

GATOR

FLORIDA

WINTER 2019

OH YEAH, THAT GUY

Emmy nominee
Stephen Root talks
about his journey into
acting and his love of
the Gators. p32



**UF & OUR
ENVIRONMENT**

WILDLIFE ABCs
Do you know these top
animal experts? p20

PROFESSOR PLANET
Meet professors whose
worldwide work helps
your environment. p38

FORESTS FIRST
This CEO says his big-time
success stems from his
small-town start. p48

AS FLORIDA GATOR CONTINUES ITS YEARLONG CELEBRATION of Gators who tirelessly work to help the environment, UF leaders extend their heartfelt thanks to each and every person. Among those are the board members of the 1923 Fund, a charitable organization created by the late Gainesville physician Dr. David Cofrin and named for his birth year.

Cofrin and his family, who are perhaps most known for launching the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art (named for Cofrin's father-in-law), have consistently fueled UF's environmental efforts over the years. For instance:



The board facilitated the purchase of 24 land parcels that expanded UF's Ordway-Swisher Biological Station by more than 460 acres, greatly enhancing UF's land management research efforts.



Fund gifts have enhanced numerous Florida Museum of Natural History exhibits, including a new storytelling project about Florida's water that empowers visitors to become advocates for — and stewards of — this precious resource.



1923 Fund members also supported research and programs at UF's Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience, which increases the lab's efforts to boost the health of marine life.

Remarkably, the board has contributed almost \$4 million toward UF's efforts to help the environment. Meanwhile, the 1923 Fund also supports UF programs in healthcare, arts and culture, education, social and human services, and community development. For these gifts and the many other ways 1923 Fund members demonstrate the Gator Good, the Gator Nation thanks them. Their consistent efforts will be greatly appreciated by generations of Gators for many, many years to come.

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20 The Wild Bunch

Gator experts are everywhere. Meet these alumni and UF professors who are among the world's top animal scientists.

28 On the Trail with Henry and Balloo

How and why one couple's shelter pooch and kitty became hiking buddies, and now Instagram stars.

32 Oh Yeah, That Guy!

Stephen Root has appeared in more than 200 films and TV shows (1,000-plus if you count each episode). But this humble star is just a Gator at heart.

38 Professor Planet

These UF researchers are moving mountains to help your environment, thanks to private support.

42 The Incredible Journey of Mariel White

This UF junior survived harrowing odds and — thanks to the support of Gator Nation — started her comeback this fall.

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Gator Terry Baker says his small-town Panhandle upbringing and his UF experiences are what helped him rise to the top of the forestry industry.

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ON THE COVER

Stephen Root (AA '72) says he would have likely followed in his father's footsteps and worked in construction if his passion for acting hadn't been sparked at UF. Find out more about his prolific acting career on page 32.

Passion

It's a Gator thing.



Great teams are driven by a passion to succeed. At UF Health, we're no different. As home to the No. 1 research hospital in Florida and consistently ranked among the best in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, we have galvanized our resources to solve the toughest challenges in medicine. Because when we win, you win. We put our passion to work for you and your family.



FLORIDA GATOR

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Conversation with Kent Fuchs

WHAT DO GATORS HAVE TO GAIN AND LOSE?

AS UF RISES IN NATIONAL RANKINGS, LEADERS TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY: ITS STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF AND ALUMNI.

Shortly after last fall's news that UF had moved up to 7th among public universities in the U.S. News & World Report ranking, I asked in my monthly student newspaper column, "As UF rises, what should endure?"

My question was whether our rise in the rankings poses a risk of undermining the values, attributes and culture that define who we are at UF. I also asked readers to share the things they most cherish about our university.

The responses I received expressed both concerns and hopes.

At the heart of the concerns was a fear that our push to rise in the rankings would damage the exceptional education we provide students.

For example, one alumnus wrote that as faculty strive to be even more competitive in their research, it could distract them from their teaching excellence and the individual time and attention they devote to students.

At the same time, respondents were hopeful that UF would continue to prioritize education and students as the heart of our rise.

As another alumnus wrote me, "The most special thing about UF has always been the students, and the fact that the faculty and administration and alumni recognize it, and (that) they will do anything to help these extraordinary students succeed in school and in life. If you protect that value, valuing students the very most, it will carry you to that top-five ranking."

I wholeheartedly agree and note that key elements of raising our ranking, such as improving our student-faculty ratio, are intimately tied to our commitment to students and to their education. In fact, many of the faculty we are hiring are known nationally for their exceptional teaching.

It's important to keep the question of who we are — and what we most wish to maintain about UF — at the forefront as we continue our quest to increase our stature and raise our excellence even higher.

Having served as president for five years, there are several attributes and values of UF that I especially love and cherish.

I love that we are an intentionally and intensely comprehensive university, one with an amazing breadth of programs, from anthropology to zoology.

I love that we are exceptional in academics and NCAA athletics and that we are proud of that excellence in both.



I love that we value being caring, loving and supportive of one another, and I feel strongly that we should never let competition or ambition undercut our support and celebration of our classmates and colleagues.

I love our land-grant heritage and focus on serving the people of Florida, even as we maintain and grow our global profile.

And finally, I love that we enjoy UF and have fun, even as we work harder to achieve new heights.

I'm sure there are other attributes and values of UF that others love and that we should also preserve, and I hope you will join me in proclaiming and championing those attributes and values as we rise.

For, as I posted on social media when my column was published, "What is the profit if we gain the whole world and forfeit our soul?"

UF RISES TO #7

*U.S. News & World Report ranks UF
the 7th best public university in the nation;
Graduate programs also rise*

Once again UF has improved its ranking on the *U.S. News & World Report* Top Public Schools list, climbing to No. 7. Last year, UF tied with Georgia Tech for the No. 8 spot and two years ago tied for No. 9 with the University of California, Irvine, and the University of California, San Diego.

"I am incredibly excited by this news," said Mori Hosseini, UF Board of Trustees chairman. "It clearly demonstrates that [UF] is on an unstoppable trajectory. We are tremendously grateful for the support of the Legislature and Gov. [Ron] DeSantis."

President Kent Fuchs expressed his gratitude and congratulations to the entire UF community, emphasizing that this news reinforces the rise of UF's graduate programs, which was announced earlier this year.

"The rankings are an indicator of our national stature among the nation's very best research universities, the quality of the education our students are receiving and the steadily increasing value of a University of Florida degree," he said.

UF's overall rise is attributed to improved scores in numerous ranking categories, including alumni giving (14%, up from 13% last year), peer reputation, student-to-faculty ratio (18:1, up from 19:1 last year and 21:1 four years ago) and the percentage of students who graduate within six-years (90%, up from 88% last year). Several of these improvements are the result of UF's drive to hire 500 additional faculty. More than half of those are in place.

This win, related to UF's undergraduate programs, compliments a parallel sweeping rise in UF graduate rankings. Among public universities nationwide, UF now has 39 graduate programs ranked in the top 30 (up from 38); 33 in the top 20 (up from 30) and 12 in the top 10.

UF remains the most highly ranked university in Florida and the only university in the state in the top 10.

TOP 10 U.S. PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

1. UCLA
2. UC-Berkeley
3. Michigan – Ann Arbor
4. Virginia
5. Georgia Tech
5. North Carolina – Chapel Hill
7. FLORIDA
7. UC-Santa Barbara
9. UC-Irvine
10. UC-San Diego

TOP 10 UF GRADUATE PROGRAMS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Education online | #1 |
| Tax Law | #1 |
| Ag. and biological engineering | #3 |
| Counselor Education | #3 |
| Special Education | #7 |
| Materials Science | #8 |
| Environmental Law | #9 |
| Pharmacy | #9 |
| Full-time MBA | #9 |
| Accounting | #9 |
| Physical Therapy | #10 |

On Sept. 9, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis joined UF Board of Trustees members and other Gators to announce UF's rise to No. 7 in the *U.S. News & World Report* best public colleges list.

PHOTO BY UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA | BERNARD BRZEZINSKI

As ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* magazine

HEARD IN GATORVILLE

*“It’s not a thing of the future.
It’s happening now.”*

— BRETT SCHEFFERS,
UF RESEARCHER

who suggests that wildlife is on the move as a result of climate change, and Florida’s fauna seem to be following the trend. **AT RIGHT,** A Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission researcher examines a snail kite raptor at Paynes Prairie in April. The endangered bird hadn’t been seen as far north as Gainesville for 100 years, until last year.

*“Their skill, dedication and
compassionate service
is at the heart of all our
accomplishments.”*

— ED JIMENEZ, UF HEALTH
SHANDS HOSPITAL CEO

Crediting physicians and staff for UF’s inclusion on the “**100 great hospitals in America**” list by Becker’s Healthcare.



FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

NUMBERS OF NOTE

22

New faculty hired this quarter as part of Provost Joe Glover’s drive to add 500 faculty and reduce UF’s student-to-faculty ratio. These additions bring total hires to 253, and UF’s ratio down to 18-to-1 from 21-to-1 two years ago. The colleges with the most new hires are:

Liberal Arts and Sciences 133

Engineering 75

Agriculture and Life Sciences 32

\$3.14

Return on investment in research funding for every state dollar UF used to hire faculty in preeminent focus areas.

\$776.2M

Research funding UF received in fiscal year 2018-19. Of that amount, 68% came from federal grants, 5% came from state grants, 7% from industry grants and 13% from foundation and non-profit organization grants.



UF/IFAS

4 YEARS

Length of UF/IFAS plant pathology professor Pamela Roberts’ \$3 million, USDA-funded research study that is expected to produce better ways to reduce bacterial diseases in many types of peppers. She’s leading a team of pepper experts from Georgia, Ohio, North and South Carolina. In 2018, bell and chili peppers alone were a \$181 million industry in Florida and a \$628 million industry nationwide.

*“It’s as important as ever to teach future journalists the
power and importance of essential journalism ...”*



— SARA GANIM, PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING JOURNALIST
AND FORMER CNN CORRESPONDENT

who will spend the next year as a **Hearst Journalism Fellow in UF’s Brechner Center for Freedom of Information**, striving to bridge the lapses in government data that deprive the public of civically essential information.



*“I want people to be
inspired by it and see
that you can create
beautiful work out
of garbage.”*

— SAMANTHA LEWIS,
THIRD-YEAR COLLEGE OF
THE ARTS MASTER’S STUDENT

who creates UF theater sets out of **100% recycled/reused materials**

ABOVE: Lewis stands in the set shop at UF’s School of Theatre + Dance.

AT RIGHT: The set of “Hills on Fire” in the Black Box Theatre. Scenic design by Lewis, lighting by Jordan Lindquist, junior BFA lighting student.



PHOTOS BY CORAL DIXON

ONCE A GATOR, ALWAYS A GATOR

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see all the newest styles!



25

Years since Jeff Weakley was bitten by something while surfing off Flagler Beach. This summer, a blister-like bulge on his foot opened to produce a tooth fragment. He asked UF scientists at the Florida Program for Shark Research to examine the tooth, which they identified as a blacktip shark. Weakley said he is grateful to finally have his mystery solved. **UF shark researcher Lei Yang** said about 70 percent of shark bites are caused by unidentified species, and more precise data on which types are involved could improve bite mitigation strategies.



30M

Number of solar panels UF will help test before they are installed as part of a massive effort to make Florida the Southeast's top solar state. This project includes a new solar grid monitoring sensor from **UF engineering assistant professor Joel Harley**, the elimination of Florida Power and Light's last coal-powered energy plant and the U.S. Department of Energy's endeavor to reduce solar energy costs by the end of the decade. See full story at uff.to/30mSolar.



Scientist Erica Goss is seeking the source of a mold that causes “swamp cancer.” Photos by Pamela D’Angelo/WVTF/Virginia Public Radio

UF EXPERT ASKED TO TRACK MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS



The cancer “has these long filaments ... like fingers that reach out into the tissue it infects to pull in nutrients.”

— **ERICA GOSS, UF PLANT PATHOGEN SCIENTIST**

AT LEFT, Goss works on Virginia’s Eastern Shore.

UF plant pathogen scientist Erica Goss and other experts were called in by Virginia officials to determine the source of a “swamp cancer” that killed eight native wild ponies in Virginia and infected three humans in Texas, Illinois and Georgia. The culprit is oomycete, a fungus-like water mold that lives in the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge’s shallow ponds and standing water used by migrating birds and the ponies. Goss and other scientists are working to determine why some of the native ponies contracted the cancer while others didn’t. She is using her data to build a map of infected waters. uff.to/CNWRponies

“There’s room for everyone in the fight against oppression.”

— **DELLA MOSLEY, UF COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

Whose research on the wellness of marginalized communities, particularly LGBTQ+ people of color who face disproportionate levels of violence, is sparking action among human rights groups. From January through September 2019, the number of transgender people killed in the U.S. reached 25, the most on record. Of those, 84% were people of color and 80% were women.

“I mean, we call it a workout, but we’re not in shape.”

— **KYLE MENDES (MS ’18), COACH OF UF’S MEAT JUDGING TEAM**

After members took a practice round at the Penn State-hosted competition on Sept. 27. UF’s team took home the beef division title at that meet, and finished **7th overall** in November at the National Intercollegiate Meat Judging Championship, in addition to other top wins in specific categories. The demand for skilled meat inspectors is growing as USDA shortages recently rose from 4% to 8% nationwide.

NEW COURSE SERIES AT UF ASKS STUDENTS TO EXAMINE THEMSELVES

Since 2012, the required course “What is the Good Life?” has encouraged UF students to explore their own perceptions and views through the arts, philosophy, culture and other humanities-based subjects.

In response to students’ and employers’ positive reviews, the Provost’s office is launching UF Quest, a similar three-tiered curriculum that over the next eight years will expand upon this concept of student introspection and practical skills development.



UF QUEST

This past spring, UF piloted the first 12 courses that include “Fairy Tales and Identity,” “The Idea of Happiness” and “Race and Law in the American City.” These and other courses are part of the first tier, called UF Quest 1.

By fall 2020, UF Quest 2 will launch with more courses that focus on natural and social science grand challenges, and teach practical skills, such as data analysis and communication. The third tier, UF Quest 3, will be added in fall 2027 and focus on experiential learning.

In all, the program will encompass

about 100 courses. Once the roll-out is complete, students must take one course from each tier, each of which will count toward humanities requirements.

UF President Kent Fuchs said he hopes the program will encourage students to “probe major questions, such as the relationship between justice and power, nature and culture, and war and peace, with an eye toward addressing our planet’s most pressing challenges today.”

Angela Lindner, associate provost for undergraduate affairs, says UF Quest addresses the “everyday skills employers seek most: critical analysis, self-reflection and decision making.” The series also “creates a shared experience” for students who are in college for the first time and helps students prepare for the type of rigor they will experience in their other courses, she said.

UF Quest Director Andy Wolpert said some of the courses include study abroad opportunities. He added that his team is developing an even greater variety of courses students can take throughout their undergraduate years.

uff.to/UFquest.

DOUBLE 2019 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS



UF is the 2019 American Society of Civil Engineering’s National Concrete Canoe race winner. UF engineering club members propelled their vessel (called Free Floatin’ in memory of musician Tom Petty) through 200- and 400-meter sprints with 180-degree hairpin turns. What’s more, the team’s title helped UF win the 2019 Engineering Dean’s Cup. Akin to athletics’ All-Sports trophy, the award is based on how university student engineering clubs fare in various national and global competitions. UF’s clubs took part in 30 competitions this year. uff.to/EngDeansCup [Facebook.com/UFConcreteCanoe](https://www.facebook.com/UFConcreteCanoe)



200%

Improvement of one Florida first grader’s test scores after she learned reading and spelling strategies delivered by **UF’s James Patterson Literacy Challenge in the College of Education**. Her early scores hovered around the 30s and below mark. But now she’s earning 90s and higher grades. See a short video about her progress at uff.to/patterson200.

4

UF faculty recently recognized with the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government for these professionals:



Aging and Geriatric researcher David Clark, whose work on mobility function in people with neurological impairments,

including the elderly and stroke or spinal injury patients, was nominated by the Department of Veterans Affairs



Electrical and computer engineer Domenic Forte, whose work on counterfeit electronics detection and avoidance was nominated by the Department of Defense



Biomedical engineer Aysegul Gunduz (PhD ’08) whose development of smarter therapeutic deep brain stimulation

for people with neuropsychiatric disorders was nominated by the National Science Foundation



Civil and coastal engineer Maitane Olabarrieta whose improvements of numerical models that predict coastal change,

erosion and flooding were nominated by the Department of Civil and Coastal Engineering

47

Years **David Colburn** served UF before he died Sept. 18 due to complications from an extended illness. His numerous UF roles included history professor and department chair, provost, International Center dean and Bob Graham Center for Public Service director. The week he died, the three-time teacher of the year was to receive a lifetime achievement award from the Florida Humanities Council. The only other recipient of that distinction was his longtime friend, UF history professor **Michael Gannon** (see opposite page). Graham Center student **Caroline Nickerson** (BA '17, BA '17) summed up her grief this way: "Dr. Colburn taught me what it means to be a good citizen. I am one of the many students he inspired to embrace the study of history, uphold democratic values and pursue service." He was 77.



\$11,000+

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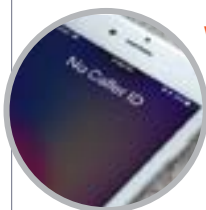
who opt into a free program from Smathers Libraries and BiblioLabs to make print-on-demand versions of UF theses and dissertations available via Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Authors who opt in receive 20% royalties and retain copyright. Learn more through UF librarian Chelsea Johnston at cjohnston@ufl.edu or 352-273-2904.

UF INNOVATES: A FEW OF THE LATEST UF TECHNOLOGIES



LONGER-LASTING IMPLANTS: Many medical implant devices, such as heart valves (at left) are made with protein-based materials that can break down after long-term use, causing calcifications and cell death. Some chemicals developed to fix this issue can provoke an immune response, increasing the likelihood of implant rejection. UF scientists have developed a new procedure that stabilizes these proteins, increasing the lifespan of implants.

FASTER PHONE NETWORKS: Electrical engineering assistant professor **Roozbeh Tabrizian** and graduate research assistant **Mayur Ghatge** (9ENG) invented a frequency filter that enables mobile phone companies to deliver more data in less time because it eliminates some of the interference between cell tower transmitters and phone receivers. This development is expected to make 5G and future networks more efficient and reliable.



WHO'S CALLING, PLEASE? Have you ever received a phone call from what looks like your bank or credit card company, only to find out it was a nefarious attempt to get you to divulge your financial or personal information? UF researchers in the **Department of Computer and Information Science and Engineering** have invented **AuthLoop**, a system that thwarts criminals' attempts to manipulate the name displayed on your caller ID screen, called "spoofing," that has been linked to more than \$2 billion in consumer fraud reports.

SAFER DEVICES: A plethora of devices use USB protocols that allow the transfer of both data and power. However, this universal connection leaves many computing platforms vulnerable to malicious attacks. UF researchers have developed a vetting system that examines and validates USB devices, eliminating the need for source codes and speeding up analysis.


innovate.research.ufl.edu

2 YEARS

Length of a campus safety and security study which resulted in the creation of **UF's Physical Security Department** this fall. Led by Joseph Souza, this team will create security policies, procedures and standards to keep the campus and its faculty, staff and students safe. Souza comes from the University of Central Florida's Department of Security where he planned, designed and oversaw construction of its Global Security Operations Center.

70

UF students helped so far this year by **UF's Trans Care Team**, a universitywide partnership between the Student Health Care Center (Infirmary building), Counseling and Wellness Center and other specialists who support students identifying as transgender or something other than male or female. This number is up from the 54 students who were supported last year, primarily because awareness

about the UF program is still growing. "What we're doing for students is better than many universities nationwide," Grooms says. "We start at the beginning and have seen about 50 students all the way through their transitions."

1 IN 5

Children from 2 to 19 years old who are obese. UF's Michelle Cardel, an assistant professor in the Health Outcomes & Biomedical Informatics team, received a five-year, \$782K grant from the National Institutes of Health to develop a weight loss intervention specifically for teenagers. Learn more at uff.to/Cardel. Read Cardel's New York Times column "Helping Children Learn to Eat Well" at uff.to/NYTEatingWell.



MICHAEL GANNON

Documenting an extraordinary life

For many Gators who attended UF between the late 1950s and early 2000s, Michael Gannon was a quiet source of strength and a sounding board on a host of issues. He was a Catholic priest turned UF professor and historian, prize-winning author, war correspondent, mediator and radio announcer. He was the first priest appointed to the St. Augustine Catholic Church and Student Center when it opened in 1959, and he retired in 2003 as a UF history professor.



Gannon died in 2017, but his work lives on in the Smathers Libraries collection that bears his name. In the collection's 70 boxes and four oversized folders, library patrons can find his writings, research notes, correspondence, photographs and even eight chapters of his unfinished autobiography that he was working on at the time of his death.

Among these many documents are Gannon's interviews with National Review magazine founder William F. Buckley, historian and Ku Klux Klan documentarian David Mark Chalmers and Norton Baskin, the husband of renowned author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. It also includes Gannon's conversations with experts on poetry, Everglades hydrology, energy conservation, microsurgery and the history of St. Augustine.

Digital items in the collection, such as videos and audio recordings, are available online at ufdc.ufl.edu/Gannon.

To support this or other library collections, contact Sara Piety at 352-273-2505 or spiety@ufl.edu.

1. Gannon served as a correspondent during the Vietnam War.

2. Gannon presents President John F. Kennedy with a copy of the oldest written document on American record from St. Augustine. The president was assassinated four days later.

3. Gannon's interviews *National Review* founder William F. Buckley.

4. Gannon worked to diffuse tensions between police and students in this 1972 local protest.

TARA SABO-ATTWOOD — ENVIRONMENTAL & GLOBAL HEALTH

WHERE HUMANS & POLLUTANTS MEET

ENVIRONMENTAL TOXICOLOGY EXPERT SAYS EXPOSURE CAN INFLUENCE EVEN THE COMMON COLD AND FLU

Q. What specifically does your team study?

A. We know that environmental pollutants impair health and cause disease in humans and wildlife. But the world’s understanding of how this happens on the molecular level is limited. My team’s work focuses on the extremely small (1-100 nanometers) synthetic particles in consumer products, such as sunscreens and electronics, and their potential toxic effects on living things, from fish to humans. For instance, exposure to these nanomaterials can increase our susceptibility to pathogens, like viruses.

Q. What has your team found so far?

A. We were the first to show that lung exposure to certain types of nanoparticles can significantly impact an infection with the flu — increasing viral particles in a mouse model by over 60 fold. Our work is informing environmental regulators, who seek to protect humans and ecosystems.

Q. Why UF?

A. UF offers a remarkable environment for collaborative interdisciplinary research. I worked here as a student and was glad to come back because I knew what outstanding environmental toxicologists UF has. Also, the College of Public Health and Health Professions has empowered me to integrate my STEM training with public health practice to offer the One Health degree master’s and doctoral programs — the first of their kind in the nation. Through these, we can address complex global health problems by teaming up with experts in other disciplines, such as infectious and environmental diseases, air/water contamination and other ecosystem challenges.

Q. How can Gator Nation help the environment?

A. Communicate its importance to younger generations (K-12). Teach them what we have learned so far and encourage them to create better



ways to preserve and interact with our environment. Integrate the outdoors into everyday activities.

Q. How do you encourage young women in this male-dominated field?

A. When I started out I was the sole female in the department. I saw this as an opportunity to become a role model for my peers and students. There is great power in mentorship and I’m grateful to have experienced strong women mentors during my journey. Also, I started college-wide initiatives that address gender issues as part of routine wellness.

Q. What is your primary environmental goal?

A. To protect people by better understanding how human-environment interactions influence health. We tend to study large-scale pollution, but there are also unique settings where we can help. For example, we are monitoring air quality at UF Shands along a high-traffic road that is the future site of a garden where pediatric patients will visit. My team ensures the air quality is acceptable for those who may be more susceptible to pollutants.



107

Age of Elver Hodges when he died in September. Hodges was UF’s first forage professor at the Range Cattle Research and Extension Center in Ona. His pioneering studies of pastures led to today’s forage production and management systems. When he was 100, Hodges created a fund for the center to help continue its research and livestock industry support.



2000

The year UF Hall of Famer Thaddeus Bullard graduated from UF. Known across the globe as WWE Superstar Titus O’Neil and a widely recognized children’s advocate and champion, Bullard will serve as UF’s university-wide commencement speaker this spring in Ben Hill Griffin Stadium.



UF Alumni Association reception



Gator Gallop



Soul Fest contestants

GATOR NATION CELEBRATES UF’S 90TH HOMECOMING



Gator Growl performer Blanco Brown



UF Association of Black Alumni Reunion



UF Alumni Association President Katrina Rolle



Homecoming court

Thousands of Gators gathered in Gainesville for homecoming festivities that included:

•SOULFEST: Student clubs showcased their culture and talents in an effort to inspire, teach and connect Gators from different backgrounds. The group winner, Danza Dance Company, and the solo/duo winner DJ McDuffie who sang “Feeling Good” by Nina Simone, performed at Gator Growl.

•LEADERSHIP PAGEANT: A faculty judging panel selected three king finalists and three queen finalists from more than 40 contestants, who participated in a pre-pageant interview, resume review, opening number, Gator spirit round, business dress round (aided by UF’s Molm Family Gator Career Closet) and an on-stage question round for semi-finalists.

“It’s not about who has the most leadership positions,” said pageant director Sydney Brandenburg (4 MAR). “It’s about whether their impact on campus can be really felt.”

•GATOR GALLOP: A 2-mile fun run

•PARADE: With 120-plus organizations, this event is billed as the largest student-run parade in the nation

•FESTIVAL: On the Plaza of the Americas after the parade, it includes live music, bounce houses, vendor and student booths

•GATOR GROWL: Pep rally featuring country musician Chase Rice, TrailerTrap artist Blanco Brown and emcee Scooter Magruder (BSTel ’11)

•UF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION TAILGATE: Where alumni and fans alike rallied in preparation for the Gators’ battle against Auburn. UF won 24-13.

•ASSOCIATION OF BLACK ALUMNI REUNION: Festivities included all these events plus a reception and brunch.



AARON DAYE

About 300 people, including UF staffer Keith Curry-Pochy and his 3-year-old son, Cypress, gathered around this new alligator statue near University Auditorium at the corner of Newell Drive and Union Road on Dec. 3 for the “Lighting of the Gator.” The 8-foot-tall and almost 9-foot-wide steel statue was commissioned from local artist Leslie Tharp (BFA '08) to celebrate the holidays and alleviate some of the stress and anxiety of finals. The statue will be removed after fall commencement and reinstalled next December.

1. In September, Hyundai Hope on Wheels gave \$300,000 to UF Health to support its pediatric cancer research.
2. In October, **Dr. Dean Hautamaki** (BS '86, MD '89, HS '92) and his wife, **Elizabeth**, of Sarasota created a \$1 million scholarship for medical students.
3. President Kent Fuchs celebrated homecoming by joining the Fightin' Gator Marching Band. See how he performed at uff.to/FuchsGatorBand.
4. Five giant cast-bronze sculptures of now-extinct birds were installed by the Florida Museum of Natural History as part of the “Lost Bird Project” to highlight humans’ impact on biodiversity. uff.to/LostBird



JESSE JONES



ERIC ZAMORA



CORAL DIXON



ROB MACK

9 TIPS FOR NEW GRADS

Accomplished health and fitness author, former Men's Health magazine editor and Department of Journalism chair **Ted Spiker**, who was UF's Teacher of the Year in 2016-17, offered these bits of advice to new graduates at this summer's commencement ceremonies.



1. Electricity. Think about what kind of energy you bring to others. Be a power source, not a drain.



2. Plasticity. The ability to change/adapt over time. People who can adjust are those who lead the way.



3. Humility. Let others do the bragging for you.



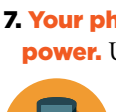
4. Generosity. In a world with lots of pressure and expectations, remind yourself what it means to get behind someone. It can fuel your spirit, too.



5. Tenacity. Keep asking the important questions. Keep searching for answers. Keep pushing the limits to make our world better. Keep going.



6. Embrace criticism. While your UF grades have stopped, your critiques have not. Challenge yourself to learn from them. They'll make you better.



7. Your phone gives you tremendous power. Use it wisely. Be a smart consumer of information. Be careful what you read and how you react to it. Celebrate diversity of thought. Understand the importance of credible information. Check sources and challenge assumptions. Think before you scroll and share.



8. Consider your words. You'll speak and write millions of words during your life. Not all of them will really matter, but you never know which ones might. Choose your words intentionally and know they may stick with someone for a very long time.



9. Fortify your verbs. Verbs define how you work and live. You will fall, fail and flourish; text, snap and post; create and conquer. And you will always chomp.

Watch Spiker's full speeches to graduate uff.to/TedSpikerPHD and undergraduate uff.to/TedSpikerUG students



The new Delta Gamma house on SW 13th Street. Photo by Scorpio.

NEW SCHOOL YEAR, NEW HOUSE

After five years of planning and 12 months of construction, the new **\$10 million Delta Gamma house** at SW 13th Street and Museum Road (south of Norman Field) opened this fall. While DG was the first permanent sorority house built on UF's campus in 1952, alumni involved with the project said its tech-laden replacement will provide living quarters for 71 UF student members well into the future.

A plethora of Gators were involved in the project, from DG alumnae **Debbie Filipe** (BSADV '84) who led fundraising efforts and former cheerleader **Martha Newton** (BAART '82) who designed the wallpaper and rug patterns, to former UF baseball player **John Jokinen** (BSBA '65) of E.J. Victor who provided custom furnishings, and **Domenic Scorpio** (BDES '94, MBC '98) whose construction firm built the home.

“The opportunity to partner with so many fellow Gators on this project made it particularly special and fun,” Scorpio said. “Any time the Gator Nation gets together to make something happen, you know it is going to be extraordinary.”



Jokinen



Newton



Scorpio

GAMING WITH GRANDMA

Online gaming with friends or family members — remotely or directly — could be one solution for seniors who feel increasingly isolated, says a UF College of Journalism and Communications study.

UF Telecommunications Assistant Professor Yu-Hao Lee surveyed more than 1,000 seniors who play video games online and found that

when they play with family or friends (established friends or new ones made through gaming), they tend to be more informed and engaged in civic or political activities, and feel stronger connections to others.

The survey did not differentiate between types of games (collaborative vs. competitive). uff.to/OADG.

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GOING GREATER FOR **OUR ENVIRONMENT**

UF EFFORTS TO BOOST WILDLIFE AND PLANET HEALTH ARE ON THE RISE

“In the end, we protect what we love; we love what we understand; and we understand what we are taught,” said **Ron Magill** (AA '80) at a *Go Greater* campaign reception in October. Magill, Miami-Dade Zoological Park and Gardens' communications director and spokesman explained how his UF education led him to love, study and work to preserve wildlife and the environment. Magill appeared at the event to help Gators understand the importance of UF's programs and research that support environmental health. UF is in the midst of a \$3 billion fundraising effort, which will support numerous UF programs including those that seek to improve the environment.

Explaining the current extinction event, in which the planet is expected to lose 1 million species within the next 50 years — the highest extinction rate since the loss of the dinosaurs, Magill emphasized UF's role in educating and preparing students who can slow this rate and take actions that will help in coming years.

“This affects all of us, even if you don't care about animals, wildlife or the environment,” he said. “It's a delicate chain with every species connecting to something else.”

See a highlight video from the event at uff.to/MagillEnv.
Support UF's environmental efforts at uf.to/environment.



TOP: Miami Zoo spokesman Ron Magill (AA '80) encourages Gators to do their part to protect wildlife.

LEFT: Also at the event, UF Health and Shriners Hospitals for Children leaders announced a new partnership to help children with musculoskeletal problems. A \$10 million Shriners gift will allow UF Health to conduct specialized research, faculty and staff development, program enhancements and continuing education at its Children's Hospital and Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Institute.

THE WILD BUNCH

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WOMBATS, WOOD STORKS, WHITE RHINOS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM? THESE GATORS STUDY AND WORK WITH ALL SORTS OF WILDLIFE, AND STRIVE TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THEIR RESULTS. HERE IS A PEEK INTO THEIR WORLD.



ALLIGATOR

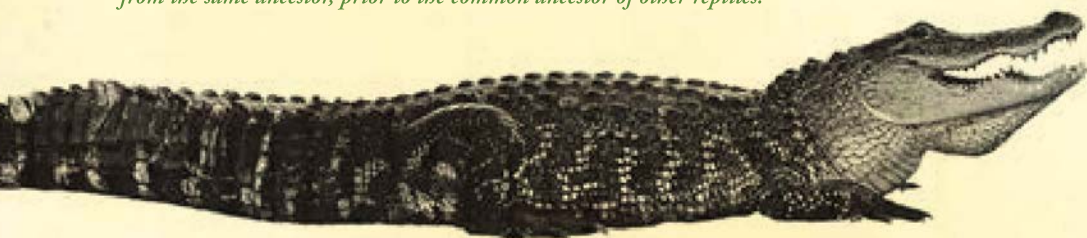


Mark Hostetler (MS '92, PhD '97)
Professor, UF/IFAS Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

The alligator isn't just UF's mascot, it's also an archosaur, a type of animal a group that predates reptiles and lizards, going back 35 million years. Although they prefer to eat fish, birds, small mammals and other reptiles, alligators will occasionally snack on fruit.

Mark Hostetler and his department colleagues are among the nation's leading alligator experts. Their work includes teaching people how to interact safely with alligators, conserving the species and studying the impacts of Burmese pythons and invasive species on gator groups, called "congregations."

i Alligators are more closely related to birds than reptiles. That's because gators and dinosaurs evolved from the same ancestor, prior to the common ancestor of other reptiles.



BEES



Jamie Ellis
Gahan Endowed Professor of Entomology, UF Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab

A beekeeper since age 12, Jamie Ellis leads UF researchers who are working to strengthen the world's bee colonies. The team's focus: combating the deadly varroa mite, pathogens and other stressors that are rapidly killing off bee colonies — last year by nearly 40 percent.

Beekeepers can combat this die-off by splitting strong hives so new queens produce more baby bees each year, says Ellis.

We can't afford to lose honey bees: They are essential to pollination of fruit, flowers and vegetables, supporting about \$20 billion worth of U.S. crop production annually.

i Of the 20,000 species of bees, only nine produce honey.



CUBAN TREE FROG



Steve Johnson
Associate Professor, UF/IFAS Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

An invasive nuisance in Florida for over 100 years, Cuban tree frogs gobble up native frogs and insects, take over birdhouses and clog indoor drains. They'll even eat their own kind if food resources are low.

Herpetologist Steve Johnson has been studying these color-morphing cannibals for two decades. He recommends using this humane method of euthanasia if you catch one: (1) apply benzocaine to frog's back or belly; (2) plop it in a plastic bag; (3) store in freezer for 24 hours; (4) dispose. (Wear gloves to protect yourself from the frog's toxic mucus.)

i Male frogs snort loudly to attract females during mating season.



DOBERMAN PINSCHER



Amara Estrada (BS '93, DVM '98)

Professor of Cardiology, Small Animal Clinical Sciences,
UF College of Veterinary Medicine

Doberman pinschers are prone to a fatal heart-muscle ailment known as DCM (dilated cardio-myopathy), which strikes nearly half of all Dobermans.

After a decade of preliminary research involving 1,000 Dobermans, veterinary cardiology specialist Amara Estrada and two of her peers are undertaking the first-ever lifetime study to evaluate the influence of genetic mutations in the breed. They will also examine how environment and nutrition impact the progression of DCM.

i *German tax collector Karl Dobermann bred the first Doberman pinscher in 1890; he wanted a fierce, loyal dog to protect him on his tax-collecting rounds.*



EVENING BAT



Terry Doonan (BS '77)

Mammal Conservation Coordinator,
Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

During zoology alumnus Terry Doonan's 25-year career, he's sought to help the 13 bat species in Florida. But he says his last five years have been a race through caves, buildings and other roosting locations to survey the number, health and environmental conditions of tiny evening bats and their cousins before the dreaded White-Nose Syndrome reaches Florida colonies. This disease has killed millions of bats across North America. "We need a lot more information ... so we can better understand problems that occur when" it reaches Florida, he said.

i *While most mama bats give birth to one "pup" per year, evening bats typically have two babies at a time. This is good news for farmers who need the 2¼-inch-long critters to naturally battle caterpillars, beetles and moths.*



FLORIDA MANATEE



Dianne Behringer

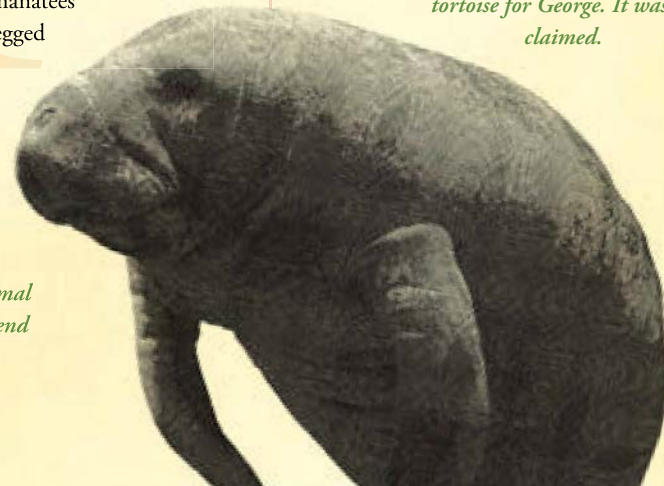
School Programs Coordinator,
Florida Museum of Natural Science

Once on the brink of extinction, the Florida manatee is making a comeback. The sea cow's numbers in Florida waters are now at 6,500, after having dwindled to a few hundred in the 1970s. One reason for the bounce back: slower "no wake" zones for boats.

Each year, between 8,000 and 10,000 schoolchildren flock to the Florida Museum where they discover the origins of this gentle beast, thanks to Dianne Behringer and her fellow educators. Students use inductive reasoning to figure out the identity of a partial manatee skeleton. They also contrast the skeletons of a modern manatee and its extinct ancestor to understand how this mammal evolved over millions of years.

"One major difference students can observe is the extinct sea cow had hind limbs," says Behringer. "These fossil remains show that modern manatees derived from four-legged land mammals."

i *The Florida manatee is related to the elephant. Some historians believe the plump sea mammal also inspired the legend of mermaids.*



GALAPAGOS TORTOISE



Peter Pritchard (PhD '69)

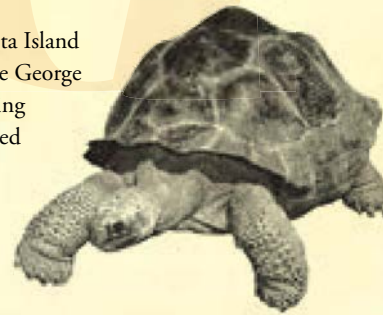
Director, Chelonian Research Institute;
TIME magazine's "Hero for the Planet"

Centuries of hunting and other threats have seen the number of giant Galapagos tortoises dwindle. Some subspecies have already gone extinct.

In June 2012, a male Pinta Island tortoise named Lonesome George drew his last breath, leaving no descendants. Renowned zoologist Peter Pritchard was among the devoted scientists who spent decades trying to find a mate for George.

"He had one unhappy defect, that he had no interest in reproducing," said Pritchard.

i *For decades, the Charles Darwin Foundation offered a \$10,000 reward to anyone who could procure a female Pinta tortoise for George. It was never claimed.*



HOUSE CAT



Julie Levy

Fran Marino Endowed Prof. of Shelter
Medicine Education, UF College of
Veterinary Medicine

With 94.2 million owned felines in the country, house cats are America's most popular pet.

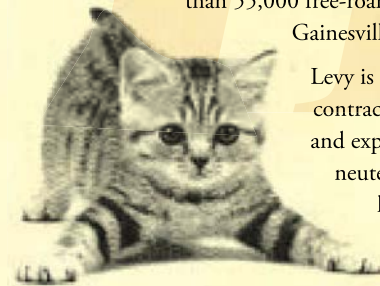
Along with that popularity comes over-population. Researcher Julie Levy founded Operation Catnip, a life-saving program that has spayed, neutered and vaccinated more than 55,000 free-roaming cats in Gainesville since 1998.

Levy is also working on contraceptive vaccines and expanding spay/neuter to young kittens.

"I'm excited to be

teaming up with wildlife biologists to develop practical methods to count and track elusive free-roaming cats," she says. "That's going to be a powerful tool for managing outdoor cat populations."

i *Abe Lincoln was the first president to bring cats into the White House. He fed "Tabby" and "Dixie" from the table during state dinners.*



INDIAN RHINOCEROS



Ron Magill (AA '80)

Zoo Miami Communications Director;
Emmy Award-winning documentary
filmmaker

Zoo Miami made history in April 2019 when a rare one-horned Indian rhinoceros gave birth via artificial insemination and induced ovulation, a first for this vulnerable species. Wildlife champion Ron Magill documented mom Akuti's 15-month-long pregnancy and delivery of female calf Sarita.

With only 3,000 to 3,500 Indian rhinos left in the wild, Sarita's birth is "an insurance policy against a very uncertain future in the wild for these animals," says Magill.

i *While rhinos are solitary animals, a group of mother and calves is called a "crash." Also, each rhino has a unique dung scent, so they create large poop mounds to communicate with each other about their health, age and readiness to mate.*



JUMPING SPIDER



Lisa Taylor

Assistant Research Scientist, UF
Department of Entomology and
Nematology

Most spiders cannot see colors, but jumping spiders do, notes entomologist Lisa Taylor. Her research reveals these tiny spiders evolved vivid colors on their bodies to facilitate communication during courtship.

"Females are voracious predators that sometimes attack and eat males before they have a chance to mate," says Taylor. In other words, spider Romeo waves his brightly colored arms to alert his Juliet, "Hey, babe, I'm not dinner!"

National Geographic filmmaker and fellow Gator Felipe DeAndrade tapped Taylor's expertise for an episode of "Untamed: The Weird Sex Lives of Jumping Spiders."

i *Jumping spiders can leap up to 50 times their body length.*



COLLARED KINGFISHER



David Steadman (MS '75)

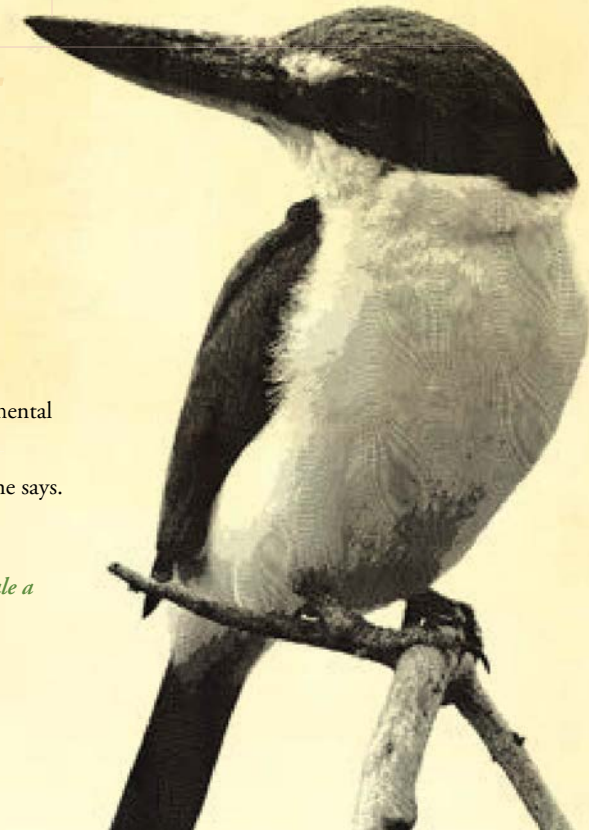
Curator of Ornithology,
Florida Museum of Natural History

With its white "collar" and vivid blue-green plumage, the collared kingfisher is one of the most striking birds of the tropical Pacific islands.

Curator David Steadman was one of the first researchers to survey this species on Tonga, and he says the plentiful birds are worth watching — not just for their beauty but for the dire environmental message their absence signals.

"It is one of the last species of birds to leave when an island's habitat is destroyed or modified," he says. "If kingfishers are gone, the place is in really rough shape."

i *Collared kingfishers perform acrobatic courtship flights, after which the male offers the female a fish, small lizard or other treat.*



LICE



David Reed
Associate Director of Research
and Collections, Florida Museum
of Natural History

Having lived on humans for millennia, bloodsucking lice provide valuable clues in their genes about our evolutionary past, says biologist David Reed. By sequencing ancient louse DNA, Reed has confirmed homo sapiens began wearing clothes while in Africa 80,000 to 100,000 years ago, long before the need for warm clothing in places like Europe and Asia.

Most modern humans have a tiny bit of Neanderthal DNA due to interbreeding between the two species long ago, Reed says, and lice are the same way.

“We are using lice collected from people all over the world to pin down when and where modern humans and Neanderthals overlapped,” Reed says.

i *Cleopatra was buried with a golden nit comb — a sign of status in ancient Egypt, where only the rich wore wigs. Plebs and slaves went bald.*

FLORIDA BURROWING OWL



Allison Smith (7 ALS)
UF/IFAS Department of Wildlife
Ecology and Conservation

Weighing less than a can of soda, the tiny Florida burrowing owl is disappearing nearly everywhere except Marco Island, thanks to Owl Watch, a community/scientist research collaboration started by UF experts and funded by Audubon of the Western Everglades.

UF grad student Allison Smith manages 60 Owl Watch volunteers, who monitor burrows on this urban resort island. In 2019, they protected the homes of 241 breeding pairs, who gave birth to 563 chicks, the highest number on record.

“Burrowing owls are a big personality packed into a tiny ball of feathers,” says Smith. “They need to be bold to survive in a city.”

i *Owlets scare predators from their burrow by mimicking the sounds of a rattlesnake.*

RHESUS MACAQUE



Jane Anderson (PhD '16)
Assistant Professor, Texas A&M
University Kingsville

Brought from Asia to Silver Springs in the 1930s to entice tourists, wild rhesus macaques are now a growing threat — destroying wildlife, attacking humans and carrying a deadly herpes B virus.

A 2015 study by Jane Anderson and UF’s Steve Johnson predicted the number of feral monkeys in Central Florida would double from 175 to 350 by 2022.

Now the state wants to eliminate the nonnative species, but many locals object to killing such an adorable animal. Anderson estimates you could reduce the population by one-third by sterilizing the females.

i *A rhesus monkey named Sam flew to an altitude of 55 miles in 1959 on a NASA rocket, paving the way for space travel.*

NEOTROPICAL LEAF MINER



Akito Kawahara
Associate Professor and Curator,
UF McGuire Center for Lepidoptera
& Biodiversity

Gracillariid leaf-mining micro-moths still boast hundreds of undescribed species in the tropical Amazon. But curator Akito Kawahara is working to change that. He has searched for them in Brazil, Ecuador and French Guiana, identified new species and collaborated on an illustrated catalogue that revises the insect’s classification.

Don’t hate the white blotches and tunnels that leaf miners inflict on leaves, Kawahara says. That cosmetic damage may have hidden benefits, such as delaying plant aging.

“We don’t know how they do it, but understanding this could have broad implications in terms of allowing crops and produce to last much longer,” Kawahara says.

i *Gracillariidae comes from the Latin word that means graceful and slender.*

FLORIDA PANTHER



Madan Oli
UF/IFAS Wildlife Ecology and
Conservation Professor

A subspecies of North American puma, the Florida panther once roamed the southeastern U.S. but is now found mainly in the forests and swamps of southwest Florida.

In 2019 ecologist Madan Oli and peers from the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission released a study showing efforts to increase the Florida panther’s genetic diversity have rescued it from extinction. In the 1990s, there were only 20 to 30 Florida panthers in the state, many suffering from physical abnormalities due to inbreeding.

Between 1995 and 2003, eight female Texas pumas were temporary released in Florida to mate with locals. Today, the Florida panther population is up to 230 healthy animals.

“There’s hope for endangered species,” Oli said.

i *Florida panther kittens are born with dark spots to camouflage them on forest floors.*

QUAHOG



Leslie Sturmer
UF/IFAS Regional Molluscan Shellfish
Aquaculture Extension Agent

When the closure of local oyster beds and a 1994 statewide voter-approved gill net ban virtually killed the economy in Cedar Key’s historic fishing village, quahog specialist

Leslie Sturmer and scientists from both UF and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution stepped in to help the town refocus its unique skills on farming the mollusks. Better known as clams, these marine animals are tasty to eat, but also serve as environmental purifiers, due to their filtration capacity.

Sturmer’s study of the town’s 2012 quahog harvest (135 million clams) showed that the animals filtered 544 million gallons of seawater daily and removed more than 25 thousand pounds of nitrogen and 761 thousand pounds of carbon from Florida’s coastal environment.

i *It takes 25 to 28 months for quahog larvae to reach market size. Left in the wild, their average life span is 33-36 years. However, in 2007, scientists discovered a specimen of ocean quahog that was between 405 and 410 years old.*

NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE



Tim Gowan (9 ALS)
Research Associate, Fish and Wildlife
Research Institute, Florida Fish and
Wildlife Conservation Commission

Measuring up to 55 feet long, the North Atlantic right whale is one of the largest animals in the world, as well as one of the most endangered — fewer than 500 remain. Historically, right whales were hunted for their oil, but today they are more likely to die from ship strikes or entanglements in fishing gear.

Florida plays a unique role in their survival, says specialist Tim Gowan: The state’s northeast coast is the only place in the world where pregnant North Atlantic right whales come to give birth.

i *Right whales have rough patches of skin on their heads, called callosities. Each whale’s callosity pattern is unique, enabling researchers to identify individuals from photographs.*

SCHAUS’ SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY



Jaret Daniels (PhD '99)
Associate Curator and Director,
UF McGuire Center for
Lepidoptera & Biodiversity

Swallowtail butterflies can be found on every continent, with 500 colorful species fluttering about on tapering chevron wings. Among the rarest is the Schaus’ swallowtail, a chocolate-brown species that once flourished in Miami and the Florida Keys. By 2012, there were only four Schaus’ swallowtails left in their native habitat, making the insect all but extinct.

That’s when Jaret Daniels’ scientists at the McGuire Center rolled up their sleeves. They produced 1,000 Schaus’ swallowtail larvae, of which 50 adults and 200 caterpillars were released into Biscayne National Park in 2014.

Today, UF’s ongoing efforts have stabilized the Schaus’ swallowtail population at between 800 and 1,200 individuals in the wild — a small but miraculous step forward.

i *When a swallowtail isn’t sucking nectar, its flexible tongue coils into a spiral.*

MALAYAN TIGER



Kae Kawanishi (PhD '02)
Director, Malaysian Conservation
Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT)

With fewer than 200 animals left in the wild, the Malayan tiger is the most critically endangered tiger species on earth, notes wildlife biologist Kae Kawanishi. She has spent the last 21 years trekking through remote Malayan rainforests to study and protect these big cats: first as a doctoral student (her research was the first-ever population study of Malayan tigers) and then as the founder and director of MYCAT.

Today, the MYCAT Citizen Action for Tiger Watch program draws NGOs and 2,000 people from 37 nations to patrol tiger habits.

While most people assume Kawanishi's job is dangerous, she has never encountered a Malayan tiger in the wild — they are that rare. Her worst injury doing fieldwork? “I had an anaphylactic reaction to an insect sting,” she says. “I fainted and cracked my canine and a rib.”

i *The Malaysian nickname for this species is Pak Belang, “Uncle Stripes.”*



UNGULATES



Samantha Wisely
Associate Professor, UF/
IFAS Department of
Wildlife Ecology and
Conservation

Ungulates are hoofed mammals, a diverse group including deer.

In the late 1800s, there were fewer than 20,000 deer in Florida; today, after intensive management and reintroduction, there are 700,000, says wildlife expert Samantha Wisely. Her team is working with deer farmers to test a new vaccine to prevent a deadly hemorrhaging disease in the animals.

“Nationally, deer trophy hunting is an \$8 billion industry, so keeping deer healthy is economically important for farmers, and it helps improve the health of wild deer populations,” she says.

i *Deer see about five times better than we do, but they only perceive the colors yellow and blue.*



VOLCANO HUMMINGBIRD



Filipe DeAndrade (BSTE '12)
National Geographic
Wildlife Filmmaker

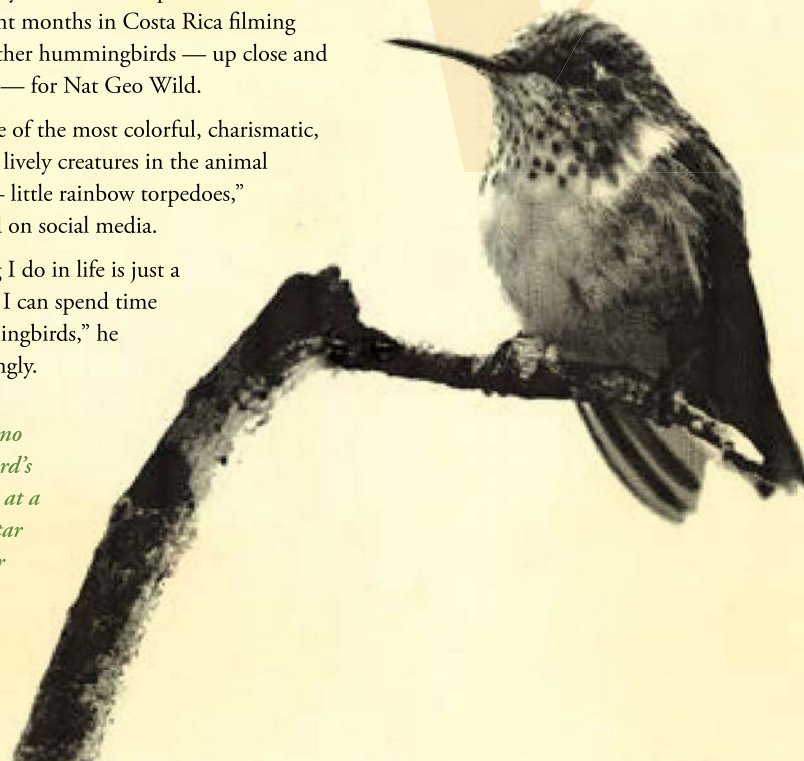
Measuring only 3 inches long with purple throat feathers, the tiny volcano hummingbird is a mighty pollinator. This species feeds on nectar from brightly colored tubular flowers in the forests of Central America.

Documentary filmmaker Filipe DeAndrade happily spent months in Costa Rica filming these and other hummingbirds — up close and in slow-mo — for Nat Geo Wild.

“They’re one of the most colorful, charismatic, vibrant and lively creatures in the animal kingdom — little rainbow torpedoes,” he enthused on social media.

“Everything I do in life is just a cover-up so I can spend time with hummingbirds,” he added, jokingly.

i *A volcano hummingbird's tongue licks at a flower's nectar 13 times per second.*



WHITE IBIS



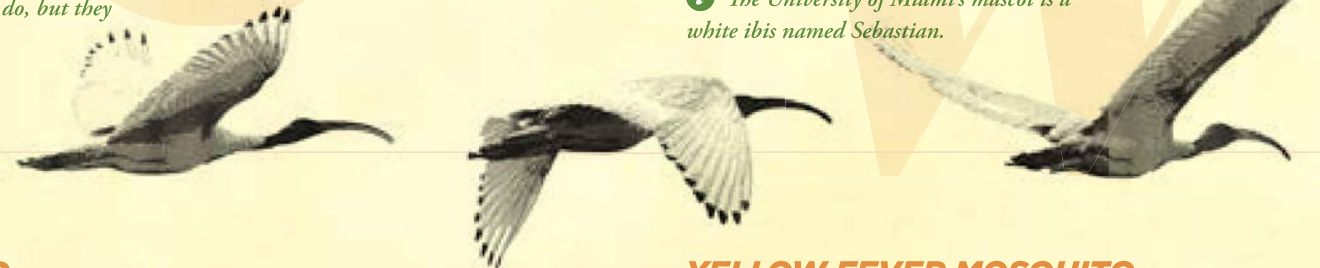
Peter Frederick
Research Professor, UF Department of
Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

With its white plumage and curved orange beak, the white ibis is the quintessential southeastern wading bird. Its native habitat is shallow wetlands, but flocks will also forage in urban parks and lawns, where they soak up mercury and other dangerous toxins.

In 2011, an experiment by UF's Peter Frederick showed mercury contamination reduces white ibis reproduction by 50 percent. Male ibis exposed to mercury had low levels of testosterone, and more than half paired off with other males, behaving as though they had laid eggs.

“Hormones can be easily upset,” Frederick told CBS News. “I think that is the scary part. We are to some extent controlled by what we are exposed to.”

i *The University of Miami's mascot is a white ibis named Sebastian.*



YELLOW FEVER MOSQUITO

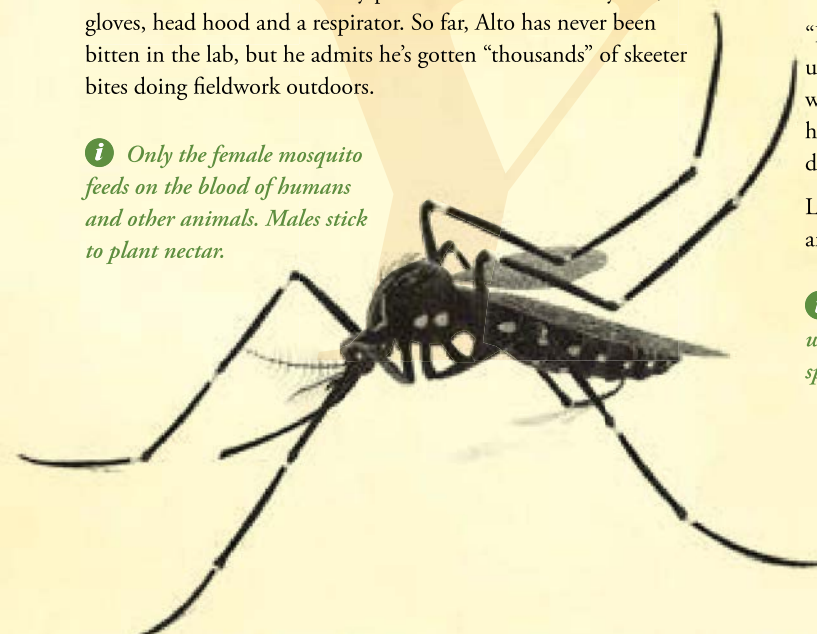


Barry Alto (PhD '06)
Associate Professor, UF/IFAS Florida
Medical Entomology Laboratory

If there is a mosquito you should fear most, it's the yellow fever mosquito, says entomologist Barry Alto. This species carries not just yellow fever but dengue, West Nile virus, chikungunya and Zika, infecting hundreds of millions of people per year.

Alto heads the biosafety level 2 and 3 facilities for UF's medical entomology lab, where he routinely oversees experiments on live mosquitoes carrying lethal diseases. To prevent infection, all scientists follow strict safety protocols and wear a body suit, gloves, head hood and a respirator. So far, Alto has never been bitten in the lab, but he admits he's gotten “thousands” of skeeter bites doing fieldwork outdoors.

i *Only the female mosquito feeds on the blood of humans and other animals. Males stick to plant nectar.*



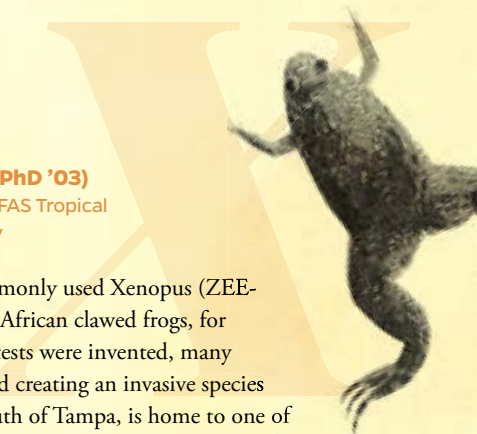
XENOPUS LAEVIS



Dr. Jeff Hill (MS '98, PhD '03)
Invasion ecologist, UF/IFAS Tropical
Aquaculture Laboratory

Almost 80 years ago, doctors commonly used *Xenopus* (ZEE-no-puss) aquatic frogs, also called African clawed frogs, for pregnancy tests. But when better tests were invented, many labs released the frogs into the wild creating an invasive species on four continents. Riverview, south of Tampa, is home to one of these populations. Associate Professor Jeff Hill and his doctoral student Allison Durland say the frogs aren't quite at the same level as other invaders, such as pythons, lionfish or zebra mussels, but the carnivores can survive harsh environmental conditions and will eat just about any small aquatic animal. Hill's research is being used to track environmental impact, teach fish farmers how to protect their ponds, identify which fish stop or slow the invasion and help the aquarium industry profit, since the little frogs don't mind when owners forget to clean their fish tanks.

i *Xenopus' eyes are fixed on top of their head so they can see food particles falling from above. They grab food with their front claws and push it into their mouths, unlike other species that use long, sticky tongues.*



ZEBRAFISH



James Liao
Associate Professor, UF Department of Biology,
Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience

Part of the minnow family, the zebrafish is prized in research because scientists can peer through its transparent body to see organs and systems developing and functioning in real time.

Biomechanist/neuroscientist James Liao channels this unique feature to understand how delicate sense organs in the zebrafish (identical to those in the human ear) enable it to navigate turbulent currents.

“I want to know how underwater animals move and what they're sensing so we can harness the genius of their evolutionary designs,” Liao recently told *Hakai* magazine.

Liao's results can help us better understand human deafness and balance disorders.

i *Zebrafish are frequent fliers on the International Space Station, where researchers study their bone degeneration and muscle atrophy in space for clues about old age in humans.*





HENRY & BALOO

AN INSTAGRAM TALE OF TRAILS & LOVE TRUE

STORY BY NICOLE NEAL | PHOTOS COURTESY
OF ANDRE SIBILSKY AND CYNTHIA BENNETT

To say they are bonded is an understatement.

More accurate: They are soldered together — the lanky German Shepherd-Husky-Boxer-Staffordshire Terrier-Aussie mix and, perched atop his head on a hiking trail, or affixed to his back as they ford a stream, or snuggled next to him in a sleeping bag, his Siamese-mix sidekick.

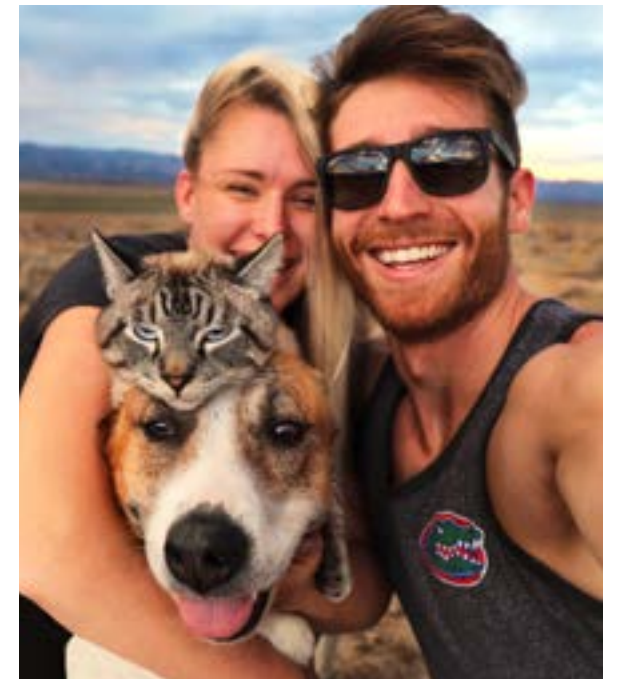
Henry and Baloo, as they are known, are more than just a dog and cat who defy interspecies stereotypes. They are Instagram stars, their cuteness attracting 1.5 million followers as their adventures together cavorting across the Great Plains and Western states are documented and shared by their human companions, **Andre Sibilsky** (BSBA '10) and **Cynthia Bennett**. There's a Henry and Baloo calendar. And guest appearances at conventions and on television shows. And, when the two join Sibilsky and Bennett at cafes in Denver, plenty of fawning by an adoring and disbelieving public.

The most frequently asked question: How the heck do you guys do it?

"As much as we'd love to take credit, a lot of it is that they really just complement each other," says Sibilsky, who came to UF from Dallas as a National Merit Scholar.

Immediately evident when the couple adopted Henry five years ago: the energetic puppy loved being with Sibilsky and Bennett. Also immediately evident: he hated not being with Sibilsky and Bennett. Partly to keep Henry company, the couple adopted Baloo who, as part of a rejected litter, had his own baggage.

Turns out, a dog with separation anxiety and a cat with abandonment issues make great emotional support animals for each other. The clingy (literally and figuratively) kitten seemed to view Henry as a surrogate mother. This suited the needy Henry just fine. Add



Turns out, a dog with separation anxiety and a cat with abandonment issues make great emotional support animals for each other.

to that a shared love of the outdoors and a beautiful friendship was born.

As for their human counterparts, Sibilsky, who works in finance for TSYS, said he, Bennett, Henry and Baloo are loving the life they've built. They head for the trails, foothills, canyons and open road whenever possible.

And they'll keep sharing their adventures. "We want to put positivity out there," says Sibilsky. "There's enough of the other stuff. We'll just have to say 'Go Gators' more often."

For more on Henry, Baloo, Sibilsky and Bennett, follow **HenryTheColoradoDog** on Instagram and visit **OurWildTails.com**

Henry (dog) and Baloo nap during a hike break in Colorado. ABOVE: Andre Sibilsky (BSBA '10) and his girlfriend, Cynthia Bennett, pause for a selfie while Baloo relaxes in his usual hiking pose on top of Henry's head.



From backpacking to canoeing to lounging, Henry (dog) and Baloo want to join in the fun no matter where Colorado's trails and their Gator dad, Andre Sibilsky, take them. When Sibilsky isn't hiking, he's a brand development and marketing consultant.

Come on Gators, get up & go!



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Emmy-nominated Stephen Root (AA '72) portrays Monroe Fuches on HBO's dark comedy series "Barry." Photo provided by HBO.

CASTING CALLS AND CURTAINS

FRESH OFF AN EMMY NOMINATION AND A YEAR OF CRITICAL ACCLAIM
GATOR STEPHEN ROOT SAYS HE'S FOUND HIS SUCCESS AS "THAT GUY."

By Bobby Ampezzan

Art may mirror life, but actor Stephen Root (AA '72) has discovered that sometimes it's a fun house mirror. In his two seasons on the HBO series "Barry," his malignant character Monroe Fuches has been beaten bloody, bound and threatened with dismemberment, tortured by tooth filing, arrested and attacked by a "feral mongoose" of a tween martial artist who sinks her full bite into his cheek. Tough go for Fuches. Bully for Root!

"I want Stephen Root to get an Emmy nomination for this season of 'Barry,'" tweeted Vox TV critic Emily VanDerWerff.

"... He's never been so much as nominated for an Emmy despite being a phenomenal actor who has appeared in every show made on television since he was born," tweeted New York Times staffer James Poniewozik in response.

"From a standpoint of universal justice he deserves at least 10 of them."

Indeed, the Television Academy included Root as an Emmy finalist this year in the best comedy supporting actor category, but another actor walked away with the award. No matter; after almost a half century in the business, Root's stock is still rising. And as a character actor, he's happy to remain "that guy" and add even more titles to his 12-page-long IMDb list of credits.

Root's epic talent for turning small roles into completely memorable characters — such as Milton from the film "Office Space," whose red Swingline stapler remains a pop culture classic 20 years later — is what led him to rewarding and revered turns in Coen Brothers movies, rowdy comedies like "Dodgeball" and serious supporting characters in award-winning TV shows. But it's his turn as Fuches that drew the Television

#MeToo movie "Bombshell" was released with Root's role supporting those of A-listers Nicole Kidman, Charlize Theron and Margot Robbie. He's also in filming for the comedy thriller "Happily," a "Perry Mason" episode and a crime drama "Empty Man" that's due out in August.

ALWAYS A GATOR

At 68, the affable and approachable Root says he loves his life, his work, his family — and the Gators. The die-hard fan was in Orlando in August for the football season opener against Miami — preferring to sit among fans, rather than in the President's Box.

His actor friends, Brian Reddy and Wayne Knight, say Root's proselytizing

says Reddy, who recalls a time about 20 years ago when Root set up a three-way phone call so the friends could talk while watching the Florida-Georgia football game on TV. "He said, 'We gotta watch it boys!' No, the truth is, in the early days, we [UGA] were getting our butts whipped pretty bad, and the reason he wanted that phone call was because he knew Florida would win!"

'HE CAN DO THAT, TOO'

Root is the son of a construction supervisor, whose industrial projects were so lengthy, specialized and lucrative that the family

of photojournalism — he eventually understood his mother's coaching when he took a theater elective at UF and performed as a "spear carrier" in one student play.

Root says that class led him to begin hanging out at the Hippodrome, where his dating life flourished and the energy of the stage marshaled his imagination and work ethic.

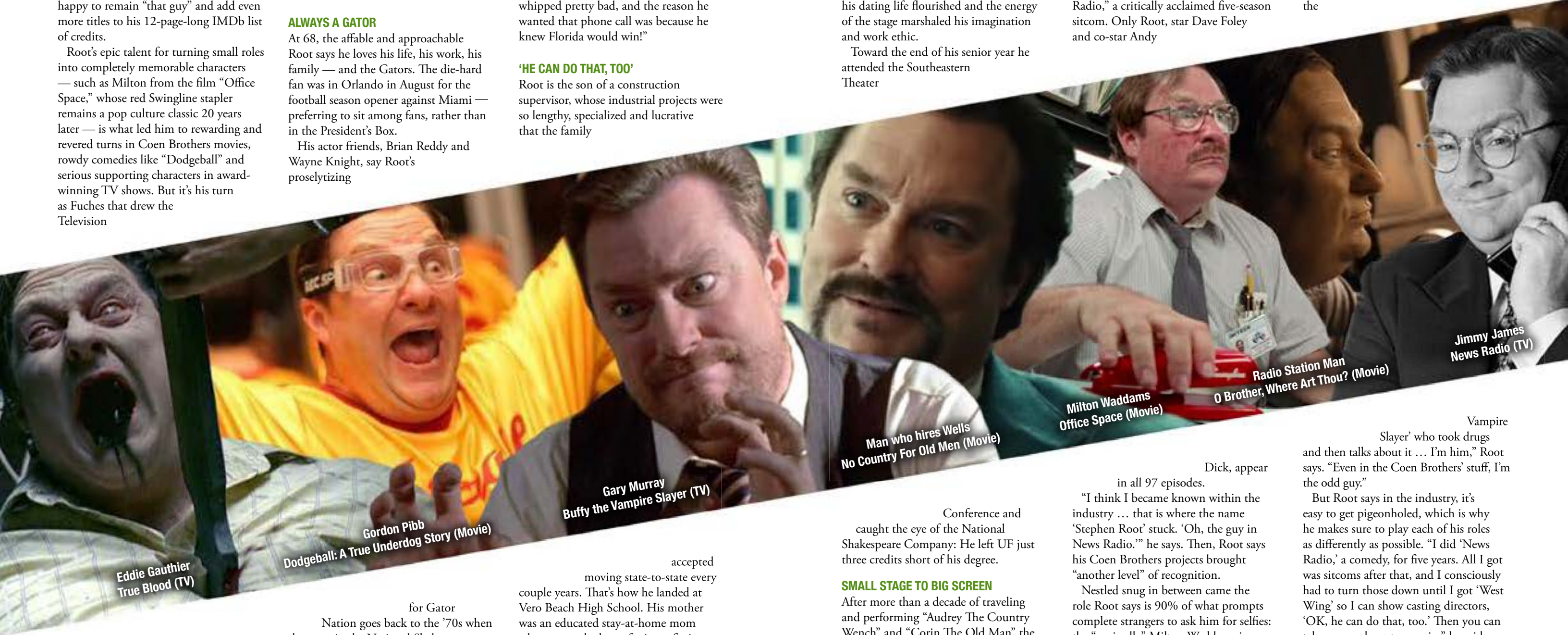
Toward the end of his senior year he attended the Southeastern Theater

sergeant, he and Demi Moore bonded over raising young kids in this peripatetic occupation.

Then, in 1995, came what Root still considers his defining career break: He was cast as Jimmy James, the "idiot or idiot savant" station owner in "News Radio," a critically acclaimed five-season sitcom. Only Root, star Dave Foley and co-star Andy

The following year, however, Root dispelled any doubt with his performance as a blind Southern radio station man in the Coen Brothers' "O Brother Where Art Thou."

"If you're looking for the bent guy, like the principal in 'Buffy the



Academy's notice and, finally, its Emmy nomination. Root says he's had little time to celebrate the honor, however.

This fall he worked opposite Glenn Close in the filming of "Four Good Days." In December, the acclaimed

for Gator Nation goes back to the '70s when they met in the National Shakespeare Company. Reddy and Knight, both known for their roles in "Seinfeld" — Reddy as the "High Talker" and Knight as "Newman" — are both University of Georgia alumni.

"For years Steve has been shootin' this [crap] about Florida being better,"

accepted moving state-to-state every couple years. That's how he landed at Vero Beach High School. His mother was an educated stay-at-home mom who nurtured a love of science fiction and a conviction that the arts could be a professional pursuit.

Although he held to more traditional jobs during his early college days — he paid for school by working summer construction gigs and turned his high school hobby of photography into a study

Conference and caught the eye of the National Shakespeare Company: He left UF just three credits short of his degree.

SMALL STAGE TO BIG SCREEN

After more than a decade of traveling and performing "Audrey The Country Wench" and "Corin The Old Man" the same night, as he's put it in interviews, he decided to make the leap to the screen. His first credited role in 1988's "Crocodile Dundee II" is "DEA Agent (Toilet)." His second is a mad scientist in "Monkey Shines," a horror movie. Two years later, on the set of "Ghost," playing a police

Dick, appear in all 97 episodes.

"I think I became known within the industry ... that is where the name 'Stephen Root' stuck. 'Oh, the guy in News Radio.'" he says. Then, Root says his Coen Brothers projects brought "another level" of recognition.

Nestled snug in between came the role Root says is 90% of what prompts complete strangers to ask him for selfies: the "squirrely" Milton Waddams in Mike Judge's "Office Space." He'd been lending his voice to Judge's primetime Fox show "King of the Hill," but in a later interview, Judge admitted he had to go to bat for Root with studio execs because "you're not a name, and it's a fairly important part," Root recalls.

Vampire Slayer' who took drugs and then talks about it ... I'm him," Root says. "Even in the Coen Brothers' stuff, I'm the odd guy."

But Root says in the industry, it's easy to get pigeonholed, which is why he makes sure to play each of his roles as differently as possible. "I did 'News Radio,' a comedy, for five years. All I got was sitcoms after that, and I consciously had to turn those down until I got 'West Wing' so I can show casting directors, 'OK, he can do that, too.' Then you can take a comedy or two again," he said.

Reddy says Root's strategy has worked perfectly.

"Steve has a wonderful quality of subsuming himself in a role," Reddy, says. "For many years, people didn't know who he was because he was so convincing in his characters.

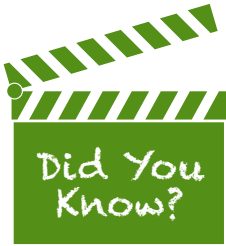
Reddy says Root can also be a chameleon. “Physically, Steve is right in the middle — perfect as a character actor. I’m balding, and you can’t change me too much. Steve ... can change himself. Just very versatile as an actor, and smart as a whip,” Reddy says.

“DILIGENT, DISCIPLINED AND KIND”
Despite his hectic work life, Root continues to stay connected with his alma mater. His gift in 2003 provided an acting studio in the Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion by the J. Wayne Reitz Union. He’s seeding a Stephen Root Scholarship Fund. And he’s returned to UF on several occasions to teach a master class for aspiring actors. Why keep coming back? Root says kindness is a code to live by.

Root expects to begin shooting his third season of “Barry” soon.

“Steve has an enormously good, strong reputation of being somebody who is diligent, disciplined and kind,” Reddy says. That’s how you earn longevity in the business, Root says. “Do your work as well as you can, be a nice guy, and have people want to work with you,” because in the case of guest and limited roles, “you’re going into a family that’s already established.” His current family, the cast of “Barry,” reunites soon. Root expects to begin shooting the third season within the next

few months. The Coen Brothers have also called him into action again. This time, it’s a billing that harkens back to those roles that first called him away from UF: Shakespeare, and specifically, “the Scottish play” (Macbeth). Root says he’s happy to retrace those steps today. It reminds him that if it hadn’t been for his journey through UF, he might have ended up wearing hard hats instead of costumes. “My whole background for my family was construction. ... I would have continued,” Root imagines. “There’s no chance for me to know ... but if I hadn’t gone to a liberal arts college and been exposed, even to first- and second-year history and philosophy and English, I would not have ended up here.”



STEPHEN ROOT ...

Has appeared in four films as of 2019 that were nominated for the Best Picture Oscar: **Ghost** in 1990, **No Country for Old Men** in 2007 (won the category), **Selma** in 2014 and **Get Out** in 2017

Donated \$100,000 to UF in 2003 to fund the **Stephen Root Acting Studio**

Is a true **character actor**, a supporting actor who plays unusual, interesting or eccentric characters

Made his movie debut in the 1988 adventure comedy **Crocodile Dundee II**

Voiced characters in three video games: **Blade Runner**,

Finding Nemo and **King of the Hill**; a plethora of movies, such as **Ice Age** and **Finding Nemo**; and TV shows, such as **King of the Hill**

Was born on Nov. 17, 1951, making him a **Scorpio**

Played a Klingon in **Star Trek: The Next Generation**

Still has **Office Space** movie fans approach him to ask about his iconic red Swingline stapler

Used these words when asked to describe himself: **kind, awkward** and a **talented nerd**

Looked up to Dustin Hoffman and Gene Hackman when Root

was starting out because they were character actors who eventually got to play lead roles

Would invite these character actors to his fantasy dinner party: **Frank Morgan, Strother Martin** and **W.C. Fields**

Once said: “I don’t want the name

Stephen Root to come up because that’s not who you’re supposed to be seeing. That’s why I’m not on social media. I want you to think of me as the character, whoever you see up on the screen”

Says the strength of his work comes from **preparation**



STEPHEN ROOT: Gator Emeritus and Friend of a Bulldog

by Wayne Knight

I’ve known Stephen Root for almost 40 years.

We met in New York as theatrical gunslingers; I was doing my first play on Broadway and Steve was touring nationally in “Driving Miss Daisy.” We sized each other up and have been competitors and friends ever since. Root preceded me to Los Angeles and seemed to do every guest spot imaginable until I arrived. We became much closer on the Left Coast as we didn’t have so many friends readily available and had to make do with

each other. Since that time, Stephen has become one of my best friends in the world. He was the best man at my wedding, he’s the godfather of my son, and when my mother passed away shortly after my wife gave birth and couldn’t attend the funeral, Stephen flew to Georgia and took care of me during that time as a true brother.

He’d do just about anything for me except get the Gators to lose! Since 1990, and the arrival of Steve Spurrier, life has not been a bowl of cherries for us Bulldog fans: 1995 alone (when the Gators scored over 50 points in Sanford Stadium) was enough to become a recurring heartbreak and nightmare.

I cling to memories of Vince Dooley and Herschel Walker and delight in any game show hosted by Tim Tebow. But does Root gloat over all these victories? Does he rub it in on his sad UGA buddy? YOU BET HE DOES! The strength of Root’s attachment to Gator Nation takes precedence over mere human kindness.

After all, I am a Bulldog.

Seriously, Stephen has ... traveled around the globe to support family and friends, fearlessly been there for those on the precipice, and celebrated his friends’ triumphs, performances and life events.

A simple example ... [involved] the reunion of the supergroup, Cream in

“He’d do just about anything for me except get the Gators to lose!”

2005. This was my favorite band as a kid and I had gone to their 1968 farewell tour. At Stephen’s urging, we got on a plane and witnessed their final US concert. Why pass up the opportunity of fulfilling a fantasy? It may not seem like much, but it’s part of Root’s [penchant] to go the extra mile. Without his encouragement, I would have missed out on one of my greatest memories.

As a person, Stephen’s generosity eventually entered into his work. His ability see the full measure of person, their strengths, weaknesses and foibles has made him a more complete actor. He can reach comedic heights by taking chances with the outer reaches of a character or mine the subtle nuances within. I believe the honors he received recently are not only truly deserved but late in being recognized. It takes a view of the body of his work to realize how many times he has Zelig-like disappeared into the fabric of a film or show — making it real for us. ... And he keeps growing. The work he is doing now is probably the best of his career. He’s getting better, dammit!

I just hope Root is not indicative of the Gators at large. Although we still have the edge on the rivalry, the last 20 years have seen a steady march toward parity or God forbid, something worse. I can count on Stephen Root to sympathetically laugh in my face if that happens.



Professor Planet

FROM LOCAL BEE HIVES TO THE AMAZON FOREST, **UF EXPERTS** SHARE HOW THEY'RE HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE **MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION**, THANKS TO GATOR INVESTORS.

Yes, the Gator Nation is everywhere. Meet two UF professors who go above and beyond — and around the world — to share their expertise with people who are helping people preserve our planet — including future generations of planet-keepers.

PROFESSOR POLLINATION OR “THE BEE GUY”

Jamie Ellis leads the UF Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab and serves as North America’s representative to the International Bee Research Association and a North American representative to the Prevention of Honey Bee Colony Losses Group. He is interviewed below by **Jennifer Holmes**, president of the Florida Beekeeping Association, whose political support and financial contributions led to state funding and subsequent construction of Ellis’ lab last year.



JENNIFER HOLMES (above) is president of the Florida Beekeeping Association

DR. JAMIE ELLIS (blue shirt), UF Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab director, and **EMILY NOORDYKE**, second year master’s student, inspect a hive at the lab.

He is interviewed below by **Jennifer Holmes**, president of the Florida Beekeeping Association, whose political support and financial contributions led to state funding and subsequent construction of Ellis’ lab last year.

HOLMES: How long have you worked with bees?

ELLIS: I’ve kept bees since I was 12, so 29 years.

HOLMES: Are managed bee populations still declining?

ELLIS: This is tricky to explain. On average, beekeepers experience about 40% gross loss rates yearly because of various stressors. (If you have 100 colonies, you stand to lose 40 of them in a year.) However, beekeepers can split up the 60 surviving colonies so new queens will produce more bees. And, beekeepers import/purchase more colonies each year. Together, that brings the net change in U.S. bee numbers to a 1% increase annually. (If you begin the year with 100 colonies, you will end the year with 101.) The net number of colonies is driven by economics. When it’s financially feasible to have more colonies, the numbers go up despite the high gross loss rate.

HOLMES: How is your team helping bees?

ELLIS: We study the main stressors of bee colonies (varroa, a mite that feeds on honey bees; nutrition; various pests/pathogens; etc.) in an effort to identify

new control options, develop better strategies for managing pests and more. We also invest heavily in extension and instruction efforts aimed at educating beekeepers/students and improving the sustainability of beekeeping for the long term.

HOLMES: Why is UF’s new bee lab important?

ELLIS: Its amazing infrastructure allows us to conduct top-quality bee research, develop and implement state-of-the-art extension and instruction programs, and house our growing team under one roof. We now have dedicated teaching space, a teaching apiary and a permanent home for the UF/IFAS Bee College. Our new faculty are already expanding instruction and recording new podcast series on beekeeping. One new scientist focuses exclusively on research to help commercial beekeepers. And a new lecturer is teaching three courses on beekeeping. We have room now for our many undergrad volunteers and international visiting scholars. I could go on.

HOLMES: What can we all do to help bees?

ELLIS: Become beekeepers. Landscape with pollinator-friendly and native plants. Provide nesting habitat for native bee species. Use pesticides sparingly. Support bee research as volunteers or even financially.

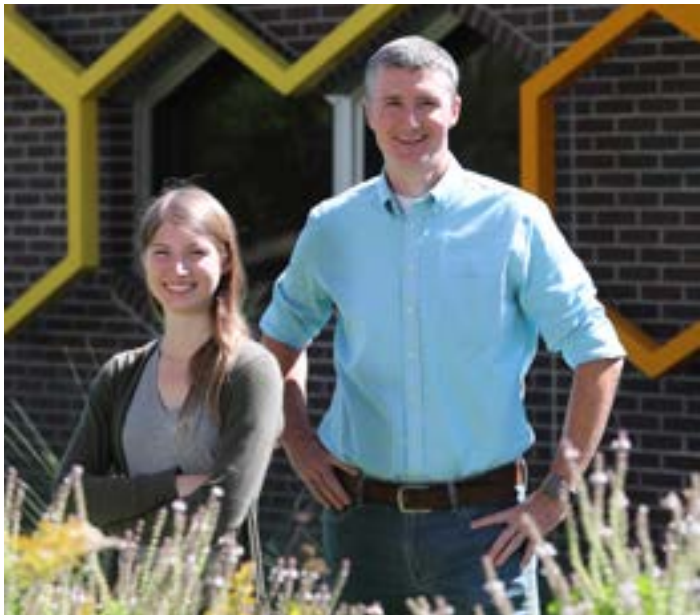
HOLMES: Describe the importance of bees.

ELLIS: Honey bees are responsible for an estimated 20+% of the food we consume. No other agriculture commodity can claim that. They contribute to healthy ecosystems, as well, through the pollination services they provide to plant communities.

HOLMES: How many times have you been stung?

ELLIS: Tens of thousands of times.

PHOTO BY AARON DAYE



BEE FACT: Honey bees are not native to North America, South America, Australia and various islands around the world. They came to the U.S. with the earliest European settlers (plus some importations after that). There are only nine honey bee species on the planet. All but one are native to Asia; the other comes from Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

NEXT GEN BEEKEEPER

Emily Noordyke, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a second year master’s student working for Dr. Jamie Ellis in UF’s Bee Research and Extension Lab.

What’s your job like?

It’s amazing because Dr. Ellis is first and foremost a beekeeper; that’s how he started. Because of that, he’s well prepared for applied honey bee research.

Why UF?

Dr. Ellis thinks about our work from the beekeeping perspective. That was a big reason why I came here. I started as a beekeeper in Michigan five years ago. I was an art major and heard about this beekeeping student club. I fell in love with it and started doing research on honey bee nutrition. Coming down here and getting a completely different beekeeping experience was a great draw. We have a prolonged season for research, which allows me to get into more projects. UF’s entomology department is very strong, giving me a good diversity of experiences working with everyone and not just on bees. There are a lot of visiting professors, too, so it’s been easy to connect with experts worldwide. Also, Dr. Ellis’ former students have great careers worldwide, so I think my prospects are good.

How many times have you been stung?

I can’t even count how many times, but it’s been a while since the last one.

SPEAKING UP FOR THE LAND,AIR AND SEA

Environmental attorney **Tom Ankersen** directs UF’s Conservation Clinic, which allows UF law students to take part in active legal matters involving land, water and air. While his focus has been on Latin America and the Caribbean, his work has led to domestic and international agreements, including a United Nations treaty system.

He is interviewed below by **Larry Sellers** (BSBA ’75, JD ’79), a Holland & Knight partner in Tallahassee, who also specializes in environmental and land use law. Sellers and his wife, Cathy (BS ’76, MEd ’82), a Florida administrative law judge, personally support the Conservation Clinic.

SELLERS: *Having worked/taught in 30 countries, what is one legal issue you’ve faced the most no matter the locale?*

ANKERSEN: Property disputes. Whether negotiating safari concessions on tribal lands in Africa to protect wildlife habitat, writing briefs in international tribunals on the human right to communal property, drafting conservation easements in Florida or ensuring local ordinances do not “take” private property, the sacrosanctity of property has been paramount.

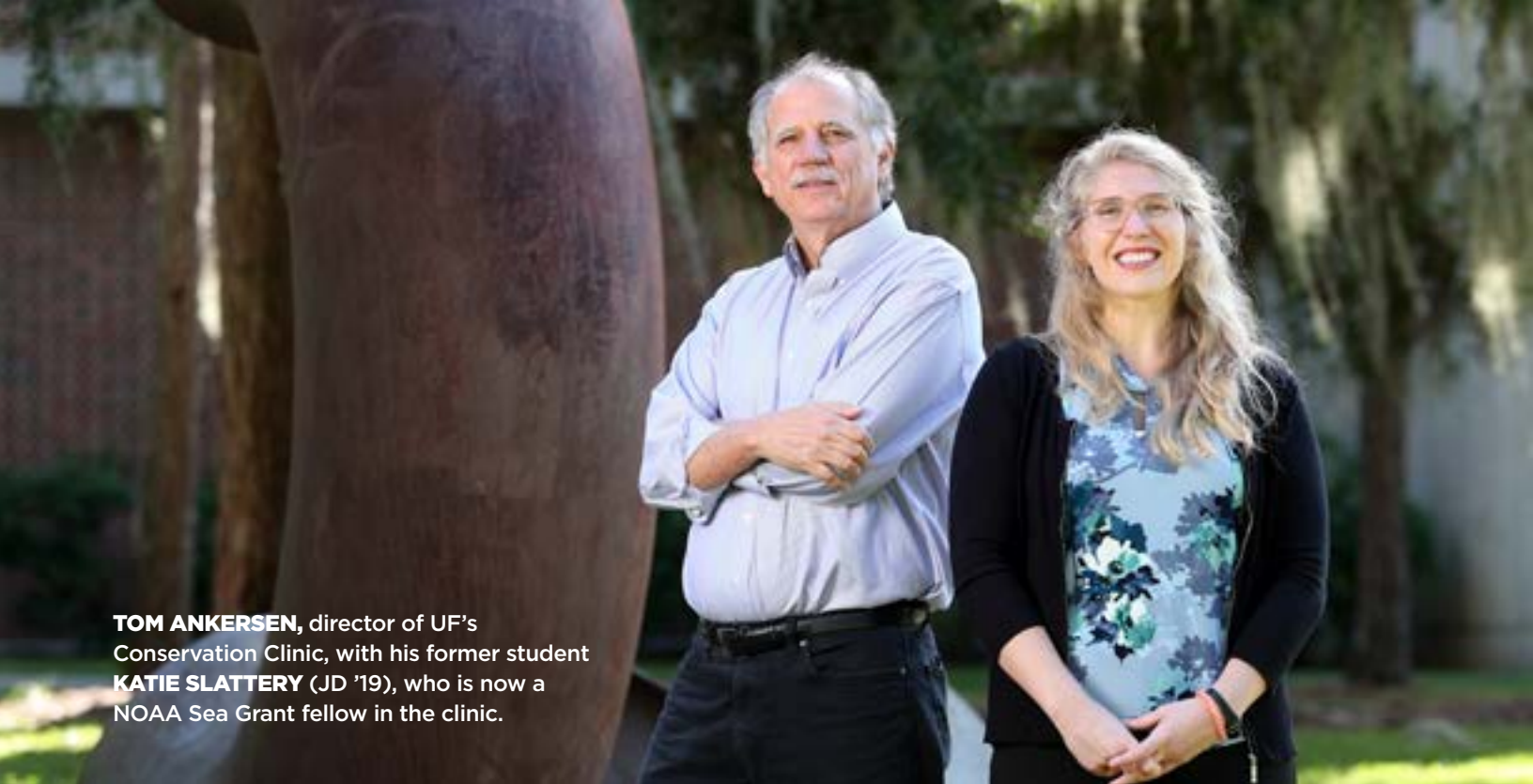
SELLERS: *What revelations do your students often have at the clinic?*

ANKERSEN: Much of what environmental and land use lawyers do doesn’t always involve the law. The hardest expectations to manage are your own. The world doesn’t run on semesters. Even in the age of the internet you have to pick up the phone.



LARRY SELLERS, a Holland & Knight partner in Tallahassee, and his wife, Cathy, a Florida administrative judge, both mentor UF law students.

PHOTOS BY AARON DAYE



TOM ANKERSEN, director of UF’s Conservation Clinic, with his former student **KATIE SLATTERY** (JD ’19), who is now a NOAA Sea Grant fellow in the clinic.

SELLERS: *From sea grass restoration and turtle conservation to beach access and forest protection, which environmental issue means the most to you and why?*

ANKERSEN: The protection of marine and coastal environments, especially beaches. I grew up in Melbourne on the Indian River Lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean. My childhood was a relatively unfettered exploration of these ecosystems at a time when Melbourne was changing from a Florida frontier town to the epicenter of the space program. Sea turtles occupy every jurisdiction under the law of the sea, and I have followed them.

SELLERS: *Why contribute your talents to UF over some other law school?*

ANKERSEN: I knew I was going focus my career in and on Florida, and in addition to being my alma mater, it is the best law school in the state. Also, I credit former Dean Jon Mills with giving me the space, literally and figuratively, to flourish. The ’90s were exciting times. You could fit all the international environmental lawyers in the world in a small room. With UF’s tropical conservation reputation preceding me in Latin America, and a

home base in subtropical Florida, I was able to become one of them.

SELLERS: *What value does the Conservation Clinic bring to Floridians?*

ANKERSEN: We undertake projects that our clients might not pursue, if it weren’t for our services. In many cases, these projects represent policy innovations that then diffuse across the state. The clinic’s fingerprints can be found in a number of areas of state and local law, and internationally. I am fortunate to have developed a long-term relationship with Florida Sea Grant and UF/IFAS extension and with the Tropical Conservation and Development Program in the Center for Latin American Studies, which support our work by providing scientific support and community access at home and abroad.

PARTING THOUGHT: “Our clinic — and the law school as a whole — is fortunate to have a strong alumni network,” Ankersen said. “I’m grateful to UF law grads like you, Larry [Sellers], who mentor students and support the travel that is required of a statewide — and even international — clinical practice, which strengthens our overall environmental, land use and real estate law program.

NEXT GEN DEFENDER

Katie Slattery (JD ’19) of Satellite Beach worked in the Levin College of Law’s Conservation Clinic while earning her environmental and land use law degree. This fall, she became the clinic’s fulltime Sea Grant Legal Fellow. In 2020, she will gain more experience as a Knauss Marine Policy Fellow.

What’s your job like?

In a competitive law school environment where it can be difficult to distinguish yourself, the clinic provided me with experiences and skills that helped me stand out. I worked directly with clients on complex legal issues.

For instance, my work with the Sea Turtle Conservancy involved the evaluation of sea turtle management in coastal parks throughout Florida and the development of best management practices for state and local stakeholders. My fellowships are undoubtedly attributed to my time with the Conservation Clinic.

How has the clinic helped you?

As he does with each student entering the Conservation Clinic, Professor Ankersen paired me with clients and projects that allowed me to explore my interest in water law and policy. My work with the Florida Springs Institute and Sea Turtle Conservancy recommending more stringent regulations for outstanding Florida springs and sea turtle management has been instrumental as I launch my career.

The Incredible Journey of Mariel White

Two years ago, near-fatal complications from a rare disease interrupted a sophomore's quest for her degree. Now this brave Gator is back on campus — getting by with a little help from her UF friends.

STORY BY BARBARA DRAKE (MFA '04)
PHOTOS BY AARON DAYE

Tattooed on the wrist of 21-year-old Mariel White (2HHP) are two words: “She persisted.”

That phrase only hints at the epic battles Mariel has fought and won in the last two years.

In September 2017, Mariel was an active sophomore — taking a full load of classes, cheering at Gator games with her Phi Mu sisters, running at the gym, working two part-time jobs — when severe neck pain and a fever landed her in UF Health Shands Hospital. Back home near Atlanta, she was diagnosed with Churg-Strauss/EGPA, an extremely rare vascular disease with only 2 to 5 new cases per year out of every 1 million people. Doctors started her on oral chemotherapy and steroids. But in January 2018, complications from the incurable disease caused Mariel to suffer four strokes.

She lost partial vision in one eye and was permanently paralyzed from the waist down.

Friends and family guarded Mariel fiercely in early 2018, assuring her she “would return to UF one day.” That phrase became the young woman's rallying cry over the next 18 months as she courageously fought to overcome her physical and cognitive impairments and to master caring for herself as a paraplegic.

“It was never an option not to go back to UF,” Mariel said. “I knew I was going to work as hard as possible to make that happen.”

On August 2, 2019, nearly two years after falling ill, Mariel returned as a student to UF.

Whatever lies ahead, Mariel, now 21, is determined to graduate from UF with a Bachelor of Science in sports management, and a minor in mass communications, ideally in fall 2021. Her goal is to be a sports reporter and analyst.

“I’ve never let anything stop me from dreaming big and setting big goals and high standards,” Mariel wrote on her new blog. “This is no different.

“I am strong. I am capable. I am not defined by my disability.”

Here are scenes from her first semester back at UF.



PROVIDED PHOTOS

Mariel White with Phi Mu sister Ally Tacket in August 2017, weeks before falling ill.



Friends Ally Tacket and Riley Marshall visit Mariel in the hospital in January 2018.



Mariel enters her Intro to Public Speaking class with her service dog, Lassie (short for Molasses).



Service dog Lassie gets in the middle while Mariel and her mother, Jill Olney, make her dorm room bed in Cypress Hall. “Yes, Lassie, this is your room too,” says Mariel.



Sorority sister Riley Marshall carries Mariel on the lawn of Phi Mu house.

August 7, 2019 | Blog Post

“I have so many thoughts of excitement and fear running through my head,” she writes. “I’m excited to be back with my friends, back in school, back to college life, but also afraid of all the what ifs and unknowns.

“I’m worried about what people will think about me and if they’ll accept me. I’m worried I’m not going to be able to keep up in the way I want to. I’m worried I won’t be able to do certain things because they won’t be accessible. And I’m terrified I’m going to get sick or have my symptoms flare.”

August 2, 2019 | Cypress Hall Dorm

Move-in day is monumental for Mariel. It’s equally so for her mother, Jill Olney, who is doing a heroic job of letting go of her daughter for a second time.

“I’m super happy, super nervous to have her here. Really, she is ready for this. Plus I’m only five hours away,” Jill says, reassuring herself.

Another safety net to calm Jill’s fears: every inch of her daughter’s room in Cypress Hall, hailed as “the most accessible residence hall in America,” has been planned and outfitted for people with mobility impairments: a zero-entry shower, a height-adjustable sink, easy door openers and a computerized system to control lights and window blinds. Plus, a personal assistant will be helping Mariel with weekly shopping and room cleaning.

Mariel is already taking charge of her space. Now that she can fully support her own weight with her arms, she no longer needs the room’s overhead lift system. “We can take that down,” she says.



A VERY GOOD DOG

A trained 3-year-old chocolate Labrador, Lassie (short for Molasses), has been with Mariel since June 2018, just after her hospital discharge. Mariel says she can’t imagine life in a wheelchair without her.

Lassie can pick things up and hand them to Mariel, push buttons to open doors and elevators, and open and close drawers if they have a bandanna tied to them.

“I’ve almost never gone in public without her,” she says. “I’m teaching her how to put my dirty clothes in the laundry.”

Also, Lassie has changed Mariel’s social interactions.

“When I’m with Lassie, other people see her, rather than someone in a wheelchair,” Mariel says.

August 22, 2019 | Phi Mu Sorority House

ABBA’s “Dancing Queen” blares as about 150 Phi Mu sisters in sequined disco gear mill about on the front lawn, awaiting the new members on Bid Day. With glitter on her face, Mariel grooves in her wheelchair, Lassie panting beside her in a pink Phi Mu bandanna.

Since Mariel first got sick, friends, family and the Gator Nation have enveloped her in their care and willed her to fight back.

For instance, nine months into her recovery (October 2018), the Tim Tebow Foundation W15H program hosted Mariel and her family in Gainesville for the LSU vs. Florida game. Mariel’s VIP treatment included attending practice with the team and being Tebow’s guest on ESPN’s “SEC Nation.” Tebow also introduced her to ESPN host and sideline reporter Laura Rutledge (BSTel ’11).

But perhaps Mariel has no greater friends than her Phi Mu friends, who live by their sorority’s motto, “The Faithful Sisters.”

When she was first paralyzed, they sat by her hospital bed in Georgia and held fundraisers to help pay for her medical expenses. Now Phi Mu is doing all it can to make her and future sisters with disabilities feel welcome, including installing an elevator and a wheelchair-accessible shower.

“We’re really, really happy to have her back,” says senior Riley Marshall (4ENG), who has been known to carry Mariel piggyback. “It was so incredibly hard when she was ill.”

At 6 p.m., 80 new Phi Mus come running down the hill to their new home. Three years ago, Mariel was one of them.

“I’m glad my friends are learning about accessibility and how it really impacts me,” Mariel writes later. “It’s something I never even noticed or considered before, but now I have to think about it everywhere I go.”



FROM LEFT: UF head football coach Dan Mullen with Mariel and Tim Tebow (BSA ’09) in fall 2018.



Mariel takes advantage of the Student Rec Center’s elevated stretching area, designed to facilitate lateral transfers from wheelchair to mat and back.

August 2, 2019 | Cypress Hall Dorm

The gym is Mariel’s domain. It was in her freshman year, and it still is — except now she favors different workouts and equipment.

“Before, I would always be on this side of the gym,” she says, nodding at the banks of Stairmasters and elliptical machines. “I mainly worked my legs.”

Triceps flexing, Mariel grasps her wheels and propels herself to the free-weight section, where she grabs a pair of 15-pound dumbbells.

“Now, I mainly focus on upper body,” she says between push-press reps, bicep curls and pull-ups.

Prior to returning to UF, Mariel worked with a personal trainer to build her upper body strength and lose the 50 pounds she had gained from her prescribed steroids. Key to her success was Disability Icon (DI), an online program with customized fitness, nutrition and lifestyle coaching for wheelchair users.

The work paid off. Mariel’s confidence soared in September 2019 when she flew on her own from Jacksonville to Salt Lake City to attend a four-day DI empowerment workshop for women in wheelchairs.

September 4, 2019 | Blog Post

Living with Churg-Strauss syndrome means accepting limitations.

“I’m learning more how my autoimmune condition affects me on a daily basis,” Mariel writes. “On days where I go nonstop or stay up later than usual, I start to have lots of pain. The pain sucks, but it forces me to stop what I’m doing and go to bed, so I guess it’s kind of preventing anything worse from happening.”

Then there is the bittersweet realization that time hasn’t stood still for the Class of 2020:

“I’ve loved being back, but it’s been really hard knowing that a lot of my friends are going to graduate in May and leave me behind,” she writes. “Hearing everyone talking about being seniors and graduating, and their plans for after college, it’s really hard.”

September 13, 2019 | Rinker Hall

To anyone observing today’s Intro to Public Speaking class, Mariel appears to be just another bright, articulate student who freely shares her opinions in discussions.

Classmates don’t realize that her disease brought on learning issues.

“I’m more disabled because of my strokes and chronic illness, the things you can’t see, rather than the spinal stroke (paralysis) and wheelchair, the things you can see,” she writes in her blog.

Immediately after the strokes, Mariel had problems recalling words. “I couldn’t tell you what my favorite food was, my friends’ names, or what I called my grandmother,” she writes. “I also had to relearn how to read; I didn’t even know what the letter W was called.”

Other skills she had to relearn include basic math — starting with 2+2 — and the practice of scanning a text, made difficult by the loss of peripheral vision in her right eye.

Today after considerable rehab, therapy and practice, Mariel’s cognitive impairments are greatly improved; but she still has farther to go. This fall, she reduced her schedule to two classes to ease her transition. Even so, she finds herself caught up in familiar anxieties over grades, homework and tests. But this time, her perspective is different.

“I’m grateful that now I’m able to stress about school,” she writes.



Mariel plans a group presentation with her classmates. “Public speaking is something I would’ve been terrified of a year ago, but now I feel like I’ve had enough experience that I’m prepared,” she says.

ACCESSIBILITY AT UF

6TH UF’s national rank for inclusion of students with disabilities, per U.S. News & World Report. Criteria include classrooms and dorms accessibility, and campus awareness of inclusion.

255 Occupancy of UF’s Cypress Hall dorm, which features numerous amenities including 35 rooms with ceiling lifts, door openers and custom-fitted furniture, carpet-less rooms for students with allergies, single rooms for those with anxiety and depression, and accessible workout rooms.

3,000 UF students with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities who receive services from UF’s Disability Resource Center



Mariel meets her new Phi Mu little sister, Danielle Murphy.

Sept 20, 2019 | Phi Mu House

It’s the annual reveal, when the new “little sisters” find out which older Phi Mu has become their mentor, or “big sister.”

Until a week ago, Mariel wasn’t sure if she would be called on to participate. Then she got a text message and sprang into action, ordering custom items from Etsy (a T-shirt, a cozy blanket, and more) and dropping them off each evening for her little at Phi Mu, anonymously.

On the front lawn, the new members walk in circles — once, twice — around the veterans, singing “We are the sisters of Phi Mu.” Each little cradles her latest gift. When she spies someone with a matching item, she has found her big sister.

At the third pass, sophomore Danielle Murphy of Atlanta is still searching. Then she runs to the bottom of the hill, having spied Mariel there holding an identical glass.

“Oh my god, thank you so much! I love the blanket,” Danielle gushes.

“I’m so glad,” says Mariel. “I still have the blanket my big gave me.”

Later, Mariel writes on her blog: “Life is hard for everyone at times, but it’s so important to take a step back and get perspective. Appreciate where you are. Appreciate where you’ve been. Dream and prepare for where you to want to go. Perspective is the key to joy.”

MORE ON MARIEL

Her blog: marielwhite.com

[instagram.com/mariel_adair](https://www.instagram.com/mariel_adair)

Meeting Tebow: bit.ly/2N6LEfE

Cypress Hall: bit.ly/2pl6zhd

POWER



RANGER

This seasoned leader goes out on a limb to fight for our nation's wild areas — and for diversity in forestry.

Story by Barbara Drake (MFA '04)

Photography by Steve Johnson (BSJ '11, MS '15)

March 12, 2012, McKenzie River Ranger District, Willamette National Forest, western Oregon

Terry Baker, a new district ranger, had battled dozens of raging fires in his 13 years with the U.S. Forest Service. But the one facing him tonight in the crowded Upper McKenzie Community Center threatened to dwarf them all — and not a single match had been lit.

For months, environmentalists had been protesting the “Goose Project,” a wildfire-prevention plan designed by his Forest Service predecessor to thin 2,100 overgrown acres of the 1.7 million-acre Willamette National Forest, with the trees being sold to local timber companies. Just months after Baker (BSF '04) took command of the McKenzie River Ranger District in late 2011, opposition to the Goose Project had exploded, with the local paper, *River Reflections*, as the chosen forum for community outrage. In its pages, readers sparred about potential harm to the forest and its northern spotted owls, and labeled Baker and his fellow foresters “greedy” — to name the mildest of epithets.

The controversy was tearing apart this rural community in the Cascade Mountains.



So Baker had called tonight’s meeting to share the forestry science behind the plan and discuss people’s concerns. He’d talk first; then his staff would take over.

No uniforms, he had told them: “You’ll find out why later.”

At 7 p.m. sharp, wearing his green Forest Service work shirt and pants, Baker stepped to the podium and smiled at the 100 or so faces glaring back. Taking a deep breath, he welcomed everyone, stressing the need for openness and mutual respect.

Then, as an ornithologist might say, the proverbial owl droppings hit the fan.

Audience members shouted that the project would damage the forest, ruin their peaceful community and destroy the owls’ nesting habits.

To their surprise, Baker calmly explored each objection, demonstrating that most of their fears were unwarranted. The threats to wildlife? The Forest Service had considered those, but maybe a more detailed risk assessment needed to be done, he admitted, taking notes.

Gradually tension in the room eased. But a core group wouldn’t give up.

“You don’t care anything about the community!” one man yelled.

An hour in, Baker asked the Forest Service employees sitting in the audience to stand.

“I want you to look at these people,” he told the crowd as his staff rose. “They go to church with you, they’re your kids’ baseball coaches. They live in and care about this community as much as you do, and you have a responsibility to treat them with respect.”

“I’m in uniform,” continued Baker, his voice rising. “I’m doing this so you can hurl all your anger at me. But they are your neighbors, and you should talk to them as such.”

That was the switch that turned an angry town hall into a community-building effort, says Baker, recalling the moment seven years later. The most vocal opponents quietly left the building; most people stayed to have one-on-ones with the staff.

Baker’s problems with the Goose Project were far from over — the Forest Service ended up being litigated and was forced to conduct an environmental impact

statement, leading to small changes in the original plan. However, the 2012 meeting marked a watershed in Baker’s evolution as a leader.

“I realized my beliefs about valuing people resonate with others,” Baker told Leadership Nature podcast in 2017.

In 2018, based largely on his exemplary leadership at McKenzie River, Baker

hardworking single mother, Velma, and so in high school Terry’s thoughts turned to college. A talent at nurturing flowers made him consider majoring in landscape architecture or ornamental horticulture at Florida A&M University.

One night, while working at a convenience store during his senior year, Baker got a surprise phone call. It

“Terry is one of the few people who knows how to put the sciences within a social and cultural context to make holistic decisions about the management of forests.”
— UF/IFAS Professor Taylor Stein

was tapped as CEO of the Society of American Foresters, becoming the first African American in the role. As such, he represents 11,000 foresters and forestry students across the nation, doing public outreach and advocating in the halls of Congress so everyone understands the importance of trained foresters to our ecosystem.

“You can manage anyone,” he said on Leadership Nature. “If you want to lead people, you have to make an effort to connect with them and give them reason to believe in you.”

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS (ON WOOD)

Baker’s path to forestry was serendipitous.

A native of Marianna, in the Florida Panhandle, Baker grew up helping his grandparents on their small farm. His earliest memory is of taking part in the annual family ritual of making sugarcane syrup. It was the children’s job to feed the stalks through the press, and 8-year-old Terry and his older brother, Tyrell, grabbed fistfuls of cane as their uncle led an old white bull in circles to power the classic setup.

Education was highly valued by the Baker family, especially by his

was a recruiter who had tracked down Baker through a college fair, and he was offering a full scholarship through the Multicultural Strategic Workforce Initiatives program. This federal partnership between the US Forest Service and historically black land-grant universities provides tuition and benefits so minority students can enter the natural resource fields. Baker would spend his first two years at FAMU before transferring to UF/IFAS’ School of Forest Resources & Conservation, where he would earn a bachelor’s degree, plus a second bachelor’s in Agricultural Sciences from FAMU.

Baker was intrigued but still somewhat mystified by the field that was welcoming him with open arms.

“I had no idea that forestry as a profession existed,” he says. “Not only that, I had no idea that one of the largest national forests east of the Mississippi was 40 miles from my house.”

With his mother’s blessing, Baker said yes to the scholarship, interning that summer at the nearby Apalachicola National Forest, home to pine sand hills and swamps, spring-fed rivers, bobcats, black bears and alligators. He would continue interning at national forests throughout college.



FROM HOTSHOT TO STAR GATOR

By the time Baker transferred to UF in fall 2001, he had already established himself as a student to watch.

In spring 2000, he'd taken a semester off from FAMU to train with the Asheville Interagency Hotshot Crew, an elite team of wildland firefighters based in North Carolina. The Hotshots respond to large fires in remote areas, and their grueling training pushes firefighters to their physical and mental limits.

"One day, we did a run that ended up being 11.8 miles, plus another eight hours of clearing brush and trees," Baker vividly recalls. "I think I lost 20 to 30 pounds in those four months!"

Firefighting is just one aspect of forest management, as Baker soon learned at UF.



Baker's walk down name tag lane reflects his incredible journey.

"Little did I know that he would later be running the entire organization!" says Stein. "He has put a personal face on the forestry profession."

A secret to Baker's success, says Stein: "He doesn't pretend forestry is all about the ecological sciences," adding that

"If you want to lead people, you have to make an effort to connect with them and give them reason to believe in you." — Terry Baker

"As a forester, you have to be well versed in science and hydrology and ecology, and even, to a certain extent, engineering," Baker says.

Today, Baker's SAF work involves regular collaboration with his former UF professors, who distinctly remember their star student.

Professor Taylor Stein, graduate program coordinator at the UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources & Conservation, still marvels at Baker's willingness as an undergraduate to volunteer for new experiences, from studying in Costa Rica to chairing UF's Society of American Foresters student chapter.

Baker's experiences growing up as an African American male on the Panhandle shape how he views and makes decisions about forests today:

"Terry is one of the few people who knows how to put the sciences within a social and cultural context to make holistic decisions about the management of forests."

After earning dual bachelor's degrees in 2004, Baker continued what would become a 19-year-long career with the US Forest Service (1999-2018), interrupted only by a stint at Yale University to earn a Master of Forestry degree.

National forests, unlike national parks, are managed for multiple purposes that are often wildly divergent: recreation,

timber, grazing, wildlife, water quality and more. Baker served at nine of them, in Florida, Oregon, Nebraska, Arizona and Colorado, rising from forester to district ranger to deputy forest supervisor. Whatever standard-issue Forest Service headgear he wore — yellow hard hat, green baseball cap — Baker always followed the advice his mother gave him long ago: Never put yourself above anyone else, and always pitch in when there's work to be done.

Even as an undergraduate, Baker possessed the "soft skills" needed to interact with a wide variety of interest groups, says Professor Tim Martin, co-director of UF's Forest Biology Research Cooperative.

"I think Terry's understanding of the value of interpersonal relationships is one of the strengths he carried into his professional life," says Martin.

INCLUSION IN THE FOREST

In 2017, Terry married fellow Forest Service professional Jessica Baker, and the couple moved to Colorado, where Terry became deputy supervisor of the Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest. They had barely finished unpacking in 2018 when Terry got an unexpected call: How would he like to become CEO of the Society of American Foresters?

Stepping away from his federal career was something Baker had never planned, he says. But an opportunity to lead the prestigious 119-year-old nonprofit was too good to pass up.

Terry and Jessica relocated to D.C. in fall 2018, with the new CEO trading his drab Forest Service duds for tailored suits and silk ties. As the face and voice of SAF, Baker raises the profile of forestry and foresters, while making the profession more inclusive.

"I'm just a little different," he laughs, noting his racial visibility gets him a foot in the door with the media, who might otherwise overlook forestry concerns.

People of color are rare in forestry for many reasons, Baker says, but a major factor is the profession, like wooded acreage itself, tends to be passed down over generations, usually from father to son, replicating the gender and racial

homogeneity of land-owning Americans 100 years ago or more.

"That in itself is probably the biggest barrier [to people of color entering the profession]: not seeing yourself physically represented in the community, even if you value the woods and the experiences of hiking, camping and hunting," Baker explained.

To increase diversity and inclusion, SAF offers postsecondary scholarships to women and people of color, and Baker is widening that effort by promoting environmental education in primary and secondary schools. The more children and teens understand the good that forests and foresters do, the more young people will aspire to become natural resource professionals, the organization reasons.



(From left) Jessica and Terry Baker took this photo by Emerson Alumni Hall during their recent UF visit.

Martin says he admires the "pragmatic, non-confrontational approach" Baker brings to diversifying forestry.

"Terry has helped SAF and his fellow foresters understand what it means to be a minority in forestry, what some of the barriers might be to entering and staying in the profession, and how we can work together to make things better," says Martin.

Baker is also assisting the UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources & Conservation's efforts to diversify their student body and the profession.

Baker "is a brilliant example of what a successful forestry student can be like," says Stein.

HARD-EARNED ACCOLADES

Baker's leadership has not gone unnoticed elsewhere in the Gator Nation. This year, the UF Alumni Association honored Baker at the annual 40 Under 40 event.

Terry and Jessica flew down to Gainesville for the April ceremony, where College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean Elaine Turner praised Baker's "career path and achievements [which] show future students the possibilities available to them with an agricultural and life sciences degree."

The shiny 40 Under 40 statue now rests proudly on the desk in Baker's office. But tucked away in a drawer is a humble object he treasures just as much. It's a yellowed clipping from River Reflections, the small Oregon paper at the epicenter of the Goose Project controversy. In its ink-stained pages, locals denounced the Forest Service's plans and lambasted Baker himself.

But not in the newspaper's subsequent editions, especially on Jan. 9, 2014.

Its banner announces "Reader's Picks for the Best of the McKenzie River," with Baker's smiling face underneath the headline, "Man of the Year."

GO GATORS, GO UF/IFAS SCHOOL OF FOREST RESOURCES & CONSERVATION

Catch up on UF's latest SFRC news at www.sfrc.ufl.edu

Learn more about the Society of American Foresters at www.eforester.org

Support SFRC students and programs through Julie Conn at jrconn@ufl.edu or (352) 392-1975

NEW ROCKSTARS

Gator Filip Molina (far right) and a full staff of alumni from Theater Strike Force, the UF student improv club, are gaining an enormous YouTube following by celebrating the nerd in everyone. Called “New Rockstars,” Molina’s team delivers intensive breakdowns of TV shows, films and even movie trailers, including “Game of Thrones,” “Stranger Things,” “Avengers Endgame” and “Frozen 2.”

From pointing out obscured props to making connections between wardrobe choices, musical scores, lyrics and other symbols and references, the team provides — fire hose style — a torrent of details easily overlooked by even the most obsessive fans.

Molina (Microbiology ’03-’06, English ’06-’08) said the success of their channel has proven that “the most popular things in pop culture right now are also the nerdiest.”

Lead writer and co-host Erik Voss (BSJ ’10), right, says delivering so much content each week is a skill he developed in reporting class. He and Molina add that their comedic approach and penchant for seeing “just how far we can push a concept” came from their experiences with Theater Strike Force (TSF).

Voss and Molina were part of the TSF team that pranked fellow students in 2008 with the “We Are Gary” fake presidential campaign, which resulted in cable TV ads, T-shirts and a massive Reitz Union rally. Another project, “New Low,” a full-length movie, ended up at the Sundance Film Festival. “I’ve never found a group of people who are as talented and as smart as those I met in TSF,” Molina said.

Voss, the youngest of five siblings who all attended Florida State University, said he opted for UF after his friends in Jacksonville told him about TSF. Molina, the youngest of seven, is the first in his Miami family to attend college.

In 2010, Molina, Voss and three other friends took a chance and moved to Los Angeles. Nine years later, their YouTube following — almost 2.5 million at press time — continues to grow daily. They also just launched NRDS, New Rockstars Digital Studios, expanding into podcasts and other evolving media platforms.

Molina’s wish: to teach a UF class on developing social media-based businesses.

“It’s time for UF to officially teach those skills,” he said.

GREAT GATORS WITH GREAT NEWS



WHEN IN ROME ...

In June when **Matthew Cole** (BA '93) and **Karen Johnson** (BSPR '93), far left, married and honeymooned in Rome (they met as UF freshmen in 1989), Matthew was able to meet the Vatican Athletic team and take a casual run with them through many landmarks in Rome. During their brief meeting with Pope Francis (right), he also exchanged zucchetos (skullcaps) with the Supreme Pontiff. See videos from their adventure at www.bit.ly/mattandkaren.



Former UF Student Government president and homecoming king **Cory Calvin** (MBA '10) wrote this memoir about his journey through UF, struggling to embrace his own sexuality and his "authentic self," as a means of inspiring others.



STUDENTS TO SALESMEN

Brad Gamble (BSBA '99) is founder of The Selling Factory, a Gainesville company that employs and trains UF students in sales, customer service, entrepreneurship and other business skills. Along with his partners **Ian Massenburg** (BA '01) and Adam Grossman, a former UF Hillel rabbi, the company recently celebrated the graduation of its 100th student, about half of which are business majors. Gamble said many of the business-to-business campaigns his company uses to train students come through partnerships with other Gator-owned companies. "They like having UF students working on their campaigns, and they feel like that supports UF in a way," he said.



JUST IN TIME

Storytellers **Steve Johnson** (BSJ '11, MSEN '15) and **Ryan Jones** (BSJ '14, MS '19) completed a project with TIME Magazine in which they built the first AR experience that tracks illegal deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. See their imagery at Seeboundless.com or download the TIME immersive app for the AR experience.



ON THE RISE IN D.C.

UF Alumni Association Board member **Jessica Furst Johnson** (JD '07) is a partner at the law firm Holtzman Vogel Josefiak Torchinsky in Washington, D.C. She is the former general counsel for the National Republican Senate Committee and has held numerous roles within the National Republican Congressional Committee.

GATOR FIRST

A Gator is the first to receive a lifetime achievement award from the International Municipal Lawyers Association (IMLA). **Frank Gummey III** (JD '72) is a retired New Smyrna Beach city attorney who also served in the same capacity for Daytona Beach and as a Volusia County Deputy Attorney. He was in the first group of Florida lawyers certified as specialists in local government law and the first group of IMLA local government law fellows. He was a founding member and first president of the Florida Municipal Attorneys Association.



Maren Nelson (BSECI '87), left, and **Jeffrey Martin** (BSECI '87) of Livingston, Texas, took their Gator flag to approximately 78° north in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway.



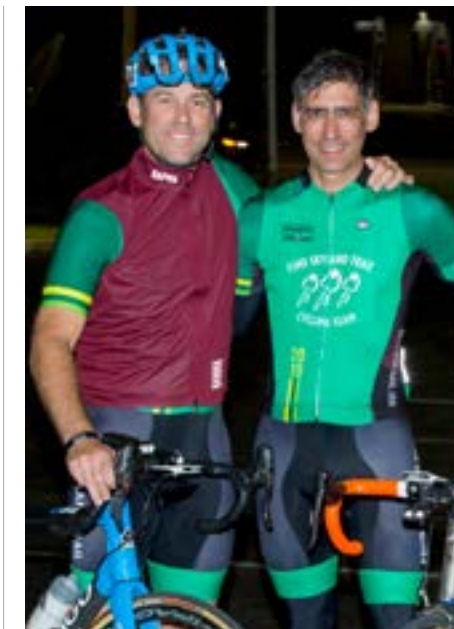
Briana Ryan (BA '11, BS '11) of Brooklyn, NY, took her flag to Mount Kilimanjaro's summit in Tanzania.



(From left) **Eric Straehla** (BSPE '78) of Melbourne, **Marty Moir Scabarozzi** (BSA '79) and **Mike Scabarozzi** (BS '79) of Indialantic took this photo in Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal.



Jim Halling (BSBA '73) of Brookhaven, GA, took his Albert golf club cover to The European Club in Wicklow, Ireland.



FROM SEA TO SEA

J. Powell Brown (BA '89) of Winter Park (above, left) and **George Pollock** (BSAC '89, MACC '90) of Lithia participated in Race Across America, a 3,100-mile team endurance bicycle trek that started at Oceanside, California, on June 15 and ended in Annapolis, Maryland on June 23.

Brown has raised more than \$1 million — partly through this race — for mental illness awareness. This time his proceeds benefited Skyland Trail, an Atlanta-based non-profit that offers support for people coping with mental illness. "Suicide is the second leading cause of death in youth ages 10 to 24. I'm riding to change that," said Brown, who is CEO of Brown & Brown insurance in Daytona Beach.

Pollock said he rode to raise money for the FSH Society, which funds research on a specific type of muscular dystrophy. The longtime friends say their marathon ride was truly memorable.

"Being able to participate in this race alongside George while raising awareness for causes that are personal to us is a tremendous honor," Brown wrote. "I appreciate all of the support ... and I'm proud of the positive impact these funds will have on education, research and treatment of these serious diseases and disorders that can affect our friends, family and colleagues."



“... Users may be prone to believing that others are more likely to share false news than themselves, confirming the third-person effect.”

— JOURNALISM RESEARCHER **PAUL MENA** (PHD '19) IN HIS ARTICLE “CLEANING UP SOCIAL MEDIA.” HIS FINDINGS ABOUT FAKE NEWS, FACT-CHECKING AND THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WARNING LABELS TO CURB THE SPREAD OF ERRONEOUS INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON UF’S COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS SITE: JOU.UFL.EDU/TAG/PAUL-MENA. MENA NOW TEACHES JOURNALISM AT UC-SANTA BARBARA.

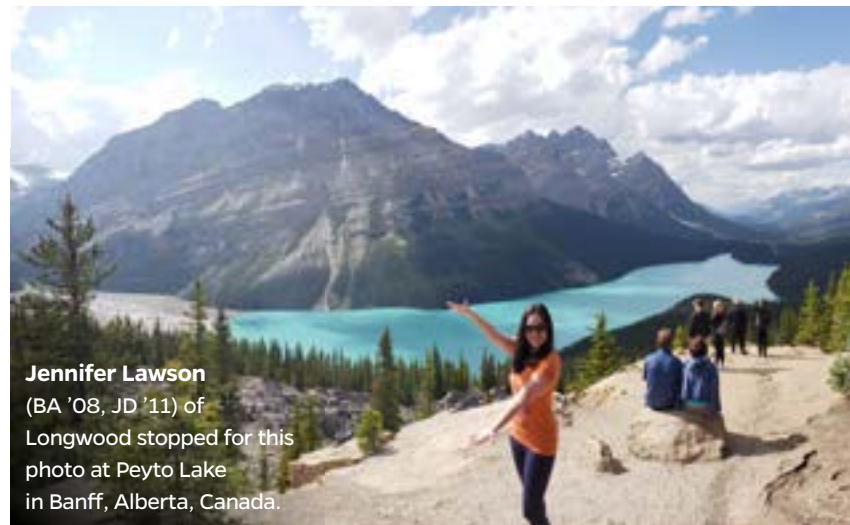


FAMILY FOCUS

Jennifer Boston Williams (BA '06, BA '06) recently earned Florida Board certification in adoption, an accomplishment held by only 29 other attorneys in the state. She works in Jacksonville.

RIDING HIGH

Joe Mohan (BA '91) is vice president of American Airlines. He manages the airline's global alliances, international planning activities and interline product distribution, as well as oversees joint business agreements. Mohan is the former CEO of VivaLatinamerica, an airline holding company, and served in several management posts at Continental Airlines. However, he says his career began when he served as an aide to Sen. **Bob Graham** (BA '59), working in foreign policy and intelligence.



Jennifer Lawson (BA '08, JD '11) of Longwood stopped for this photo at Peyto Lake in Banff, Alberta, Canada.

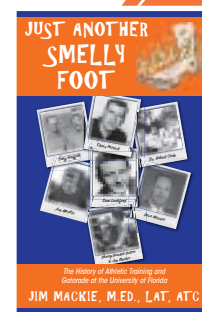


John Farese (BSBC '84) and **Patti (Thomas) Farese** (BSPT '84) wore their Gator shirts while sailing and cycling through the Greek Islands in June 2019.



GATOR STRONG

May-li Cuypers (DVM '92) finished 15th at the 2019 ITU Cross Triathlon World Championship in Pontevedra, Spain. The 53-year-old veterinarian also volunteers on the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's disaster response team that provides emergency support for animals after natural disasters. This year Cuypers also made a gift to her college through her will that supports shelter medicine efforts. She lives near Clearwater.



Jim Mackie (BSPE '74), a Gators athletic trainer from 1972-88, wrote this book about the staff and students who worked in UF sports medicine and with the Gatorade development team. A portion of the proceeds from the book will support former UF athletes with medically related financial issues and athletic trainer education.



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SWEETWATER WETLANDS PARK PHOTO BY WESLEY HETRICK

TOM PETTY BIRTHDAY BASH PHOTO BY JOHN DAVISSON

Where Nature & Culture Meet





HEAD, HEART, HANDS, HEALTH

Deborah Nistler (PhD '14) is the 4-H youth development state program leader for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. She is the former UF|IFAS' state civic engagement and 4-H legislature program coordinator, as well as the Bradford County, FL, extension director.



SCOUTING FOR LIFE

John Searcy (BEE '55), 87, of Jacksonville received the National Eagle Scout Association's Outstanding Eagle Scout Award this fall, recognizing his personal and professional contributions at the local, state and regional levels. "I was shocked and humbled," Searcy said about the award. "... Scouting has been an important part of all aspects of my life — family, church, education, business and community. The principles I learned as a young Boy Scout still guide my actions."



Nancy Lomax Leslie (BS 60) and **Richard Leslie** (BA 58) of Coral Gables shared their Gator spirit with hundreds of penguins in Antarctica.



Vicki Cotto of Gainesville represented the Gators at the Women's World Cup in Lyon, France.

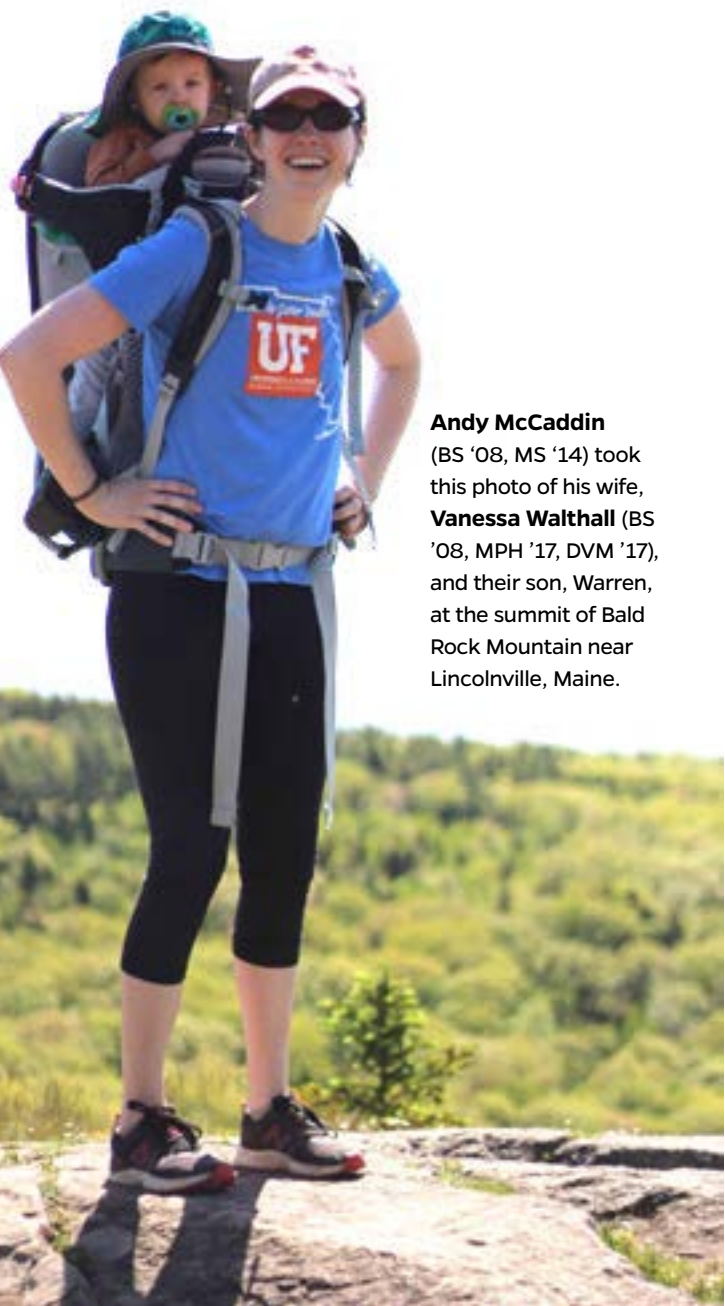


Amy Husted (BSTEEL '96) of Coconut Creek wore her Gator jacket on her first trip to Ireland this year.



Jonathan Adkins (BSEE '98) of Madison, Ala., chomped it up at Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska.


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



Andy McCaddin (BS '08, MS '14) took this photo of his wife, **Vanessa Walthall** (BS '08, MPH '17, DVM '17), and their son, Warren, at the summit of Bald Rock Mountain near Lincolnville, Maine.

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NUMBERS OF NOTE



Years **Steve Futch** (BSA '75, PhD '97) served as a citrus extension agent in multiple Florida counties before retiring in June. His first experience with citrus was working in his great-grandfather's Wauchula grove (est. 1905). But after freezes in the 1980s claimed his own grove, he took his first extension agent job at UF, helping a plethora of growers with pest, fungus and other issues from Lake Alfred (Polk County) down to Indian River, DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee and Sarasota counties.

34



Years **Carl Stein** (BSPR '73) was a photojournalist with KCBS-TV in Los Angeles. He retired in 2014, but this year received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Press Photographers Association of Greater Los Angeles.

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Over the course of his career, Stein covered the LA riots, wildfires and earthquakes, the full OJ Simpson trial, the Oscars and Emmys, Dodgers and Angels, Clippers and Kings, USC and UCLA, the Olympics in Nagano, the

Pope's visit, a 2007 May Day protest during which he was beaten by police and a plethora of other news events.

"I shot the very first chopper TV news live shot in Miami @WPLG-TV back in 1978," he said. "And, how the TV news business changed dramatically with the advent of live coverage anytime, most anywhere with satellite trucks, portable 'live' packs and then the transition into the digital realm."

He lives in Scottsdale, AZ.



Number of consecutive years **Jack Bierley** (BA '58, LLB '63), now 82, has made a contribution to UF. He's tied for the longest cumulative years of giving at 55 years. The international attorney who has volunteered in many capacities at UF, in addition to his monetary gifts, says philanthropy has always been an important part of his life.

"I received great things from the university and have always supported things where I feel I have an obligation — where I feel I benefited from it," he said.

Bierley said during his college years he engaged in as many opportunities as he could to become involved in student life by serving, among other roles, as a student politician, Florida Blue Key member and, in 1962, homecoming general chairman.

"I learned how to become a leader and bring people together through my activities at the university," he said. "Those skills translated into my career, which is why I'm able to give back today."

Bierley's lifetime of UF donations, including a law school scholarship, an international visiting professor fund and even a Japanese art piece for the Harn Museum, have enhanced 11 UF programs.

"A lot of people don't realize the status of UF in the context of the public universities in America. It's a leading and outstanding institution, and one we should support."

53

59

Years since **Mario Cartaya** (BAARCH '74, MBC '75) left Cuba with his parents to seek a better life.

This fall, the Fort Lauderdale resident celebrated his architecture firm's 40th anniversary at one of its buildings, the Charles F. Dodge City Center in Pembroke Pines. At the event, U.S. Congress member **Debbie Wasserman Schultz** (BA '88, MA '90) presented him with a proclamation honoring his accomplishments in Broward County and throughout South Florida. He talked about the community he loves and his lifetime of service.

"From [arriving] as a scared 9-year-old refugee with dreams greater than my family's income, to having my name enshrined into the Congressional Record is a validation of my journey and my parents' sacrifice, leaving their dreams behind so I could have mine," Cartaya said.



23

Home runs hit by **Pete Alonso** in the final round of the MLB's 2019 T-Mobile Home Run Derby to clinch the title and \$1 million prize, of which he donated \$100,000. The New York Mets player is a former Gators first baseman (LAS 2014-16). In November, he was named National League Rookie of the Year.

GREAT GATOR LEGACIES

Fort Lauderdale attorney **George Allen** (JD '62), whose distinguished legal career spanned 57 years, died in November. He was the first African American to graduate



from UF. Back then, Allen had turned down Ivy League law school offers in favor of attending Florida's College of Law because he said, "I'm a native Floridian, and I felt that somebody had to integrate [UF]."

And he did. With his degree, Allen went on to help integrate Broward County schools, as well. During his lifetime, he also saw his daughter, Amy Allen (JD '03), graduate from UF's Levin College of Law. He was 83.

Gators football linebacker **Neiron Ball** (BSAg '14) died Sept. 10 in Orlando at the age of 27. Ball made a whopping 94 career tackles at UF, even though he sat out the 2011 season to have surgery that helped his congenital brain condition, called AVM. In 2012 Ball was drafted by the Oakland Raiders, but played just one season before a brain aneurysm caused paralysis. His family created a GoFundMe page to help with his medical bills.



Hazel Hough died in August. During her lifetime, she and her husband, **Bill Hough** (MBA '48), contributed \$30 million toward the construction of Hough Hall, which now serves as UF's hub for graduate business students.

She also donated millions — with her family — to other Florida institutions, including St. Petersburg's Museum of Fine Arts, the Salvador Dali Museum, Canterbury School and the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

A 1949 journalism graduate of Florida State College for Women (now Florida State University), Hazel met her husband on a blind date and they married in 1951. Bill started a municipal bond firm in St. Petersburg in 1962, and Hazel ran its community relations division, in addition to raising their three children.



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— **Selyne Singh** (BA '18) of Tampa is a recruiting administrator for McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting business.

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1960s The Decade That Changed America & UF

It was the Age of Aquarius — a time to love, and a time to hate, a time of war, and a time of peace.

Across America, protesters implored politicians to stop the Vietnam War. Pastors, college students and housewives marched for social justice. Police scattered crowds with fire hoses and dogs. Men burned draft cards. Women burned bras. The Ku Klux Klan burned crosses. The Cold War smoldered. Assassins took the Kennedy brothers, Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

Yet, in the midst of that decade's unrest, astronauts walked on the moon. Schools were integrated. The first black U.S. Supreme Court justice was appointed. Voting rights became law. On UF's campus, the graduates of 1969 would be forever changed. As they were inducted into UF's Grand Guard this year, some shared these memories:





STEVEN APTHEKER (BA '69)



I recall wearing a black arm band when Dr. King was murdered, as some other students did, while there were others celebrating Dr. King's death. The night that Bobby was shot was the day before my last final. I could not concentrate because Bobby was still in surgery. An awful day.

Aptheker, now a Port St. Lucie attorney, says he recalls that Gator football got more attention than anything happening in Washington, D.C. or Vietnam. Nevertheless, between the draft and the ROTC requirement for all male underclassman, the thought of going to war loomed. Not long after graduation, he went to Vietnam as a U.S. Army intelligence officer. "Until the horrible events of 1968, I think it was a positive thing to be at school on a gorgeous campus with beautiful weather without being buffeted by the controversies and drug culture that were riling up the rest of the country," he says.

MAE WEST GIRARD (BA '69)



Two of my most memorable events were: 1) being told by my counselor during fall registration in 1967 that I should consider a different degree than math because I already had two strikes against me — I was female and I was Negro; 2) being part of such a history-making event — the desegregation of not just our educational system but of this nation. The killing of Martin Luther King was heart-breaking. I couldn't outwardly protest because it would have cost my dad, James West, his job as chef at Phi Kappa Tau. My few friends called me names because I wouldn't protest with them.

One of UF's few black students, Girard said she didn't feel welcomed at most UF activities. The retired Hillsborough School Board administrator says the "bittersweet" time was worth it: "UF presented obstacles and opportunities that made me the woman I am. My experience encouraged three generations of my family to pursue and graduate from UF — three generations of African American UF alumni who bleed nothing but orange and blue."

WILLIAM ANDREWS (BSJ '69, JD '72)



I remember well the Vietnam War protesters, the sit-in at Tigert Hall (April 1971), the armored police vehicles parked across the street, the march on the ROTC building and the gatherings in the Plaza of the Americas. President (Stephen C.) O'Connell did an excellent job controlling/diffusing the situation with no violence that I can recall.



A Florida Alligator student newspaper reporter, Andrews had a front-row seat to UF events. He's now an attorney with GrayRobinson in Jacksonville, focusing on labor and employment law and actively participating in civic groups.



Tankard was a member of Theta Sigma Phi (now Association for Women in Communications), helped create the then-women's leadership group UF Savant (an alternative to the then-all-male Florida Blue Key) and was editor of the women's handbook "The Florida Coed." She is now a freelance editor in Austin, Texas.

ELAINE TANKARD (BSJ '69)



(I remember) being 'shuffled' out of the law library with my freshman roommate because we were women and not welcome. Over the years, I've wondered whether any of those 'Boys from Old Florida' later regretted their unwritten secret practice to which they subjected any female who set foot in their sanctum sanctorum, before women's liberation put an end to it and opened wide all areas of study to both sexes. Quite frankly, it's still my favorite UF memory because it illustrates how far women have come since then.

BRYAN PAGE (BA '69, PHD '76)



The woman who led the movement to prohibit prayer in schools spoke on campus in 1968. A passionate speaker with strong opinions, she effectively defended atheism, the use of Anglo-Saxon cuss words, women's rights and the growing opposition to the Vietnam War.

An ROTC cadet and son of an FBI agent, Page said he attended debates concerning the war and other issues of the times, but stayed away from campus demonstrations. He recalls smelling teargas from a Vietnam War protest on University Avenue while he studied in the library in spring 1972. "I could hear students clashing with police outside, but I did not participate. My father was still an agent ... and I did not want to attract the attention of his boss, J. Edgar Hoover, who tended to punish fathers for the sins of their sons." Page is a University of Miami anthropology professor.

MARY WILSON DUNGEY (BAE '69)



During such turbulent times there were peaceful places. Father Michael Gannon, a priest at St. Augustine Catholic Center, single-handedly interrupted a huge Kent State demonstration by his amazing ability to

communicate with and calm down students. Attending Mass and lectures about our faith helped me feel at peace through it all."

Then an officer in UF's Young Republican Club, Dungey became a teacher, social worker and assistant school principal. She lives in Stuart and retired in 2016 from Fort Pierce's Saint Anastasia Catholic School.

STEVE SPURRIER ('63-'66, BSPE '81)



I remember exactly where I was when President Kennedy was killed. I was hitchhiking



from Gainesville to Johnson City, Tennessee, with a buddy of mine for Thanksgiving. Nobody does that anymore, but that's how we saved money. ... I didn't have 20 bucks [for a bus ticket] back then. We started at University and 441. ... In Lake City, a car came by the other way ... It slowed down and [the driver] said, 'The president just got shot.'

Spurrier left UF in 1966 to play football for the San Francisco 49ers. In March, he coached the AAF's Orlando Apollos in a game at Legion Field, the site of the historic 1970 Alabama vs. University of Southern California football game. USC's African-American athletes — whose performance soundly defeated the Tide — were the first of their race to play in a college game in the South. Spurrier shared his recollection of the event with his Apollos before their game: Running back Sam "Bam" Cunningham "ran for a whole bunch of yards against Alabama," he said. "That helped convince people in the South that ... they certainly needed to allow the black athletes to play."

1960s: A Glimpse

1961

- Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba
- Americans begin to build backyard nuclear bomb shelters



1962

- UF's first black undergraduates enroll
- Cuban Missile Crisis



1963

- UF students regularly protest whites-only policy at College Inn Cafeteria
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech
- Gainesville Women for Equal Rights established
- President Kennedy assassinated



NATIONAL ARCHIVES.GOV



UNITED PRESS INT'L



- Beatles U.S. tour launches "British Invasion"
- Vietnam War begins

1965

- UF honors Vietnam War veterans with Operation Appreciation
- Malcolm X assassinated
- UF students take part in Selma, Ala., march for civil rights
- Voting Rights Act ends discrimination at polls



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



- Thurgood Marshall confirmed to Supreme Court
- Race riots across U.S., including Tampa

- Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated
- Spencer Boyer, UF law's first African-American visiting professor, receives death threats
- Ron Coleman becomes UF's first African American student-athlete (track and field)
- Robert Kennedy killed



1968

1966

- National Organization for Women (NOW) formed
- Black Panther Party formed
- Stephen Stills (1963) records "For What It's Worth" with his band, Buffalo Springfield
- Steve Spurrier (BSPE '81) wins Heisman Trophy



1969

- UF's ACCENT Speakers Bureau hosts "Dimensions of Freedom" series on the Vietnam War, religion, drugs, sex, civil disobedience, race and other topics
- African American students protest inequity at Tigert Hall
- Gay Liberation Movement begins
- Astronauts walk on moon
- Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music
- UF students and faculty hold Plaza of the Americas "Gentle Wednesday" peace rallies

1970

- First Earth Day
- National Guardsmen kill four Kent State University protesters; UF students strike to cancel classes in response

SOURCES: AMERICA'S BEST HISTORY, PBS AND UF ARCHIVES

In November, the Class of 1969 returned to UF for its 50th reunion and induction into the Grand Guard Society, an elite group that celebrates Gator Nation's rich history and revels in meaningful experiences around



this milestone anniversary. During Grand Guard Weekend each year, UF welcomes a new class with a full slate of activities followed by the induction ceremony. All Grand Guard Society members are invited to participate and help welcome the new inductees. For video highlights from the 2019 event, or to learn more about Grand Guard Society, visit uff.to/GrandGuard.



(Clockwise from top left) **Howard Rosenblatt** (BAE '69, JD '81), **Steve Spurrier** (BSPE '81), **David Clark** (BSOT '65), **Susan Copeland Lee** (BSOT '69), and **Carol Gwin** (BSOT '69) share memories and reconnect at the reunion.



ENTREPRENEURIAL ALUMNA TALKS ABOUT HER METEORIC RISE IN THE BUSINESS WORLD AND HER RECENT PARTNERSHIP WITH LINKEDIN

Kim Kaupe (BSBA '08) is co-founder and CEO of The Superfan Company, an agency founded in 2011 that creates one-of-a-kind products for extreme fans, as well as programs and strategies for celebrities and brands. So far, she's produced fan packages for Katy Perry, the New York Mets, KISS, Shawn Mendes, ACE Comic Con, Miller Coors and Paul McCartney, to name a few.

She's been named to numerous prominent entrepreneurs-to-watch lists, won several offers on ABC's "Shark Tank," served as a 2019 Miss USA pageant judge and contributed many articles to media outlets, such as Forbes, The Wall Street Journal and Forbes Woman. Her most recent side project is a series of entrepreneurship video classes for LinkedIn.

Despite her hectic schedule, Kaupe has purposefully carved out time to meet with UF students and share her lessons learned. She's headlined events hosted by the Gotham Gator Club, UF Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and UF Alumni Association.

In the 11 years since you graduated, you've accomplished more than many people. Describe what that's been like?

A lot of it is getting lucky. Success in business is having the right idea at the right time in the right space with the right people. This recipe for me led to a lot of fast growth and success. It was definitely not something that I ever planned. When I went to UF there was no such thing as the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation or the Hatchery. What UF and Jamie Kraft are building over there is amazing. They'll help you build businesses and write business plans. What a fantastic resource. I look back now and I'm very jealous. My entrepreneurial path was an exciting awesome blur. I either had the best day ever or the worst day ever — for about three years. I've never had a baby, but I imagine it as having a baby. The concept of "That was fun and terrible and let's do it again."

How has your success changed you?

I've had a lot of opportunity to grow as a leader and a businesswoman. Success has taught me to become a better listener, and more empathetic to what people are going through around me. Leadership comes from getting into the not-so-fun stuff.

Why do you stay involved with UF?

I've lived by the saying "If you can't see it, you can't be it." I remember participating at the business school while I was at UF and we had tons of Gator guest speakers come talk to us — heads of companies and retired executives. All their roles and titles and experiences were amazing to hear, but I didn't see myself in any of those people. So I think it's important to get out there and talk with students while my company is still growing and I'm in the thick of it. Don't wait until you're 50 to give your perspective. In my case, I'm 33 and a founder. The more the students can see themselves in you and your story, the more they can get that spark and confidence that they can do it, too.

You recently partnered with LinkedIn to offer tips for people who want to start their own businesses. How does it feel to be positioned as a career-path sage at 30-something?

LinkedIn has been a fantastic partner. I started working with them a year ago doing short videos on tips and hacks. I had been doing my own version [through social channels] because I thought I should share my mistakes and all this knowledge that I was picking up along the way. But now with LinkedIn, it's been great to reach different audiences. Not only is it touching people in the U.S., I've also received emails from people in India, the UK and Brazil who say the course has helped them. I still give my time to UF and meet with students up here in New York, but by partnering with LinkedIn people can access information on their own time and even in their pajamas whenever they feel like it.

Of all the tips you offer, which one is a must for anyone in any industry?

Mentorship — in all caps. It's so important to have mentors around you who can listen to you and be a sounding board to your life, your career. I believe in having lots of mentors. The word mentorship scares people because it seems so official and time consuming. But it could mean having breakfast with someone once a quarter or a phone call once a week.

Which Gators inspired you or shaped your approach?

That's one thing about the Gator Nation that's so great: There are so many Gators up in New York and Manhattan who have helped me countless times. There's tons of great Gators who constantly inspire me from Adam Schwartz (BSTel '08) at TeePublic to Myka Meier (BSPR '07) at Beaumont Etiquette. Other Gators have been so generous with their time and experience, advice and contacts that have been invaluable. We are so fortunate to be Gators because not only do we graduate with a great degree, we become a part of a great community.

Anything else you'd like to tell Gator Nation?

It's so important to give back. Sometimes people get it into their head that they can't give back until they're accomplished or older or rich. But your most valuable asset is time. The sooner you can give back in whatever way that looks like, that's really the key in how we're going to keep our community of Gators going strong.

5 Fast Ways to Get Ahead In Business

BY KIM KAUPE

- 1 GET A MENTOR.** This is a huge game changer. Find someone a bit higher up than you in your industry. Ask them to coffee or to hop on a 30-minute call. It's easy, fast and can change the direction of your life.
- 2 CHOOSE YOUR BOSS, NOT YOUR JOB.** You will be spending the majority of your life with the people you work with. Pay attention to who you will be reporting to and working around. It's better to have a great team than a great name brand job title or company.
- 3 LEAVE YOUR JOB, NOT YOUR CONTACTS.** When leaving an internship or job remember to take your contacts with you. LinkedIn and social media has made it so easy to stay in touch!
- 4 RESPECT PEOPLE'S TIME.** If you have a 30 minute meeting set up, make sure you finish the meeting on time. Tell the person your meeting time is running out and you want to respect their time. It will blow them away and won't make them late to their next meeting!
- 5 ASK FOR HELP.** Tell everyone and anyone who will listen about what you need to succeed. The world is small and you will be surprised at the number of people who reach out to offer you a helping hand!



FINISHLINE

BY PAT DOOLEY (BSJ '76)

STACEY NELSON



FROM SOFTBALL TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Stacey Nelson (BA '09) brushed away her still damp hair as she sat in a hotel lobby on one of the biggest days of her life. She would be inducted later that day into the UF Athletic Hall of Fame.

But her mind was in Uganda. It's always there. “They're such happy, loving people,” she said. “I miss them all the time.”

The former Florida softball star pitcher — arguably the best to ever play for the Gators — made quite a journey from Los Alamitos, Calif., to Gainesville to play softball for four years at Florida. But that pales in comparison to the many trips she has made to a remote village (Pader Town Council) in northern Uganda where she has worked with the Acholi people to try to find answers. To understand the questions, you have to go way back on the 32-year old's timeline.

Nelson studied about the children being used as soldiers in Uganda as a high school student, but it was a documentary about Pete Singer's book “Children at War” that really hit her. She was home from college when she saw it and her attitudes about helping others were starting to evolve.

“It struck me so deeply, but what could we do?” Nelson said. “It took hold of me and after that I just wanted to learn more about the problem.”

Part of it was being on a college campus and being exposed to more viewpoints. Part of it was just being a Gator.

“A large part of who I am was developed by UF: academically as well as the human aspect, volunteering, giving back to the community. It became a part of my nature. It was a part of who I was when I left [UF].”

While Nelson was still at Florida, she knew she wanted to do something. So she went to area high schools encouraging teenagers to study about Uganda's situation.

The winner of an essay contest would receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Nelson worked with Steve Noll, a Florida history and UF disability professor, turning a six-month independent course study into a year-long exercise.

“She's intellectually curious,” said Noll. “I've never met someone who can flip the switch like her, be a bulldog on the

field and totally different off the field. It tells a great story that you can be an athlete at such a high level and still have this academic interest.”

It was like there were two Stacey Nelsons with different levels of passion.

“[Uganda] was something she was really passionate about,” said UF head softball coach Tim Walton. “I was actually afraid when she was playing here she'd leave in the middle of a semester and go abroad.”

Once she was finished with an amazing career at Florida that included a gaudy 136-36 career record and 0.99 ERA (as well as Florida's first appearances in the Women's College World Series), Nelson was off to pitch in Japan.

“It's sad for me to say because the game of softball has given me so much,” Nelson said. “Pro softball was a bit of a disappointment for me because I didn't have the camaraderie I had in college.

“When it became all about the money, I knew I needed to stop.”

She had dreamed about going to law school since she was a little girl. But first there would be a stop in Uganda in 2011. The people she had never met had never left her heart. The issue was that the Acholi

people had been trained for the workforce after war but only a handful were employed. She decided there had to be a way to build something to offer employment to so many people who wanted to work. But it would have to wait because law school at Loyola Marymount awaited.

“It was like a monkey on my back in law school,” Nelson said. “I never stopped thinking about it, but you know how law

school is. You have to be all in.”

She worked with an organization to build a bread factory, but the organization she worked with “wasn't trustworthy.” So Nelson continued to raise money hoping to find a better solution.

“I was sitting on \$35,000 to be spent in Northern Uganda for about a year,” she said, “and then I was at this party and someone introduced me to a guy who was from the exact village I had been working with. I can't tell you how remote it is. People in Uganda don't know where it is.”

His message to her was simple — the bread factory is fine. But what northern Uganda really needed was agriculture, the backbone of the area. So she started working to do both.

Nelson ended up spending a year in Uganda working toward the goal of finding employment for people after the chaos of war.

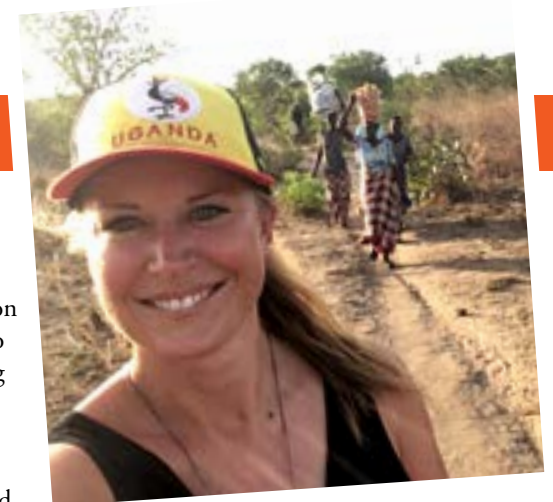
“I try to stay on top of the finances,” she said. “You can't come in as an American and create solutions. They were so used to being given things, getting handouts. We had to teach them how to work for them, to empower them to create wealth and have a livelihood.”

As her mother Carolyn says, the seed was planted early in Stacey, and it continues to grow,

“What a difference she's made over there,” Carolyn said. “She hit the ground running and had to do a lot of adjusting, but her goal was to help the people. I'm very proud of her.”

Nelson swats away praise, much like she credits her teammates for her All-American softball career. There's more to do.

“It's not satisfying because I worry if I'm doing all I can,” she said. “When you cross



cultures, you don't know if you are doing the right thing or the wrong thing.”

At the same time, she can smile because not only has the Kope Foundation (named after the word for “the problems are not there”) empowering women to work but reducing domestic violence in the community.

And there's this — she coached a little softball team in Uganda, securing donations from her old pitching coach and others for equipment.

For now, though, she is back in the Los Angeles area working as a lawyer for the office of the inspector general monitoring jail conditions in Los Angeles County.

“I'm 32 and I'm kind of wondering what's next,” she said.

So is everyone else.

 <https://www.gofundme.com/f/kope-foundation> or www.kopefoundation.org



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