographics and employee satisfaction.

BRAD MCCLENNY/THE GAINESVILLE SUN
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Text WhatsGood to 22828 for the weekly events guide.

My goal is for aging loved ones to remain independent and comfortable in their own home to live their best lives as possible.”
— Emma Dickison (BA ’86) of Cincinnati, OH, President and CEO of Home Helpers Home Care, who was elected President of the Home Care Association of America’s Board of Directors.

A Leader Among Entertainers
Emmy Award-winner Tony Hernandez (BS/BA ’97) of New York City, received the Creative Leadership Award on behalf of Jax Media at the Variety New Leaders event in New York City. In 2011, Hernandez co-founded Jax Media, which has produced shows and specials including “Broad City,” TBS’ “Full Frontal with Samantha Bee” and John Mulaney’s “Kid Gorgeous.” Hernandez’s Emmy came from his 2015 work on “Inside Amy Schumer,” which won the Outstanding Variety Sketch Series category. Jax Media has offices in New York City, Los Angeles and London, and was acquired in 2018 by Imagine Entertainment.

Friends in the Crowd
When Alan (Med ’75, EDS ’75, PhD ’77) and Lorna Schlossman (MEd ’75) of Ormond Beach, far left, coincidentally met about 30 other Gators while on board the Norwegian Getaway Ship headed for Northern Europe, their FSU alum entertainment director arranged an informal social. Between all the Schlossman family members alone, which include their three children, Scott (BSAC ’03, M.Acc. ’03), Kyle (BSAC ’06) and Illicia Shugarman (BS ’02, BSA ’02, MD ’09, HS ’15), they are proud to have earned 11 UF degrees.

In the Spotlight
Katrina Rolle (JD ’91) of Tallahassee appeared on the cover of Tallahassee Woman magazine this winter. She is president and CEO of the Community Foundation of North Florida, as well as president of the UF Alumni Association’s Board of Directors.

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Fellow Gators
Two Gators are among the winners of a yearlong public policy fellowship with The Fund for American Studies. They are Mike Torounian (BA ’17) and Daniela Lozano (BA ’17, BA ’17). Torounian of Arlington, VA, works at a lobbying firm focused on assisting technology companies with the federal procurement process. Lozano of Washington, DC, is the development director at Defense of Christians, overseeing and managing the organization’s fundraising efforts.

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There are some things all Gators understand—shared experiences that transcend decades and social circles: having lunch on the Plaza of the Americas, waiting in line for an O-Dome game or strolling through UF’s art and natural history museums. Being introduced to UF through the Preview program is one of them, too.

But for Bob Lloyd (BA ’87, JD ’90) and his daughter, Delaney Lloyd (JAG), of Port Orange, Preview has given them a deeper connection: They both served as student staff. Bob served his one-year stint in 1985. Back then, this job wasn’t considered as elite as it is today. In fact, Bob recruited his cousins and other friends to sign up as student staff in order to fill out the group.

Delaney was accepted into the 2020 team this spring. But she was one of 46 staff selected from more than 200 applicants through a three-round interview process. Her duties are almost identical to her dad’s: welcome new UF students by serving as mentors, guides and coaches during a two-day orientation program; conducting tours for new students; sharing thousands of facts about UF’s history, academic and sports prowess; and answering hundreds of questions during each tour about what it’s like to be a Gator. But in Delaney’s case, she and her fellow staff will welcome about 7,000 students.

Bob was the first in his family to graduate from college and the first to attend law school. Today, he’s the executive vice president and general counsel at Brown & Brown Insurance in Daytona Beach. Despite the years, he says he’s never really given up his role as a Preview staffer.

“I started selling UF and the Gator experience from my first days … on staff,” he said. “I have been selling it ever since. I now make my most precious and valuable contribution to UF and its future: [my daughter, Delaney]. Put her to work! I am humbled, honored, proud and, admittedly, a bit teary-eyed by the whole experience.”

Learn more about Preview and the guide application process by visiting http://uff.to/gapbcv.
Marc O’Connor (BSISE ’90) of Atlanta, whose company was named to the Gator100 in 2017 and 2018, took his daughter Megan dogsledding on the Norris Glacier in Juneau, Alaska.

Hallie (BHSSH ’00) and Evan Rosenblatt (BSBC ’00) of Boca Raton took time to chomp with their sons, Eric and Zack, at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

Dale Moody (BSBA ’63, MA ’64, PhD ’75) of Mount Dora and his daughter, Diane Rivers (BAEd ’97, MEd ’99) of Saint Cloud, showed their Gator pride at the Great Wall of China.

Hallie (BHSSH ’00) and Evan Rosenblatt (BSBC ’00) of Boca Raton took time to chomp with their sons, Eric and Zack, at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

Jaclyn Wenaas (BSADV ’09) of Golden, CO, married Christopher Azqueta at Lake Catamou in Steamboat Springs, Colo. Wenaas owns a tanning salon, Bronzed Denver, and Azqueta is a tax consultant.

Lance Karp (BS ’96, DMD ’00) of Sarasota took his family, his Gator banner and his Florida Gator alumni magazine to Antarctica in January.

Marc O’Connor (BSISE ’90) of Atlanta, whose company was named to the Gator100 in 2017 and 2018, took his daughter Megan dogsledding on the Norris Glacier in Juneau, Alaska.

DYNAMIC DUO
Twins JaSheika James (BSTel ’03) and JaHeika James (BSTel ’03) received a 2019 Sentinel Award for their writing of an episode of the hit TV show “Empire.” Called “Depth of Grief,” the episode delved into the issue of HIV/AIDS. Since the episode aired, the sisters have been serving as supervising producers for the show. They live in North Hollywood, CA.

Consecutive years Mark Gendzier (BS ’83, DVM ’87) and Virginia Quelch (MS ’85, DVM ’87) have supported the UF College of Veterinary Medicine. The couple met at UF while they were studying to become veterinarians and now own and operate a small animal hospital practice in St. Augustine.

GATOR NATION

35

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Marc O’Connor (BSISE ’90) of Atlanta, whose company was named to the Gator100 in 2017 and 2018, took his daughter Megan dogsledding on the Norris Glacier in Juneau, Alaska.
On Feb. 28, the UF Alumni Association, in partnership with the UF Entrepreneurship & Innovation Center, celebrated the 100 fastest-growing, Gator-owned or -led businesses in the world. At the event, these leaders gathered to network, share their talents and wisdom, and serve as an inspiration to fellow UF alumni.

The No. 1 fastest-growing company among the 2020 honorees is FanChest, a sports fan gift box company that Jeff Lin (BSAC ’02, MACC ’02) of Manhattan, NY, started with his business partner. Lin is a former Wall Street salesperson who left a lucrative career in 2012 to pursue a more fulfilling life. He aims for his company to help people “create moments and memories through sports” by delivering all types of fun and unique items that enhance fan experiences.

While FanChest boxes typically come loaded with sports-related swag, we asked Lin to curate this box at right to reflect his own interests and personality.

Applications for the 2021 Gator100 will open later this summer. Visit Gator100.ufl.edu for details. For questions about the Gator100 program, please contact Missy Poole at mpoole@uff.ufl.edu.

With High Honors

Congratulations to the Gator100’s 2020 S. Clark Butler Pinnacle Award winner, Scott Pressly (BSCHE ’90). The co-founder of private equity firm 10 Point Capital has developed his own franchise accelerator model to help entrepreneurs expand their brands. His clients include Schlotzsky’s, Fastsigns, Cinnabon and Tropical Smoothie Café. The Pinnacle Award recognizes an established business leader who has demonstrated sustained excellence and leadership in his/her industry.

For more than 30 years, Wells Fargo has sponsored events at UF. The UF Alumni Association is grateful to Wells Fargo for its dedication and support as this year’s Gator100 presenting sponsor.

“We’re proud of our strong presence in the Swamp, where many of our team members and customers are students, alumni, Gator parents and fans,” said Wells Fargo’s Northeast Florida Region Bank President Damien Haitsuka. “Our goal is to make a positive difference through our support and engagement with the university and community.”

EXERCISE improves my attitude and focus in everything I do. I try to be active in some way every day.

FOOD is a huge part of my life; as a way to celebrate with friends and family, cooking as a way to relax, and during travel as a way to connect with other people and cultures.

MUSIC opens my mind and brings me happiness, whether at a concert, at workouts or at home, where I play it 24/7. I think music influences us in ways we don’t fully appreciate yet. Plus it’s fun to see my 2-year-old dance.

READING is a gift, take full advantage.

FAMILY means everything to me. I work hard to be present, especially with my kids. They are such an amazing blessing, and I want to give them my undivided attention without all the crazy distractions of our digital age.

UF laid the foundation for so many aspects of my life — my friends, finding my identity, my academic preparation, the connections I made after graduation — the list continues to expand.

TEAM WORK

I MEDITATE every day, usually following my workouts. I just clear my head and practice a combo of spirituality and mindfulness.

An Insider’s Look at Gator100 Honoree Jeff Lin

UF CHEERS GATOR 100 HONOREES

TEAM WORK

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Top 10 honorees who gathered after the event.
HELPING TO HEAL THROUGH ART

Lori Arbel (BAAED '02, BFA '02) of Parkland is a mixed-media artist and photographer who teaches art as a tool to promote healing, self-discovery and storytelling. She is also a creative coach. Aside from her classes in New York City, Broward County and in community spaces, Arbel held a solo exhibition at the Pompano Cultural Center this winter.

“I’ve embraced emotional introspection for content,” Arbel said. “Paint, pen, and ink lines, handmade paper, and geometric shapes allow me to express energetic and meditative content. The imperfections of the handmade paper and pop of gold illustrate metaphor, transforming sometimes negative energy into something beautiful.”

See examples of her artwork at loriarbel.com.

GATOR NATION

ONE AND “ONLY”

Takashi Doscher (BA '08) directed the sci-fi movie “Only,” which had its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival and was acquired by Vertical Entertainment. The film stars Freida Pinto and Leslie Odom Jr. and is expected to be released this spring. “The Walking Dead’s” Chandler Riggs, Jayson Warner Smith and Joshua Mikel also star. Doscher wrote the script, as well. It questions the lengths people will go to protect those they love.

GATOR CHRONICLES

LIFE OF SURVIVOR

Travis Atria’s (MAMC ‘07) new book, “Better Days Will Come Again,” explores the life of Arthur Briggs, who became known as the “Louis Armstrong of Paris” following the Harlem Renaissance. Through Briggs, Atria tells the story of the first half of the 20th century and the evolution of jazz. He follows Briggs from the Great War to the Nazi prison camp where he survived by performing in a makeshift inmate orchestra to his eventual role as one of the world’s legendary jazz performers. Atria lives in Gainesville.

The University of Florida: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

In all kinds of weather, Gators are working tirelessly to cure, to educate, to eradicate, to expand knowledge, to push boundaries, to find solutions, to create, to repair, to aid, to soothe, to comfort, to lighten someone else’s load.

TOGETHER, WE GO GREATER. It’s what Gators do. Always.
GATOR NATION

THIS IS JEOPARDY
Two Gators competed on the TV game show “Jeopardy!” this winter: Kristin Carter (BSJ ’93) on Jan. 6 — season 36, episode 86 — and Jamison Webb (BSJ ’07) on Dec. 27 — season 36, episode 80. Webb is an actor and writer in Los Angeles who has appeared in a wide array of commercials and TV shows, including a Netflix comedy series to be released later this year. Carter is an attorney in Fort Lauderdale who is a presidential appointee on the UF Alumni Association’s board of directors. Their “Jeopardy!” episodes can be viewed on Hulu and CBS All Access.

ON THE OLYMPIC TRAIL
Kurt Roeser (BSAPK ’09, DPT ’12) of Boulder, CO, competed in his first U.S. Olympic marathon trials in February. The Naples native is a physical therapist who ran for UF’s track and cross country teams during his undergrad days. Roeser says he loves the act of getting outside for a run or hard workout every morning. In his job he gets “to help people get back to doing what they enjoy, often running, through a combination of education, strengthening, motor learning, mobility exercise and manual therapy.”

...WE ALL STICK TOGETHER
These Gators above stopped to give a chomp at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theater in New York City, where they were celebrating the graduation of Barry Naylor (BSTel ’07), front row, center, from an improv course. As part of the event, Naylor, of Coatesville, PA, and his classmates put on a show for family and friends. The following week, Naylor performed at the Gotham Gator Club’s® comedy night March 6 at the Tailor Public House in Manhattan. Proceeds from the event supported the club’s scholarship fund for local high school seniors who plan to attend UF.

UNVEILING LA CASITA
UF Association of Hispanic Alumni members gathered for a reunion Nov. 8-10 and toured UF’s new La Casita facility, which serves as a home away from home for Latinx students. The Gators, who have waited years for the new facility to be built, shared stories from their college days and about the old La Casita building. For details about the reunion and the group, visit www.ufalumni.ufl.edu.

Nona Jones published her memoir, “Success from the Inside Out,” in January. It chronicles her path to becoming a 23-year-old executive who later served public, private and nonprofit leadership roles after surviving a childhood filled with physical and sexual abuse and being diagnosed with behavioral and learning disabilities. Her story focuses on faith and forgiveness, as well as practical ways to build purpose out of pain.

Send your photos and captions to: FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu

Karri Barabas Miller (BSA ’00, DVM ’03, MS ’07) of Raleigh, NC, gave a big Gator chomp in front of the Trevi Fountain in Rome.

Julianne Korbelak Gerdes (BED ’65) of Sparta, NJ, flew her Gator flag at Glacier Lagoon, Iceland.

Raul Pojer (BSCE ’65) of Madrid, crossed the equator while sailing from London to Uruguay as part of the Clipper Round the World yacht race.

Pat (BA ’79) and Mike Varner (BSCE ’70) of Banana City showed their Gator pride at Cape Breton Highlands National Park in Nova Scotia.

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COME BACK HOME

Mark your calendars now for UF’s Grand Guard reunion Nov. 12-14, at which the Class of 1970 will be inducted.

The Grand Guard Society celebrates the rich history of The Gator Nation® and provides meaningful experiences for Gators who have reached the 50th anniversary of their first graduation. Each year we welcome a new class into the Grand Guard Society during the reunion weekend. All Grand Guard Society members are invited to participate and help welcome the new inductees.

The Grand Guard tradition began in 1955 and included graduates from East Florida Seminary, Florida Agricultural College, and South Florida Military Institute. There are approximately 900 living Grand Guard members to date.

See photos from past reunions, a video about last year’s inducted members from the Class of 1969 and information about a special cruise designed for UF alumni online at http://uff.to/rwhkt5

Members receive a plethora of benefits, but more importantly, their dues support career networking programs, scholarships and fellow and future members of the Gator Nation. Your UF Alumni Association is proud to keep Gators connected to campus and to each other.

JOIN TODAY by visiting ufalumni.ufl.edu or calling 352-392-1905.

MEET FELLOW GATOR: JUAN ENJAMIO

“I joined the UF Alumni Association because it allows me to remain connected to the university that has meant so much in my life. It also allows me to give back to UF, to serve a new generation of students and to make a contribution — however small — toward UF’s magnificent rise to national and international prominence. No university can be great or remain prominent without the active involvement of its alumni.”

— Juan Enjamio (BSBA ’82) is managing partner of international law firm Hunton Andrews Kurth’s Miami office. He specializes in the defense of class and collective actions, mainly in the area of employment and labor law. He is also actively involved in community, civic and educational organizations, such as United Way, the Kozyak Minority Mentoring Foundation and the UF Alumni Association Board’s Executive Committee.

24,362 OF YOUR FELLOW GATORS ARE LIFE MEMBERS OF THE UF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Members receive a plethora of benefits, but more importantly, their dues support career networking programs, scholarships and fellow and future members of the Gator Nation. Your UF Alumni Association is proud to keep Gators connected to campus and to each other.
ART, MUSIC AND GATORS

A plethora of Gators came to support their alma mater at the UF at Art Basel event during Miami Art Week. The UF Alumni Association hosted the event with UF Coral Gables, the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art and UF’s College of the Arts. Pictured are Alexa Butler (BSADV ’15), secretary of communications for the Palm Beach County Gator Club; and Warren Sowell (BS ’05), at left, the Florida secretary of commerce and president/CEO of Enterprise Florida Inc. Sowell talked about claiming ownership of your school on the path to achieving full potential and leveraging partnerships. Pictured from left are ABA Jacksonville members with Sowell: Brittany Woodward (BFA ’05), Nicole Ross (BSAC ’05) and Marques Wilkes (BA ’05).

HELPING HAND FOR NEW GATORS

The Association of Black Alumni’s Jacksonville chapter hosted a scholarship brunch for local UF-bound high schoolers. Their keynote speaker was Jamal Sowell (BA ’05), at left, the Florida secretary of commerce and president/CEO of Enterprise Florida Inc. Sowell talked about claiming ownership of your school on the path to achieving full potential and leveraging partnerships. Pictured from left are ABA Jacksonville members with Sowell: Brittany Woodward (BFA ’05), Nicole Ross (BSAC ’05) and Marques Wilkes (BA ’05).

PAIRING KIDS WITH THE OUTDOORS

These Washington, DC, Gator Club® members took advantage of the Gator football season’s bye week in the fall to help a local charity. City Blossoms, turn a local elementary school outdoor space into a classroom and exploration area for a teacher and her students. The project, at Ridle Highlands Elementary, turned out to be a hit with the schoolchildren.

GATOR NATION: IT’S TIME TO GATOR UP!

Do you have a creative way of showing your Gator pride on the road? Florida Gator magazine wants to publish photos of your unique tags.

For those with plain-Jane tags, Gator Up! Proceeds from UF’s specialty license plate support student scholarships and alumni programs. Put UF and our Gators on top by purchasing a UF license plate the next time you renew your tag.

GatorUp.ufl.edu

Send photos of your Gator-themed tag with your name and graduation info to:

FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu

INVESTING IN ENERGY

Sameer Reddy (BA ’05, BSBA ’05) of Brooklyn, NY, specializes in renewable energy financing at the private equity firm Energy Impact Partners. He serves as a director on numerous boards, including that for Particle, an end-to-end IOT platform company.

GREAT GATOR LEGACY

Michael Joseph MacDonald (BSAE ’68) of Whispering Pines, NC, was a retired Air Force Captain who tested air-dropped weapons and oversaw test flights or running test equipment from the back seat of a chase plane. He logged time in more than 30 different types of aircraft, ranging from front-line fighters to bombers to helicopters before he retired in 1983. He came out of retirement to teach, serving as an assistant professor in economics at Central Missouri State University, as a fellow in strategic planning and management at the International Management Centre in England, and as a management consultant and NASA High Performance Computing and Communications program coordinator at Universities Space Research Association in Washington, D.C.

MacDonald retired again in 1992, but then answered a call to serve as a consultant for 11 years at California Institute of Technology’s Center for Advanced Computing Research and NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He and his wife, Betty, moved to Whispering Pines, N.C., in 2001. He died Dec. 29 at age 77. He will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery.
UF held its second giving day event on Feb. 20, during which Gator Nation came out in full force to surpass last year’s gift and amount totals, as well as UF’s 2020 giving goals. While Gators stormed social media with supportive messages, UF students, faculty and staff gathered at numerous events across campus. Funds raised will support a myriad of UF programs, scholarships and research. Photos by Aaron Da Ye; Twitter Gotham Gator Club®

1-4: UF Health colleges hosted a “Pop Out and Give” event. Beau the therapy dog greeted donors, who also received a bag of popcorn. 5. Gotham Gator Club® members rallied in New York City. 6-7: The College of Journalism and Communications hosted James Bates’ social media video updates and its own celebration. 8-11: UF’s main giving day activity was at the J. Wayne Reitz Union, where Albert rallied student support, President Fuchs filmed thank yous and Sorority and Fraternity Affairs Director Reggie Lane got pied when giving goals were met. 12. Alumnus James Gadsby sported his giving day tee at Times Square.
like many college students in 1966, Ed Barber had to put his studies on hold when the Vietnam War draft called him to serve. A helicopter crash and a year's worth of hospital stays later, Barber arrived back at UF with a different perspective on life and schoolwork, and the need to support his wife and child. His path back to normalcy came through the Alligator newspaper, which was then a part of UF Student Affairs. Barber worked his way up to director of University Publications before crafting the newspaper's split from UF in 1971 when coverage about abortion access left administrators at odds with student reporters. Administrators, faculty and students alike wanted Barber to lead the newly independent student newspaper. He eventually accepted that role in 1976 and retired in 2007. He lives in Tallahassee now, but still serves as publisher emeritus for the Alligator Alumni Association.

What's the biggest mistake you've ever made?
Retiring. After my wife's (of 44 years) death, I had some health issues and did into a deep depression. So, I stepped down from the Alligator because I believed it needed someone stronger than I was at the time. Worst mistake I made in my life. I miss it every day.

How does it feel to have given so many successful journalists, lawyers and other professionals a start?
Sometimes former students would say, "Thanks, Ed, for giving me the opportunity to..." but I'd stop them and say, "You make your own opportunities. I don't edit your copy or give you assignments." I don't deserve the credit.

Name one bizarre incident from your Alligator days.
A law student group was hosting an event at which it was going to show movies for free. In the advertisement, one of our staffers put "free flicks" in the headline. She didn't know that in all caps, Futura bold font, condensed, in black with no serifs, it would come out looking obscene because of the way the L and the I were squished together.

Why does the Alligator stand out against other university student papers?
We've had fantastic investigative journalism stories. For instance, there was a man whom juries said committed suicide in prison, but thanks to an Alligator reporter's digging, was later found to have been murdered by his cellmate. Another reporter found that doctors who served students in the UF infirmary were not licensed. This led to UF shifting control of the infirmary from the Department of Physical Education to Shands Hospital.

What about the Alligator makes you most proud?
The people it has produced. There are so many whom I should name. A few are David Lawrence, retired Miami Herald publisher; Pulitzer Prize winner Walker Lundy, former top editor of Philadelphia Enquirer; Phil Graham, a photographer who later became publisher of the Washington Post and then bought Newsweek; Tom Julin, former Alligator editor and now the best First Amendment attorney around. He's helped us so many times. Pulitzer winner Ian Johnson, who is an expert on China and Germany. More Pulitzer winners. There are so many good people.

What does the Alligator do better than other media?
It provides a fresh perspective and dedication to readers, giving the students' point of view. These students aren't getting paid to do these stories. They aren't influenced by paying jobs or advertisers or publishers who are looking at the bottom line.

What don't people understand about the Alligator?
When pulling together all the components of a complex story and the nuances of the English language and all the punctuation rules, there are millions of opportunities for something to come out erroneously. But if a typo arises, that's the one thing people will spot.

What do you want your legacy to reflect?
The continued success of the Alligator that I had one small part in at one time. The continued success of freedom of information and the First Amendment that I've always loved.

What makes the Alligator staff great?
The quality of UF's College of Journalism and Communications, the quality of UF itself and the quality of students it produces. Also, the structure of the newspaper. We have been experimental, starting our own student-run Tallahassee bureau and buying/restructuring the High Springs Herald ... that gave students experience in what it was like to work at a weekly newspaper.

What's your secret to working with young people?
For example, I never refer to the students as the kids — as other advisers would. I referred to them by their titles, "the editor," and respect them as young adults. They are doing the same things I was doing as a young adult, and doing the best they can. Are they going to make mistakes? Of course. Everyone makes mistakes. But they are trying hard, working for their readers, not for their own glory, to deliver information and the truth.
As a kid growing up in Pass Christian, MS, Cory McGee (BA ’14) discovered the sport of running because she was an annoying younger sister — she wouldn’t leave her older sister, Shannon, alone. Sometimes the two went for a run on the beach with their dad, counting the piers. Other times they ran the 3.5 miles from their grandparent’s house to a local park, their grandfather following along in his pickup truck.

“If I wanted to stop, I could get in, and he would have ice cream in the car,” McGee says. “But I always wanted to keep going because I wanted to stay with Shannon as long as I could.”

One day, she got off the truck to help carry the ice cream to the car, and the two went for a run on the beach with their dad. From that day on, they would often run together as a family. Shannon and Cory would often run with their grandfather, and their dad would sometimes join them.

McGee’s motivation has changed over the years. Now a professional runner for New Balance and two-time world champion U.S.A. team member, she’s focused on racking up personal records and qualifying for the sport’s top meets.

She arrived in Gainesville with the mindset that she would someday compete at the professional level and it soon became clear she was more than capable. McGee won six SEC titles as a Gator, earning 10 All-America honors and two national runner-up finishes. She made her first U.S. team in a Florida uniform, when she placed third in the 1500 meters at the 2013 U.S.A. Track & Field Outdoor Championships. After graduating with her political science degree in 2014, she was signed by New Balance and went to Boston to train. But that move wasn’t the easiest.

“Four for the first time, I was training on an indoor track for long periods,” McGee says. “I had to layer up to run in the snow. And it wasn’t just cold; it was also gloomy and dark. I loved my team, but those other things really affected my state of mind.”

So in 2018, McGee moved to Boulder, CO, to train. She considers it the best decision she ever made.

“Colorado still has snow and gets cold, but it’s sunny most of the year. Parking ruled her life in Boston, but Boulder is easy to get around and has a similar pace to Gainesville,” McGee says. “While her training has been harder than what she’s done in the past (more long runs and strength work), it’s paid off. This year, she set personal records in the 1500 meter and the indoor mile, placed third in the mile at the Indoor Track and Field Championships, and her 4:04:01 in the 1500 hit the Olympic standard.”

That success means training almost every day, waking up at 7:30 to meet her teammates for a workout either on the track or at the road. That’s usually followed by work in the gym, a few hours rest and then a second run. McGee is in bed by 10:30.

“We live a very robotic lifestyle about 45 weeks of the year,” McGee says. “Our day to day isn’t that exciting. But I stay motivated by being very aware of what my goals are, so I can easily remind myself what I’m working toward.”

McGee’s training has been harder than what she’s done in the past, but Boulder is easy to get around. She loves the sun and the pace of life in Boulder, but sometimes she misses the snow and cold.

“I think this was my best year as a pro, but I didn’t necessarily get to show that at this year’s championships,” McGee says. “I think I would’ve have competed well. I’ve sort of rediscovered this belief in myself with my new training group, so I’m looking forward to taking these next opportunities to be able to show off where I’m at.”
By mid-March, UF’s campus was virtually empty, due to COVID-19. All who remained included essential staff and students who could not return home. Social distancing and video chats quickly replaced typical interactions.

A myriad of activities including Krishna Lunch were suspended.

This student with her luggage trekked through the union unimpeded.
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