

# GATOR

FLORIDA

FALL 2022



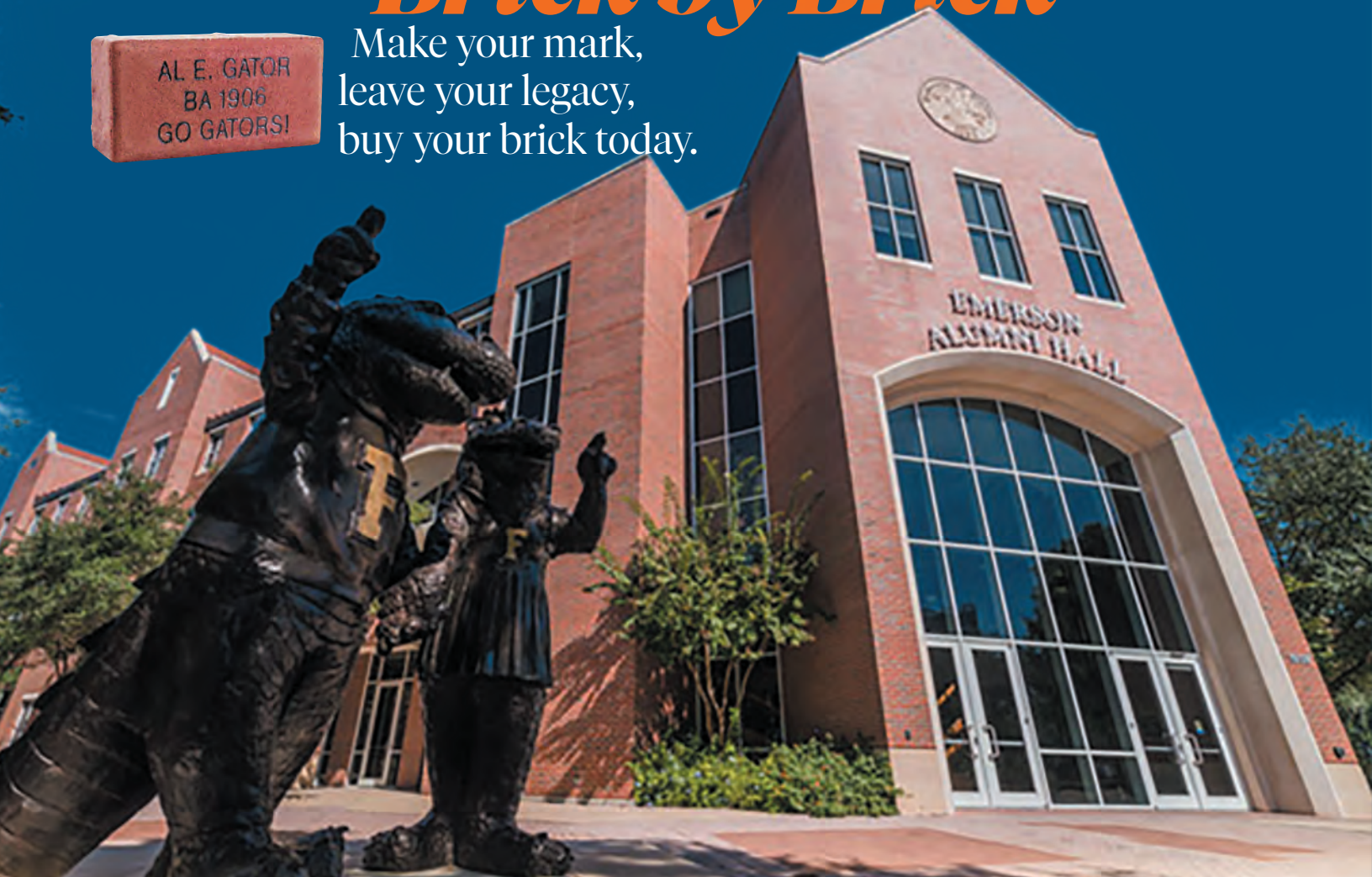
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# UF's CHAMPIONS

## GATOR GAME-CHANGERS

*These generous Gators were attracted to the University of Florida's ability to change lives through its mission of teaching future generations and translating research into meeting the needs of Florida's underprivileged children. On behalf of Gator Nation, we salute your contributions to the Gator Good.*



## ROBERT ROARK AND JORGE AMAYA

Robert “Rob” Roark (BS ‘77) and Jorge Amaya wanted to be a catalyst for the success of LGBTQ+ UF students who may struggle to afford higher education.

Through their own personal experiences, the partners understand “how difficult it is to be different.” So, Roark and Amaya took action on UF’s Giving Day with a \$1 million estate gift, ensuring their legacy will live on through initiatives at the university supporting the LGBTQ+ community.

Their advice for students: “Be laser focused on the end result, create a network with supportive faculty,” and just remember, “if you are having a hard time now, it will get better.”

## NAPLES CHILDREN AND EDUCATION FOUNDATION

For the ninth year, UF’s College of Dentistry will partner with the Naples Children and Education Foundation (NCEF) as part of a two-year, \$1.8 million grant toward the college’s dental outreach programs. Coordinated by dental hygienist Susan Gorman, these initiatives provide no-cost preventative services to children in Collier County who face challenges accessing dental care. NCEF has helped more than 5,200 children access dental screenings, oral hygiene instructions, sealants and fluoride varnish over the years.

Olga Ensz, a clinical assistant professor at UF who oversees the outreach programs, said NCEF “has made a lasting, immeasurable impact” on thousands of children and families in Collier County. She is grateful for the ongoing support of the foundation and hopes to expand these collaborative efforts in the future.

Read more at [uff.to/XXXXXX](https://uff.to/XXXXXX)



# FLORIDA GATOR

FALL 2022

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## ON THE COVER



President Kent Fuchs will retire in December and return to his first love of teaching. Fuchs led a period of unprecedented growth in facilities and stature for the university, all the while keeping students foremost and exhibiting a sense of what he calls purposeful fun. See story, **page 32**.





## Conversation with UF President **Kent Fuchs**

# ALWAYS A GATOR

**KENT FUCHS LEAVES THE PRESIDENCY BUT LOOKS FORWARD TO MENTORING AND TEACHING STUDENTS AS HE CONTINUES TO CHEER UF'S RISE**

**O**f all the beautiful landmarks on the University of Florida campus, one of my favorites is Century Tower. There is something about it both stately and humble, from its soaring heights, to the chimes of the carillon to the small weathered plaque at its base honoring UF students killed in the world wars.

I arrived at UF in January 2015. The ensuing months were a blur as Linda and I adjusted to a new home and community amid flurries of meetings, social gatherings and travel. Writing my speech for the inauguration, in December, brought a rare chance to gather my thoughts. I found my opening words in Century Tower, saying that it represents our missions and traditions — and that the beautiful orange and blue Florida sky around it suggests an “even bigger beyond” for UF.

With the presidential search underway as I write these words, and the expectation that UF's 13th president will be appointed this fall, this is likely my farewell column for Florida GATOR Magazine. As I try to put my eight years at UF into perspective, I again find myself returning to Century Tower and to the promise and potential of that dramatic Florida sky. As high as our community has soared, what's most significant is the even bigger beyond.

A timeline in this issue (page 35) makes clear the many major milestones crossed by faculty, staff, students and alumni, from reaching Top 5 to topping \$1 billion in research to exceeding the goals of the capital campaign. I am so grateful to all the members of our community who poured

their energy, time and creativity into these advancements, just as I am grateful to those who help our students to thrive and UF to flourish each and every day.

However, as with our graduates lining up to be recognized at commencement, we are beginning more than we are ending. I am confident that UF will rise into the ranks of the 20 best public and private universities. I believe the AI Initiative will put us at the forefront of the next technological shift in society. UF's next campaign will double the Go Greater campaign, topping \$6 billion. We will become an even brighter national beacon as our new programs in South Florida flourish.

As we enter this future, Century Tower will continue to represent our missions, traditions and who we are, including our caring culture of people who support one another in their work, ambitions and lives. Such a caring culture is precious in institutions, and I know we will continue to prize it.

My experience is that leadership transitions are great for organizations, giving members the chance to reflect on where they are, and to conceive and create new aspirations and new goals. The new president will move into a new home in the Dasburg House and plunge into a whirlwind of events, meetings, social gatherings and travel. And, when the moment comes for action, I know the president will join hands with everyone in continuing our momentum and in setting off in new directions that we can't even imagine today.

From a personal perspective, I look forward to cheering the university and its ascent from a different vantage point. Following the new president's appointment, I will take a sabbatical leave and then return, after 26 years of academic leadership, to my longtime role as a faculty member, joining UF's department of electrical and computer engineering. I am keen to refresh my knowledge of circuits, signals and systems, to teach and mentor students — and to assist my colleagues in raising the stature of the department.

Alumni and friends, Linda and I thank you for the privilege of working with you toward UF's even bigger beyond. Thank you for your love, dedication and purpose. Thank you for eight incredible years.

It is great to raise a joyous song. It is great to wear orange and blue.

It is great to be a  
**Florida Gator,**  
now and forever.



**FLORIDA GATOR**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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**HAPPY BIRTHDAY,  
LAKE WAUBURG**





For 100 years, generations of Gators have made the trek eight miles south of the University of Florida to Lake Wauburg, a satellite campus of sorts where outdoor fun now includes much more than swimming and picnics. For more, *see story page 6.*  
*Photo by Brianne Lehan.*





BY CARISSA ALLEN

UF STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF ARE USUALLY THE ONLY ROWDY REPTILES in Lake Wauburg's swimming area.

But Amanda Bostwick (BHS '19, MA '21) remembers an afternoon of training new lifeguards under the watchful eyes of a baby gator, a regular visitor nicknamed Chillary by lake staff. With permission from the trainees, she continued teaching with "a little cheerleader on the sidelines."

Lake Wauburg, alligators and all, is intrinsic to UF. Bostwick, who worked at the lake for nearly three years as a former program assistant for UF RecSports, called it home when she was a student; it was where she felt most comfortable. Though the lake's popularity has

ebbed and flowed since it was purchased 100 years ago, she hopes more human Gators discover the recreation area as it celebrates its centennial year, which started in September.

The lake is named after Frederick Warburg, who immigrated to the United States in 1821 to recruit settlers for a Jewish agricultural colony. He arrived with Moses Levy, a Moroccan businessman who spearheaded the creation of a safe haven for European Jews in the Gainesville area. Levy purchased about 50,000 acres of land for the settlement, says Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney, the executive director of the Matheson History Museum.

Historians believe Warburg's estate was close to Levy's, which was near the lake. No one knows why it is misspelled, but Lake Wauburg is a part of Warburg's legacy.

UF's initial \$6,000 investment in 1922 bought 20 acres of land and water – now considered the North Shore – for weekend leisure, aquatic competitions and camping outings for students and faculty.





UF PHOTOGRAPHY

## Lake Wauburg activities

Lake Wauburg is run by UF RecSports. Active Gator 1 Card holders can bring four guests.

### NORTH SHORE

- Fishing
- Volleyball
- Picnic areas, grills
- Boating (kayaks, paddleboards, sailboats)
- Swimming area

### SOUTH SHORE

- High and low challenge obstacle courses
- 18-hole disc golf course
- Mountain biking trails
- Fishing
- Volleyball
- Sports field
- Climbing wall
- Bouldering grotto

The North Shore is a favorite for water activities, while thrill-seekers can be found on the South Side conquering the 55-foot-tall climbing wall. UF RecSports hopes to expand the facilities and equipment, with a new boatlift and a more centrally located boathouse in the works.

Before roads paved the way, lake goers would spend half a day walking just to go swimming at the lake, Hof-Mahoney says.

“It was certainly something that was incredibly popular in the 1950s, and even before that,” she added.

Maya Gonzalez, a UF senior and recreation manager at the lake, grew up listening to her grandfather’s anecdotes about weekend trips to Lake Wauburg in the ‘50s. At the time, about 500 people a day flocked eight miles south of campus in droves to sunbathe along the shoreline and de-stress from their studies. Hundreds of colorful beach towels and blankets engulfed the lawn; Camp Wauburg employees could not even mow the grass, an archived Independent Florida Alligator article details.

The recreation area was only about a quarter of the size it is now when Gonzalez’ grandfather was a UF student. Development of the South Shore’s 65 acres began in the 1980s.

The centennial celebration is a sign of resilience, says Gonzalez, who began working at the lake in October 2020 under strict COVID-19 procedures. It was one of the last UF facilities to close during the pandemic and one of the first to reopen. It has

withstood devastating hurricanes, a destructive tornado in 2019 and a fire in 2020.

“I definitely have a lot of faith that Lake Wauburg will be standing for another 100 years,” she says.

Nearly 56,000 visitors come to the lake each year, but Amber Larkin, the UF RecSports associate director for outdoor recreation, says UF students often hear about the lake during their senior year when it may be too late to visit. She hopes the centennial celebrations will garner even more attention.

“There are very, very few college campuses that have lakefront properties and offerings like we have, so it’s always exciting when people learn about it, come out and take advantage of it,” she added.

Bostwick, now an alumna, still visits the lake to go sailing and swimming.

“The lake caters to so many different people,” she says. “It really, truly is a hidden gem on campus, but it shouldn’t be because it’s so special.”



PHOTO BY AARON DAYE; MOVIE STILL/SONY PICTURES

Albert watches Lyle at Regal Celebration Pointe in this photo illustration.

## DAPPER CROCODILE STEALS GATOR HEARTS IN NEW MUSICAL

BY CINDY SPENCE

**I**F YOU WERE A CROCODILE and you wanted to explore New York City without causing a scene, what better way than as a de facto Florida Gator mascot?

"There are some characters in New York City, and a lot of them blend in, but even in a Gator T-shirt, a crocodile walking down the street is going to turn some heads," says comedian Oscar Collazos (BA '01), a member of the Gotham Gator Club, which, you could argue, just added a

For more on the movie:

[uff.to/XXXXXX](http://uff.to/XXXXXX)

**Gator fans: Keep an eye out for events like watch parties related to the movie release, scheduled for Oct. 7.**

scaly new member to its community.

The crocodile in disguise is Lyle, the star of "Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile," released earlier this month. Producers Will Speck and Josh Gordon say the Albert impersonation is deliberate; it gives Lyle the cover he needs to leave the house on East 88th Street.

And, Gordon says, "If you're a Florida Gators fan, you're going to love the part where they run into some Georgia

Bulldogs."

A curious Gator Nation was already enchanted by the crocodile rocking the orange and blue when the trailer came out in the summer, sparking a tizzy in the Twitterverse. In the trailer, Lyle, his owner and his family look like they raided Albert and Alberta's closet: They wear Gator tees, beanies, scarves and sweaters everywhere they go.

Speck says Javier Bardem, who plays Signor Hector P. Valenti, star of stage and screen and Lyle's original owner, comes up with the idea to use Gator duds to disguise Lyle: "How else are we going to get him out in the city?"

A crocodile who's a Gator fan? Why not? If you were a crocodile, which team would you root for?





SONY PICTURES

Lyle in New York city wearing Gator gear as a disguise.

## A CASE OF REPTILE MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Lyle's snazzy style aside, Twitter and Reddit erupted with debate over another feature of the chic croc's appearance. Could he be Lyle, Lyle Alligator?

To settle the question, we turned to Venetia Briggs-Gonzalez, a researcher with the Croc Docs Lab at UF's Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center. After viewing the trailer, she was sure.

"Lyle is an alligator."

Briggs-Gonzalez is part of a UF/IFAS team that studies crocodilians – crocodiles and alligators – and she says the giveaway is the snout. Alligators have a rounded snout and crocodile snouts are pointy. Lyle's prominent proboscis is too rounded for a crocodile. It's a case of mistaken identity that can even catch Gators off guard, as on the cover of UF's 2003 football media guide, when a crocodile accidentally made a guest appearance.

Lyle, however, definitely adopted the right state school.

"The only place where crocodiles and alligators actually can coexist is at the very southern tip of Florida," says Briggs-Gonzalez. "Nowhere else in the world can we find alligators and crocodiles in the same place, so that makes the Everglades and South Florida unique."

Briggs-Gonzalez says people always give her storybooks about crocodiles and alligators but Lyle is new to her. She plans to head to the library and check out the Lyle books for her two "cutie patooties" ages 3 and 7. After the trailer came out in the summer, one tweet commented that it was odd for a crocodile, a perfectly adapted killing machine that has survived two mass extinctions, to get a musical. Briggs-Gonzalez disagrees.

"I think it's about time," she laughed. "Crocodiles – and alligators – are fantastic creatures. We need to protect them for generations to come. We need to show kids these creatures are awesome."

### ALLIGATOR OR CROCODILE?

It's all in the snout:



**Mississippi or American, alligator**  
(*Alligator Mississippiensis*)



**Estuarine, or saltwater, crocodile**  
(*Crocodilus porosus*)



## A CROCODILE WHO CARES

Lyle is based on a character in a series of children's books from the 1960s by Bernard Weber. "Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile" is the sequel to "The House on East 88th Street," and in the sequel Lyle's neighbor, the curmudgeon Mr. Grumps, tries to have Lyle committed to the zoo.

Producers Will Speck and Josh Gordon say the childhood classic's sweetness inspired the movie.

"This was a beloved book for Josh and I growing up," Speck says.

UF children's literature expert and author John Cech says stories like Lyle's can "de-fang" scary creatures, who can be controlled within the construct of a book.

"We're all intrigued by these creatures, be they dinosaurs, crocodiles or other 'wild things.' Children's imaginations are full of these creatures," says Cech, a professor of English and director of UF's Center for Children's Literature and Culture.

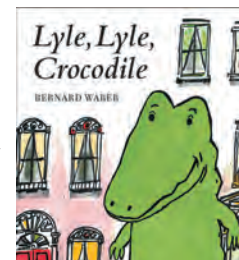
If the story carries a larger message, Cech says, it's that we should look beyond the surface of those we meet.

"How does one win over the Mr. Grumps of this world?" Cech asks. "With generosity of spirit. That's a message that, happily, never grows old."

Speck and Gordon agree and say the movie shows that it is OK to "come out of your shell with the love of your family."

Although Speck and Gordon asked permission to feature the Gator gear, there was no payment to UF and no endorsement by UF. However, they say, the crocodile-alligator collaboration is all positive, just what the country needs right now.

"This should definitely endear the audience to the Gators," Gordon says. "A school that reflects Lyle's values and spirit would be a great place to spend some time."







# TINY PLANTS, GIANT LEAP

UF SPACE BIOLOGISTS GROW THE FIRST “GARDEN” IN MOON DUST

**A** TINY LUNAR FARM GROWN in a high-security lab on the University of Florida campus may put space salad on the menu for future astronauts.

In the first experiment of its kind, UF scientists have grown Earth plants in dust harvested from the Moon in the Apollo missions of half a century ago. The experiments are a first step in NASA's goal to get back to the Moon, and perhaps to Mars.

The soil, called lunar regolith, had been sealed in vials for most of the half century since the first astronauts walked on the Moon in Apollo 11, 12 and 17. UF researchers Rob Ferl and Anna-Lisa Paul had applied three times over 11 years for a chance to work with the lunar regolith. NASA finally said yes.

“You might say we were over the Moon,” said Paul, a research professor of horticultural sciences and director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Biotechnology Research.

Paul and Ferl are trailblazers in the study of plants in space. Through the Space Plants Lab, they have sent experiments on

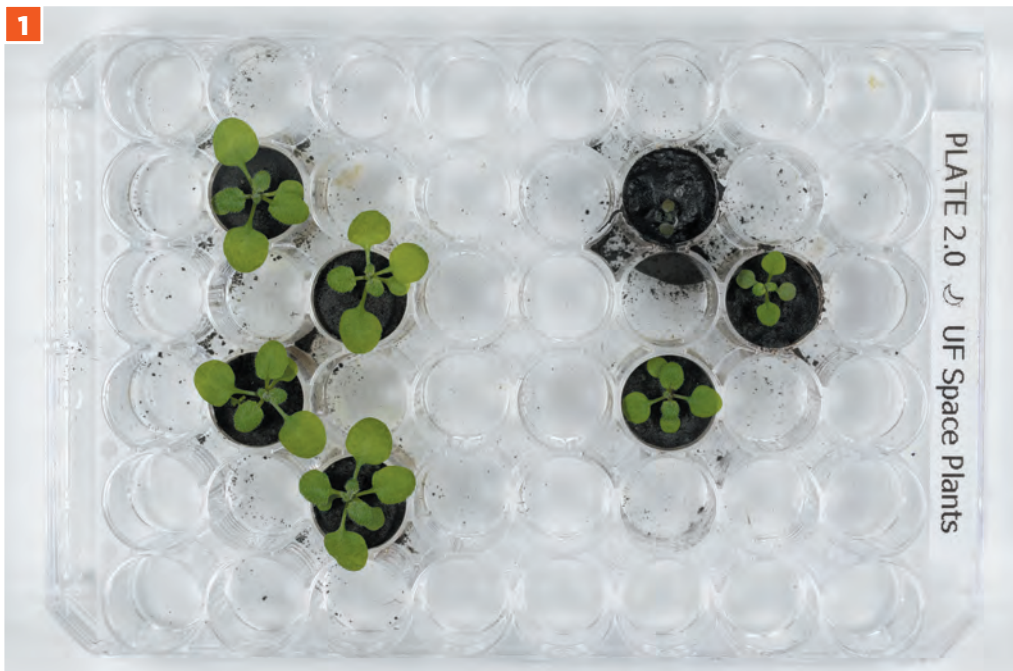
space shuttles, on rockets to the International Space Station and on suborbital flights with Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic, all with the goal of understanding how plants respond to extreme environments. Ever since their first spaceflight experiment, the researchers had dreamed about the chance to grow plants in soil that was not of this world.

Ferl attributes the long-awaited green light partly to the Artemis Program, which plans to return astronauts to the Moon. Artemis will require a better understanding of how to grow plants in space, Ferl says, “because it's pretty clear that somebody is going to be growing plants on the Moon in the next decade.”

Ferl, a distinguished professor of horticultural sciences and assistant vice president for research, says follow-up studies will build on the following questions and more: “So, what happens when you grow plants in lunar soil, something that is totally outside of a plant's evolutionary experience? What would plants do in a lunar greenhouse? Could we have lunar farmers? These are all things we want to know.

“We wanted to do this experiment because, for years, we were asking this question: Would plants grow in lunar soil?” says Ferl. “The answer, it turns out, is yes.”





**1.** Plants grown in simulated lunar soil, left, and plants grown in real lunar soil right. Physical differences between the plants were clear, but nearly every seed germinated to the amazement of the team.

**2.** With only 12 vials of 1 gram each, the experiment had to be tiny. Here, Anna-Lisa Paul and Rob Ferl place the lunar soil in thimble-sized wells in plates that functioned like a garden plot.

**3.** *Arabidopsis thaliana* was the perfect pioneer plant. Its genetic code is completely mapped, making it the hardest worker in most horticulture labs because it allows scientists to study gene expression under a variety of conditions.

**4.** Plants were placed in vials for genetic analysis. “At the genetic level, the plants were pulling out tools traditionally used to cope with stressors such as salt, metals and oxidative stress,” Paul says. One initial finding was that older regolith that had been exposed to solar wind longer was more hostile to plants than younger – close to a billion years younger – regolith, Paul says.

**5.** Buzz Aldrin’s footprint in Moon dust.



PHOTOS BY TYLER LENNON JONES, UF/IFAS

Compiled from a story by Samantha Murray for Explore, UF’s research magazine.  
For the full story see [uff.to/XXXXXX](http://uff.to/XXXXXX)





AARON DAYE

The Swamp Restaurant, now on Southwest Second Avenue, recreates the original eatery's charm from the ground up.

# Return of The Swamp

**STORY BY CARISSA ALLEN (3JM)**

For Katie Taylor (BS '06, MS '08), a visit to The Swamp Restaurant changed her life. Taylor met Patrick Taylor on Memorial Day weekend in 2010. A friend introduced them, they married, and when they returned for Homecoming, The Swamp was a sentimental stop.

For Taylor and countless others, The Swamp was special, so when it was closed in 2019 to make way for apartments, it left a gap in the community.

Ryan Prodesky (BA '15) and Matthew Luedecke hope the newly rebuilt Swamp, which has relocated to the Innovation District, fills that void and helps generations of Gators make new memories.

"Alumni that come back to Gainesville are going to recognize the building as The Swamp Restaurant," says Luedecke, the director of commercial leasing at Trimark Properties. He and Prodesky, the owner, rebuilt The Swamp in the same style as the vintage building, which stood on University Avenue in Midtown.

Rob Meis (BA '96) says he will check out the new location. His memories of the old Swamp include Wednesday nights when Ken and Andrew from Sister Hazel played.

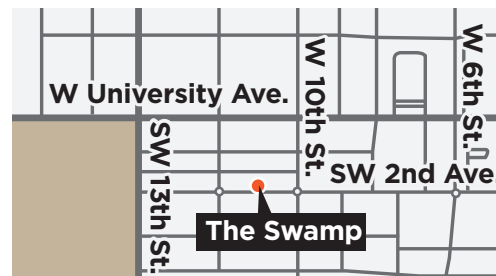
"Outside, in that environment on the front lawn of The Swamp, is just great memories with a lot of great friends," says Meis, who

managed The Swamp in 1998 and again in 2012. The former building was constructed in 1914 as a professor's house and remodeled in 1993 after a fire. The restaurant opened its doors in December 1994.

Rep. Anthony Sabatini (BA '12) tried to save The Swamp, filing a bill in the Florida Legislature to designate the building a historic landmark to protect it from demolition. The move failed, and The Swamp was demolished and replaced with mixed-use development featuring hundreds of student apartments.

Now, Luedecke says, the new location is the right fit. The old bricks, which Prodesky reclaimed before demolition, pave the outdoor courtyard alongside new bricks. Original memorabilia, like the Dazzlers poster signed by Erin Andrews, will come out of climate-controlled storage.

"I think the most exciting thing is just being able to reconnect with our guests that have come through the years," Prodesky says. "The stories, the way that it has become part of Gator Nation – what I'm the most excited about is bringing that back."









# Professor and alumna makes history as UF/IFAS names a dorm for her

BY SAMANTHA MURRAY

A new dormitory for graduate students and visiting scholars at the UF/IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC) in Homestead will be named in honor of UF professor emerita and alumna Pauline O. Lawrence (MS '72, PHD '75).

The naming is one of several firsts for Lawrence and the university. As a graduate student at UF in the 1960s and 1970s, Lawrence was the first Black female student in entomology and the first female student to live and study on the UF/IFAS TREC campus. The Pauline O. Lawrence Student Residence will be the first UF building named after a Black person.



Lawrence

"This was a big surprise, and I am deeply honored," Lawrence said. She and her husband Carlton Davis, distinguished professor emeritus in the UF/IFAS food and resource economics department, have strongly supported the campaign to build the dorm,

but she never asked or expected to see her name on it, she said.

"I hope it reminds all the future graduate students coming through the center that entomology and other scientific disciplines are open to everyone, regardless of background," Lawrence said.

"The dorms are part of a larger vision for TREC in which graduate students are an integral part of the research and teaching community at the center," said Edward 'Gilly' Evans, the center's director.

However, working and learning at a research and education center comes with challenges, not least of which is finding a place nearby to live in Miami-Dade.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Dr. Richard Baranowski and then PhD student Pauline Lawrence in 1973.

Providing affordable, quality living space for graduate students right on the campus will help attract the best and brightest students, Evans said.

"Naming memorializes the contributions of faculty, students, donors – and Dr. Lawrence is all three – who have helped build the foundation for excellence at UF," said J. Scott Angle, UF's senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources and leader of UF/IFAS.

The project is now in the design phase with construction planned for 2023.

## UF TOPS IN TECH TRANSFER FOR ECONOMIC RETURN

#	INSTITUTION	SCORE
1	Carnegie Mellon University	100
2	University of Florida	98.72
3	Columbia University	98.37
4	Stanford University	95.5
5	Harvard University	94.96
6	University of Pennsylvania	93.88
7	North Carolina State University	92.79
8	University of California, San Diego	92.64
9	University of California, Los Angeles	91.47
10	University of Minnesota	91.01

HEARTLAND FOUNDATION

The University of Florida ranks first among public universities and second nationwide in a report that evaluates which U.S. universities are best at moving new discoveries from the lab and into the real world through research commercialization and STEM graduates.

The report, "Research to Renewal: Advancing University Tech Transfer," was produced by the nonpartisan, nonprofit Heartland Forward organization, which evaluated American universities based on their success at infusing discoveries into

private industry to yield an economic return.

The metrics included invention disclosures, number of licenses and options, licensing income and startups formed, citations of university articles contained in patents granted to firms, and relative number of STEM graduates.

The report noted UF "is the top public university. It has a huge student body ... and research enterprise. Its technology transfer prowess was seeded in the 1960s with its creation of Gatorade."



## UF PARTNERS WITH CIA ON IMPROVING CYBERSECURITY

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA AND THE CIA have entered a first-of-its-kind agreement to study how artificial intelligence and machine learning applications can be used to detect and deter malicious agents that infiltrate computer networks.

The work will be carried out by researchers associated with UF's Florida Institute for National Security.

"If you're operating retroactively in cybersecurity, oftentimes you are too late," said **Damon Woodard**, principal researcher and newly appointed director of the Florida Institute for National Security.

One area of research will be on reinforcement learning, which attempts to mimic how humans learn through trial and error. Woodard said little work has been done on this method of machine learning's application to cybersecurity problems. Researchers will explore this technology on simple problems and then see if solutions can be scaled up.

"In terms of a cyberattack, you are trying to figure out what the person attacking you is trying to do so you can anticipate and make adjustments on your side to stop them," Woodard said.



**Woodard**

The Identity Theft Resource Center reported in January there were 1,603 cyberattack-related data breaches in 2021, an increase of about 500 over the previous year. Ransomware attacks are also on the rise, doubling in each of the past two years, the nationally recognized nonprofit organization said.

The hope, Woodard said, is the work will revolutionize the way the world thinks about cybersecurity and provide insights and technologies that can better protect data and strengthen security across both the government and private sectors. The team also includes two UF doctoral students in Electrical and Computer Engineering: Olivia Dizon-Paradis and Stephen Wormald..

"Working with the CIA is a major benefit because they present interesting constraints in cybersecurity," Woodard said. "You're dealing with worst-case scenarios to prepare for everything from low-quality data to low-resolution images. This level of research allows us to reach our full capacity for understanding potential shortcomings."



# TRANSITIONS



## 'OH-FOUR' REJOINS THE GATORS

Florida's two-time national champion point guard, Taurean Green, returns to Florida after a 14-year pro career to UF's men's basketball program as director of player development.

"I couldn't be more excited for



**Green**

Taurean to join our staff," said head coach Todd Golden. "He's one of the best to ever wear the Gator uniform and understands what it takes to achieve at the highest levels here.

Green played three seasons with the Gators from 2004-07, a member of the unforgettable "Oh-Fours" recruiting class that helped bring back-to-back titles to UF in 2006 and 2007.



UF ATHLETICS

New Gators soccer coach Samantha Bohon, left, with longtime friend and Gator great Danielle Fotopoulos. Right: Bohon, then Samantha Baggett, and Fotopoulos after the infamous 1996 matchup.

## OLD FRIENDS **GET A KICK** OUT OF SOCCER COACH PICK

Danielle Fotopoulos and Samantha Baggett had been friends and teammates for several years, but on Nov. 3, 1996, they were opponents locked in a ferocious battle on a soccer field in Durham, N.C. Fotopoulos, the forward for Florida's second-year program, was one of the nation's most prolific goal-scorers. Baggett, out of Daytona Beach, was a standout and speedy defender for Duke.

All the club practices, the middle-school travel team games, the rides up and down Interstate-4 – even Baggett's weekend as a bridesmaid in the 20-year-old Fotopoulos' wedding a few months earlier – meant absolutely nothing as the No. 9 Gators and Blue Devils did battle that Sunday afternoon.

That became painfully clear (for one more than the other) when Fotopoulos, in a scoreless game, executed an open-field tackle (the legal kind) on Baggett that sent her Blue Devil buddy spilling to the turf and writhing in pain with an ankle injury. Baggett eventually returned to the sidelines to watch Duke prevail 1-0.

"When I finally saw Sam ... on crutches, I told her, 'I'm so sorry.'" Fotopoulos recalls. "She was like, 'I don't care. We won.'"

Fotopoulos and Baggett – now Samantha Bohon – have relived and retold that anecdote throughout the last quarter century-plus, be it during their time together on the U.S. National Team, as their families grew and careers took their turns, and eventually as coaching rivals the last six years in the Sunshine State Conference.

And in May, Fotopoulos, now a coach at Eckerd College, was in attendance at the press conference inside UF's sparkling new soccer complex announcing her longtime friend Samantha Bohon as the third coach in Gators history.

Now married with three children, Bohon says the opportunity just two hours from her Daytona roots was too good to pass up.

"There weren't many openings that would have taken me from my current situation," Bohon said. "But when Florida calls, you pick up the phone."

For complete story, visit [uff.to/XXXXXX](http://uff.to/XXXXXX)

Samantha Bohon took over as head coach after 15 seasons with the Embry-Riddle women's soccer program, where she oversaw the program's transition from NAIA to NCAA Division II competition. She spent four seasons as an assistant coach at Tennessee (2001-05) and was on staff for the Lady Vols' first two SEC regular-season and tournament (2002, 2003) title teams.

## Comings and goings at two health colleges

### DEAN MICHAEL G. PERRI

Michael G. Perri, Ph.D., stepped down as dean and will retire at the end of the year after leading the UF College of Public Health and Health Professions for 15 years.



Perri

With Perri at the helm, what was once one of the smallest UF colleges grew to become recognized nationally for education and research, with 20 degree programs and an increase in student

enrollment of more than 70%.

Beth Virnig, Ph.D., M.P.H., took over as dean July 11. She most recently served as a professor in the division of health policy and management at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and as director and lead of the school's Strategic Global Public Health Programming.

### DEAN JULIE JOHNSON

Julie Johnson, Pharm.D., a visionary leader who guided the University of Florida College of Pharmacy to its first top 5 national ranking, retired as dean in August.



Johnson

In 2013, Johnson became the first female dean of the college and the first to hold a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. Under her leadership, the college ascended in the U.S.

News & World Report rankings of the best pharmacy colleges from No. 14 in 2013 to No. 5 in 2020 and from approximately No. 20 to No. 3 in National Institutes of Health and federal research funding.

Johnson will take a year of administrative leave, then rejoin the college faculty in the department of pharmacotherapy and translational research.



CHRIS KIM/UAA COMMUNICATIONS

Mick Hubert, who retired in May as the Voice of the Gators, is flanked by broadcast partner Nick Belmonte, left, and producer Steve Egan.

## Oh my! LONGTIME VOICE OF THE GATORS SIGNS OFF ...

The signature "oh my!" call went silent in May with the retirement of its creator, Mick Hubert, who was the voice of the Gators for 33 years.

Hubert started in 1989 at UF's season-opener against Ole Miss. His last game was at Condron Ballpark at the end of the regular baseball season. In between, Hubert called 2,510 games, including six national championships – three in football, two in men's basketball, one in baseball.

In an interview with longtime Gainesville Sun columnist Pat Dooley, Hubert said he is looking forward to watching games on TV, although one of his most famous catchphrases – "Doering's got a touchdown!" – stemmed from his exuberance in calling an unlikely Gator road win in 1993.

"This is going to be a fun college football season," he said. "I can watch a game or not. I can turn it off if it's boring. It's going to be a blast."

As he signed off for the last time at Condron Ballpark, Hubert spoke to fans: "I've enjoyed 33 years broadcasting Gator sports to you. I thank you so very much. I love you one and all. You made my career. Thank you so much. For Nick Belmonte, I'm Mick Hubert, so long everybody."

## ... but here comes a new Gator on play-by-play

ESPN Radio play-by-play announcer Sean Kelley kicked off his UF career as only the fourth voice of the Gators with the 2022 football season.

The veteran broadcaster's desire to be part of a team fueled his interest in the Gators job.



"I grew up in St. Louis where Jack Buck was the voice of the Cardinals, Bob Costas got his career started there, Dan Kelly was the voice of the St. Louis Blues," Kelley said. "I grew up in a town where sportscasters were not only some of the best in the country but were also true ambassadors of the teams and the city. They're the ones who inspired me and made me want to get into the business."

"All this time, I have been in search of a place where I could be that same all-in kind of announcer. Call the games, yes. But also represent the university and be a part of the fabric of the community."

Although Kelley, 50, says he doesn't have a signature phrase, he wants his listeners to enjoy the broadcast.

"I always tell the partners I'm working with that if we're not having fun, the listener is not having fun." *Information from floridagators.com was used in this report.*



# NUMBERS TELL

*A research record and other developments, discoveries and distinctions for the University of Florida.*

# \$1

## BILLION

**Amount surpassed by UF researchers in research spending in 2022**, a milestone for UF and a key to advancing the treatments of diseases, the development of new agricultural products and engineering solutions, and countless other discoveries.

With \$1.076 billion in research expenditures, UF joins an exclusive group of about 15 public universities around the country to surpass \$1 billion, including the University of Michigan, UCLA and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

UF Vice President for Research David Norton praised the faculty and staff for driving the university's relentless pursuit of new knowledge and discovery

through research and scholarship.

"Surpassing the \$1 billion research milestone reflects UF's continued rise as one of the leading research universities in the United States," Norton said. "But this number represents far more than dollars – it represents the value of these researchers' remarkable intellect and talent and its impact on our state, our nation and the world."

Almost half of the research occurred in the six colleges of UF Health, with major thrusts in cancer, diabetes, neurological

diseases, gene therapy and many other areas. But faculty from all of UF's 16 colleges and the Florida Museum of Natural History contributed to the record research, as did scientists at UF Scripps Biomedical Research.

"The statewide economic impact related to Florida's State University System research spending is phenomenal," said Mori Hosseini, chair of the UF Board of Trustees, "and UF's share of that total — more than 40% — is something we can all be proud of."

# 2

**UF's RANK among public universities in the economic return students get from attending college**, leading to greater financial security. The analysis, highlighted in Forbes magazine, puts UF ahead of such schools as MIT, the California Institute of Technology and the University of Michigan.

# 3

**NEW SPECIES OF HAWK MOTHS discovered by researchers at the Florida Museum of Natural History.**

Discovered in the Bahamas, the tiny moths are only as long as a standard pill, unlike typical hawk moths, whose wings can span more than four inches. Hawk moths are important pollinators, sustaining countless native plant populations around the world.



**NEW VARIETIES OF CALADIUM recently developed by a UF/IFAS professor of environmental horticulture.**


Florida is the world's only source of the popular red-and-green ornamental plant, and gardeners are excitedly welcoming Zhanao Deng's four new cultivars: Dots Delight, White Lightning, Firefly and Spicy Lizard.

# 500,000

**Number of campus bats that have to be relocated to a new bat barn** before their dilapidated current home (pictured) collapses. Donations are being accepted for repairs and reconstruction of the old bat house. Visit [UFgive.to/BatHouse22](https://UFgive.to/BatHouse22).



# THE STORY



**NEW HURRICANE CATEGORY** to be tested in a new lab at Florida International University's National Hurricane Center, where scientists from UF and eight other research institutions will gather. Category 6 hurricanes don't exist on paper, but researchers will study 200+ mph winds and 20-foot storm surges to prepare the nation for climate change.

**\$7.5  
MILLION**

**Amount of a grant from the National Science Foundation** to a team of researchers led by the UF to examine the needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations as they deal with security and privacy technologies.

**8** **UF'S RANKING** in "The Best Colleges in America, Ranked by Value" by Money magazine. UF was the only Florida institution to be named among the top 10 in a list that includes over 600 colleges and universities nationwide.



**NUMBER OF FLORIDA UNIVERSITIES** participating in a new medical marijuana consortium, led by two UF Pharmacy professors. The group is researching how marijuana works as a medical treatment.



**\$10  
MILLION**

**Funding awarded by the CDC to the Southeast Regional Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases (SECVBD)** to continue the study of harmful viruses, parasites and other pathogens spread by mosquitos, ticks and kissing bugs. Based at UF, SECVBD was established in 2016 and links an interdisciplinary team of researchers from UF and other universities in the southeast and Puerto Rico, who work alongside leaders of state public health and mosquito and tick control agencies.



# TWO NATIONAL TITLES FOR UF TRACK & FIELD



UAA COMMUNICATIONS

The UF women's track team celebrates its national championship at the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships in Eugene, Oregon in June.

The Florida Track and Field program won both the NCAA Men's Outdoor Championship and the NCAA Women's Outdoor Championship on back-to-back days in June.

The titles mark No. 11 and 12 for Coach Mike Holloway. It's also the first sweep of team titles at the NCAA Outdoor Championships since Oregon in 2015.

The Florida women won four event



UAA COMMUNICATIONS

The Gators scored 54 points to win their fifth outdoor title, 10th overall on the men's side.

titles in their first NCAA Outdoor Championship. The Gators swept the team titles Indoors and

Outdoors this year.

Florida's men won three event titles to win their fifth outdoor title and 10th overall.



CNN

History was made on July 13, when a statue of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune was unveiled in the U.S. Capitol, making her the first Black American to have a state-commissioned statue in the National Statuary Hall. An educator, civil rights activist and presidential adviser, she founded the institution that became Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach. The statue is one of two representing the state of Florida and replaced one of a Confederate general. Attorney Bob Lloyd (BA '87, JD '90) helped lead the effort, inspired by his grandfather's long friendship with Bethune.

Read about it here: [uff.to/XXXXXX](https://uff.to/XXXXXX)



# *Student wins national award for jazz recordings*



PROVIDED PHOTO

A chance jam session with friends and classmates led Derris Lee to pursue a music degree.

A University of Florida architecture-scholar-turned-music-student has won national recognition for a series of jazz recordings that might never have happened had it not been for a chance jam session with friends.

Derris Lee, who was scheduled to graduate in August with a degree in music, won the 45th Annual DownBeat Student Music Award for Outstanding Performances in the Best Jazz Soloist category at the undergraduate college level. The award is considered among the most prestigious in jazz education. Lee submitted three recordings as a drummer, percussionist, keyboardist, vocalist and producer.

Pursuing a bachelor of arts in music with a minor in sustainability and the built environment, Lee's path has been anything but a straight line.

Originally from Palatka, Lee arrived at UF in Fall 2017 after transferring from St. Johns River State College. After finishing his second fall semester in architecture at UF in 2018, Lee and his classmates attended a get-together at a professor's architecture studio, which included a music room. As the professor and other students began selecting their instruments, Lee sat at the drums, which he has played since childhood, and began to play.

His performance left his friends gobsmacked.

"When I got to the drums and began playing, to my surprise, my friends said, 'Dude, what? I didn't even know you could drum like that. What are you doing here?'"

Lee's parents, both musicians, supported his decision to change his career trajectory. His father is a drummer and his mother a vocalist.

Upon arriving at the UF School of Music, Lee became interested in jazz. Scott Wilson, associate professor of jazz studies, offered Lee a position as a drummer in UF's jazz band, and Lee seized the opportunity to learn more about jazz traditions alongside adjunct professor Clyde Connor.

"I became immersed into a musical world that I have always loved," Lee said.

This fall, Lee began a master of music in percussion performance and was also awarded the first graduate assistantship in music business and entrepreneurship at UF.

"The joy in winning a 2022 Downbeat Student Music Award is seeing the results guided by the wisdom of my parents, church, musical inspirations, professors and mentors," Lee said. "I aim to create art that compels listeners to seek faith, hope and love in a world in dire need of it."

To see a performance by Lee, visit [uff.to/XXXXXX](https://uff.to/XXXXXX)



# OH, THE THINGS YOU CAN THINK

*No disrespect to Dr. Seuss, but Gators are on a wondrous odyssey of ideas, ingenuity and innovation more magical than even his classic children's books*

BY DAVID FINNERTY

OUR BRAINS, SCIENTISTS SWEAR, ARE MORE MYSTERY THAN NOT. Mindboggling as that might seem, we know more about the dark side of the moon than we do that three-pound organ inside our own skulls. At least that's what the experts who compare such things tell us.

Be that as it may, we humans have come up with some really good ideas. Especially Gators. Think Gatorade, frozen orange juice concentrate, the Chomp.

The university's 169-year history sparkles with moments so imaginative, so lucid, so brilliant, that at times our labs and classrooms almost feel like Leonardo da Vinci's workshop. But what's happening on campus now is bigger. Much, much, much bigger. It's a renaissance of creativity and ingenuity. An innovation revolution.

And it has a straight line to UF's **Go Greater** campaign.

Back in 2014, when the campaign began, UF's president, provost and deans were so determined to supercharge the university's status as one of the world's powerhouse idea generators, a large slice of the Go Greater mission was committed to making that happen. The results are breathtaking.

Professors and researchers — with a colossal assist from visionary donors — are finding new ways to solve puzzles that have stumped us for millennia, while also taking a fresh look at how we work, play, learn and thrive.

Starting with — what else? — our brains.

Biologists at UF's Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience believe one of the Atlantic's simplest creatures might hide clues to our own brain's evolution. It's an intriguing notion. Nervous systems in the gelatinous ocean comb jellies are so basic, they're a glimpse at what animal life was like before the first beasts crawled from the sea. If the biologists are right, their research on

the jellies — made possible with a grant from **The Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group** — could bring scientists closer to explaining how mammals, birds and reptiles made the leap from merely functioning to thinking.

Far up the evolutionary ladder from the ocean comb jellies are the kinds of brains that dream up robot dogs. That's what a team in UF's **Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering** did. The

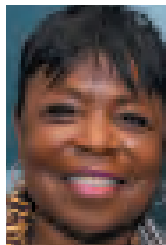
student engineers, along with their adviser, associate professor Eric Jing Du, built the robot to keep firefighters safer on rescue calls. The "dog" can get into small places, scan what it sees and provide images to its human handlers before firefighters are sent into dangerous situations.

On the other side of campus, doctoral student Hope Hersh and her squad of out-of-this-world thinkers have come up with a recipe that lets astronauts bake bread in space. Her idea is to mix ingredients in a bag where dough can rise, then bake it in the spaceship's oven. Judges at NASA's Deep Space Food Challenge were so taken with the idea last fall that Hersh and her team were awarded \$25,000 to fine-tune the formula.

Ideas like those — ignited with funding from philanthropists like **Jane Sun** (BSAC '92) and **Gale King** (BSJ '83, MA '86), whose scholarships bring new brainpower to campus

— are bubbling up all over the university. Gators are so good at it, UF has earned the unofficial nickname "Innovation U." A nonpartisan think tank reported this spring that UF is the nation's top public university for tech transfers, moving discoveries from lab to real world.

Here's a look at just five of the Big Ideas that took root during the campaign:



King



Sun

## AMERICA'S AI UNIVERSITY

Call it what it is: the doorstep to the future. Artificial intelligence is changing life as we know it, what we do and how we do it.

At its epicenter is UF. Our university is quickly becoming America's undisputed "AI university" — what happens here will reverberate around the globe.

Two years ago — leveraging a \$50 million investment from alumnus **Chris Malachowsky** (BSEE '80) and **NVIDIA**, the company he cofounded — UF embarked on a journey to create the world's fastest AI supercomputer and to introduce the technology to all students, regardless of their majors. The university pitched in

another \$20 million to create an AI-centric data center.

"Artificial intelligence," UF President Kent Fuchs said at the time, "is poised to transform the way we all work with information, helping us address challenges and make discoveries that once seemed unattainable. By immersing this powerful technology in the curriculum across UF, we are positioning Florida as a global leader in a technological revolution that — similar to the smartphone — will transform the way we live, work and interact with the world around us."

"In my 38 years at the University of Florida, I have never before seen an initiative with the power to fundamentally transform so many areas of scholarship and research at so large a scale," UF Provost Joe Glover predicted.



## SCIENCE OF REAL ESTATE

"Real estate cannot be lost or stolen, nor can it be carried away," Franklin Roosevelt once said. "Purchased with common sense, paid for in full, and managed with reasonable care, it is about the safest investment in the world."

There's a 21st-century twist, however. The best real estate decisions are backed with science and research.

Alumnus **Kelley Bergstrom** (MBA '68), one of the most successful men in the business, believes wholeheartedly in that viewpoint. So much so he gave UF \$13 million to turn the campus real estate center named in his honor into the preeminent resource for practical, timely and usable information for the entire industry.

"As a land grant university, the University of Florida has a unique role to facilitate applied research to the real estate industry and consumers of real estate products," Bergstrom said when he made the gift in 2019.

With his investment, the **Bergstrom Real Estate Center in the Warrington College of Business** is piggybacking on UF's already strong research in agriculture, architecture, construction, business, economics, engineering, geography, law, medicine, urban planning and other academic disciplines to shape the decisions of policymakers, investors, developers and the public.





## POWERING THE NEW ENGINEER

Like all evolutions, this one started with a need: the notion that UF's engineering college must step forward in this moment to be able to unflinchingly meet the moments ahead. "Powering the New Engineer," the movement was called.

Dean Cammy Abernathy and her team — colleagues and donors and lawmakers — went to work on a plan to reimagine the college's mission and to draw a roadmap to get there. So big was their dream, **Dr. Herbert Wertheim** (BSCE '62-'63), the college's namesake, predicted UF would eventually have the "premier engineering college." Health care, preventive medicine, communications, the environment — almost nothing, he said, would be out of its scope.

To set the course for that trajectory, Wertheim and his wife, Nicole, invested \$50 million in 2015. Their gift became the footing for a \$300 million initiative to remake the college into a 21st-century force of science, the boldest undertaking in the engineering college's 100-plus-year history.

"Engineering is the future for us as a society," Wertheim later explained. "When we think of all the good things that have happened in our lives — whether airplanes or automobiles or harvests or the video camera — it all comes from engineering."

Abernathy described it this way: "If we really want to change the world, it starts with educating the new engineer — an engineer who's technically competent, but [also] one who is capable of leading and innovating in a world that is increasingly global and virtual."



## THE HEALTHIEST GENERATION

Here's a sobering statistic: In the United States alone, 60,000 of us are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease each year, and 5.8 million are living with Alzheimer's.

Put another way, there's a 1-in-6 chance a neurological disorder of one kind or another will find you at some point in your life. Make it to the ripe age of 85, and your risk goes way up.

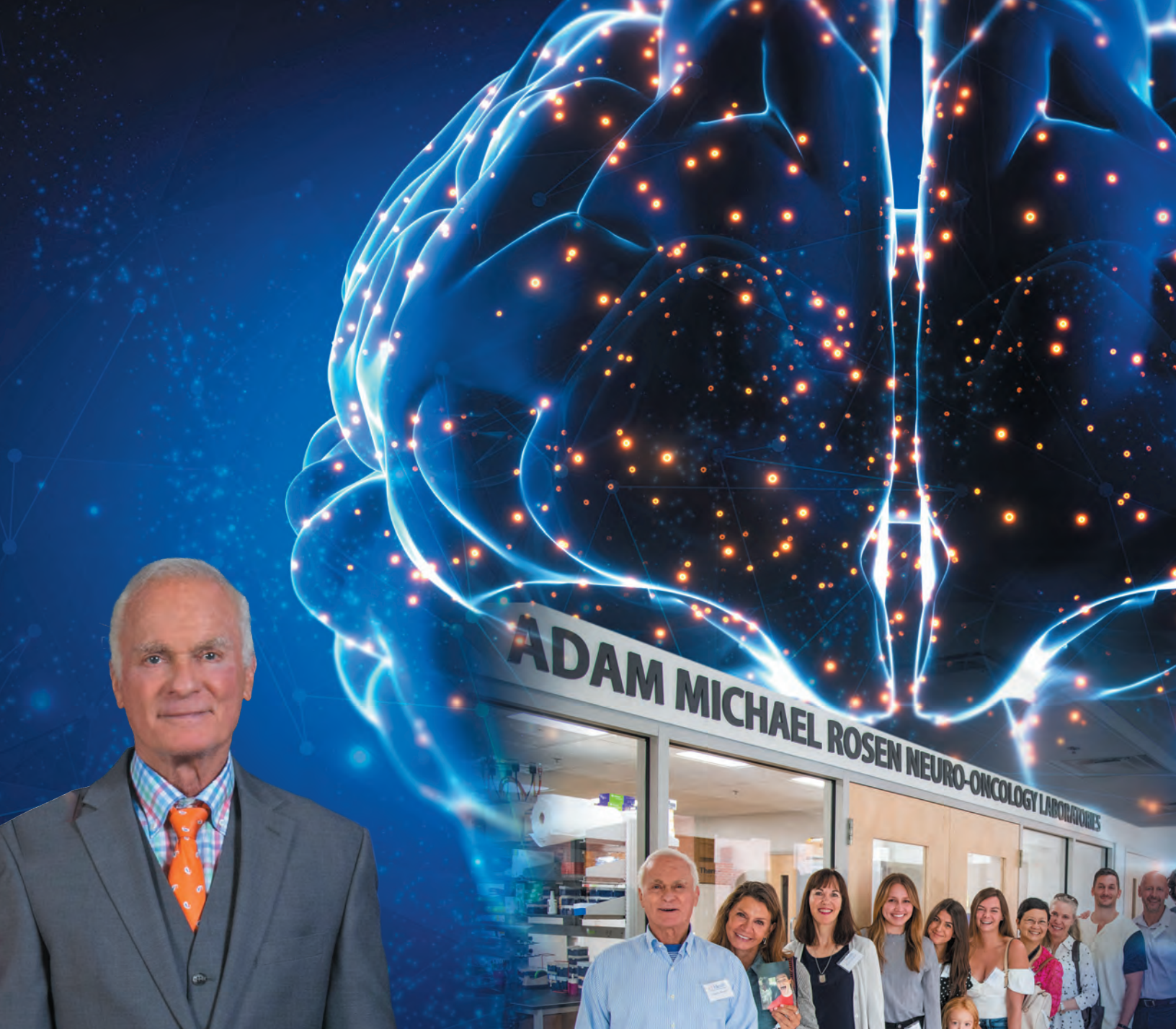
The good news: Look for those odds to improve in our favor.

UF doctors are closing in on cures and better treatments to ease those burdensome health issues. Their cause got a big boost in 2018 when **Lee and Lauren** (BSJ '07) Fixel invested \$20 million to create the **Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases**, named to honor Lee's father, **Norman** (BSBA '75).

"We hope that our gift, along with extensive efforts at the University of Florida, will cement UF Health's position as the preeminent destination for patient care, research and technological innovation for neurodegenerative diseases," Lee Fixel said at the time.

In the years since, the institute has become a cornerstone of UF's "Platform for Life" initiative — the university's aspiration to create history's healthiest generation through precision care, the elimination of health disparities and the advancement of therapies related to the brain and neuromuscular and mental health.





## THE BRAIN

It's been a brutal year — war, inflation, pandemic, gaping political divide, climate change. Now this: 88,970 Americans are expected to be diagnosed with brain tumors in 2022.

Brain tumors are nothing new. Rumor is the first case was discovered back in 1873. What is new, however, is a \$12 million investment from Orlando magnate **Harris Rosen** that's bringing UF's doctors ever closer to taming a disorder that doesn't give a hoot if your name is Elizabeth Taylor, Johnnie Cochran, George Harrison or Beau Biden.

Or Adam Rosen.

Harris Rosen's contribution — seed funding for UF's \$100 million **ReMission Alliance Against Brain Tumors** project — honors his son, who died of brain cancer in 2018. The

groundbreaking alliance is an international collaboration that unites top neuro-oncology physicians and scientists in research and clinical trials.

"The team at UF is already doing extraordinary work, and the alliance will enhance their progress and improve outcomes for patients well beyond Florida," Rosen said in 2019 when he made the gift. "A collaboration like this is difficult and lofty, but my family and I support this vision to rewrite the story of brain cancer."

The alliance is building on the work done at UF's Preston A. Wells Jr. Center for Brain Tumor Therapy — widely considered a leader in brain tumor treatment and research. With the alliance in place, the team there has undertaken new projects and clinical trials alongside partners at the world's best research institutes and hospitals.







# ‘Lift *as* You Rise’

THEY’RE PROUD OF THEIR START, EACH ON A PANHANDLE DIRT ROAD. NOW **THIS GATOR COUPLE** — WHO RAISED THREE GATOR CHILDREN, INCLUDING A STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT — IS SHOWING **FUTURE GENERATIONS** THE POWER OF A UF EDUCATION.

BY BARBARA DRAKE (MFA ’04)

**H**E LIKES PRINCE; SHE’S INTO GOSPEL. He goes on intuition; she’s a planner. He recharges by watching sports on TV; she unwinds on a yoga mat.

“We’re yin and yang,” said **Val Green** (BSA ’84) in a recent interview with her husband, **Vince Green** (BSBA ’84).

“I’d second that,” laughed Vince.

But when it comes to core values, this Gator couple is in perfect alignment.

“Seek God. Work hard. Be kind and be a good person,” said Val. “That’s the Green family motto.”

Married for 37 years and parents to three Gator children, the Greens are living proof that education, hard work and service to others are the foundations of success. From humble beginnings on the Florida Panhandle, Vince and Val rose to become outstanding students at UF and leaders in their careers, Vince as a field sales leader for Allstate’s North Georgia market, Val as director of commercial operations for Merck pharmaceuticals.

Since 2018, the couple — now retired and living in Jacksonville — have been fostering diversity at UF by supporting deserving students with the Green Family Achievement Scholarship fund, administered by the Association of Black Alumni.

**The Green Family Scholarships** reward academic excellence and encourage recipients to become active civic leaders.

“We want to instill the importance of volunteering and contributing to society in a meaningful way, whether it’s giving to the campus community or to the Gainesville community,” said Val. “It’s vital to give back, not just financially but also of your time and talents.”

**Alumni Val and Vince Green** are parents to three Gator students and endowed a scholarship through the Black Alumni Association. They are shown here relaxing in UF’s Wilmot Botanical Gardens.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GREENS

**The Greens and the Gators go together.** This photo of the couple with their two youngest was taken in Atlanta at the Florida vs. Alabama game, Dec. 19, 2020. From left to right: Vince Green, son Ian, daughter Olivia and Val.



“We want to instill the importance of volunteering and contributing to society in a meaningful way ... It’s vital to give back, not just financially but also of your time and talents.”

- VAL GREEN ON VALUES PASSED ON TO GREEN FAMILY ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## TOBACCO AND GIANT BEETS

Vince and Val’s journey began in the Florida Panhandle. Vince’s family lived in Lynn Haven, a beach/military town just north of Panama City. Val grew up 135 miles away in the tiny inland community of Lamont, on a 65-acre working farm that has been in her family for generations. Both grew up, they are proud to say, on dirt roads.

“Our cash crop was tobacco when I was growing up,” said Val. “But we raised everything — animals, vegetables, corn, tomatoes, squash, peas.”

Active in public speaking, talent shows and 4-H, Val took a 20-mile-long bus ride to school each day and fit her duties on the farm around homework and crafting with her mother, Elizabeth, an avid sewer, gardener and cook. In the summers, Val, her two brothers and their parents worked up to 10 hours a day to get the tobacco harvest in.

“A farm is a great place to be from because it teaches you the value of a hard day’s work,” she said.

“It was a good, humble beginning, filled with lots of love and family ... and we had a great church, right there in our community,” she added.

Vince acquired his work ethic from his father, George, a truck driver who served in the Army Reserves for 42 years. Nicknamed “Green Acres,” their family home sat on two and a half acres, and while it wasn’t farmland per se, there was enough good soil to raise vegetables out back.

Gifted at sports and horticulture, Vince used his green thumb to grow vegetables for the family’s suppers, lovingly cooked by his mom, Maxie, an educator. In seventh grade, he grew a beet as big as a volleyball, earning a glowing write-up in the local newspaper. The story caught the eye of Lynn Haven’s most celebrated resident, Charles W. Ireland, founder of Vulcan Materials Company and a gardening enthusiast.

The construction-materials magnate was looking for someone to manage the four greenhouses on his 15-acre property, and he figured whoever had cultivated that giant beet could work wonders on his estate.

That is how, at age 12, Vince Green ended up being hired by one of the nation’s most powerful businessmen.

“Yes, I wanted that job,” remembered Vince. “I was tired of doing all that stuff around my house for free!”

In addition to giving Green a steady paycheck, Ireland passed on invaluable advice.

“He said, ‘Save more money than you spend,’” recalled Vince. “I’ve always tried to do that.”

As much as teenaged Vince and Val loved their communities, both dreamed of building futures beyond the Panhandle and



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GREENS

**One of Val Green’s most influential people was her late mother, Elizabeth Hall. In the fourth grade, Val wrote an essay about her mother that won a Mother’s Day contest. This photo from around 1974 shows mother and daughter celebrating that win.**

understood that college was necessary to open new doors. Each took a unique path to the University of Florida.

Having grown up in the shadow of the NAS Panama City Navy Base, Vince headed to UF on a Navy ROTC scholarship, the second member of his family to go to college. With Charles Ireland’s financial advice echoing in his ears, he trained his sights on a degree in business administration.

A highly organized go-getter who graduated early from high school, Val gravitated to UF because it was “the perfect happy medium” among her acceptance schools, she said: Not too close, like FSU in Tallahassee, not too far, like Boston College in the chilly north. Plus, the first-generation student felt at home on the UF campus since she had attended summer programs through UF’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

After weighing her options, the level-headed 16-year-old accepted a scholarship from UF/IFAS and started in the summer of 1979, eventually majoring in microbiology and cell science.

“It’s something that I’m very interested and passionate about,” she said. “It was my aspiration to do research on cancer, something significant.”

## A GATOR ROMANCE

When Vince Green first stepped on campus in the fall of 1980, it was a hopeful time for African American students at UF. The university had been desegregated just 22 years earlier, and since that tumultuous time, minority enrollment had been slowly increasing, with organizations like the Black Student Union and Black fraternities and sororities offering support and community. That year, African American students constituted roughly 6% of UF's undergraduate population. By 1985, one year after Vince and Val graduated, that number would swell to 11%.

"The atmosphere among Black students was very cohesive at that time," said Vince. "UF was just getting that influx of Black students, and we created a family on campus."

Greek life appealed to both newcomers, with Vince joining Phi Beta Sigma and Val, Alpha Kappa Alpha. But college life wasn't all parties and tailgates for them: Both students worked their way through UF. Vince had a job at the UF Athletic Association and waited tables at the Reitz Union. Val cleaned petri dishes and test tubes in a lab and sorted bones at the Florida Museum.

"I knew for sure that my future depended on my ability to graduate from the University of Florida," Val said.

It was not until their senior year, in 1983, that the future Mr. and Mrs. Green met; a mutual friend introduced them at a party.

"We just clicked," said Vince.

The pair dated for less than a year. Val never planned to get married right out of college, she said, but Vince had other ideas, as she subsequently learned from his parents.

"They said, 'Oh, he kept telling us that you were the person he was going to marry, almost from Day One,'" Val remembered.

"Yep, that's it. I knew," said Vince.

Score one for Vince's intuition: The couple married soon after they graduated from UF in 1984, their long-dreamed-of bachelor's degrees finally in hand.

## DUAL CAREERS IN GEORGIA

Prior to graduation, Val had received a career wake-up call. Never a fan of chemistry class, she nevertheless applied to become a medical researcher and interviewed with several pharmaceutical companies. Their reps broke the news to her.

"They said, 'Listen, based on your personality and this interview process, we don't think [research] is going to be a fit for you,'" she remembered. "But we've got these sales positions that, gosh, we think you'd be perfect for."

She had never known anyone who was in pharmaceutical sales. "It was a career path that meant absolutely nothing to me," she admitted.

But a close sorority sister, who had just taken a job with Merck, encouraged Val to return for the sales interviews – "and the rest is history," laughed Val.

That history encompasses 34 years of leading Merck sales teams throughout the Southeast, with Val's determination and leadership skills propelling her up the corporate ladder. The strong work ethic she'd honed on the farm and at UF stood her in good stead as she inspired her teams to peak performance, earning her three Merck President's Awards. Those who worked with her



Vince and Val Green met at a party at UF in 1983 and married less than a year later. "We just clicked," said Vince. This photo was taken in the couple's senior year.



Vince's late mother, Maxie Green, was an educator who gave many children a strong early foundation. She is shown here in 2010 toasting with family to her 70th birthday. From left to right: brother George Jr., father George Green, Vince Green and mother Maxie.





COURTESY OF THE GREENS

The Green family and close friends are shown here at the 2018 UF Homecoming, when they presented the check to endow their scholarship fund for high-achieving students.

praise her calm leadership style, her business acumen and her ability to stay cool under pressure.

While Val hitched her star to Merck, Vince — after a two-year stint on a Navy nuclear submarine — parlayed his business degree into a job with Allstate in 1987. He stayed with the company for more than 30 years, opening his own agency in Roswell, Georgia, in 1999, and earning awards for superior customer service and profitability. He later served as a field sales leadership representative, recruiting and developing new agency owners in the southern United States.

In staying loyal to a single employer over their careers, the Greens have embodied a favorite saying of Val's mother, Elizabeth.

"She used to say all the time, 'Never start something you're not willing to continue,'" said Val. "It's a message about knowing for sure what's important to you and what you're able to consistently do."

## NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION

Over the years, the Greens have been active in local charities, with Val serving as a board member of the Center for Children & Young Adults, and Vince chairing the Atlanta Cancer Awareness Partnership.

Their greatest joy, however, has been guiding their children, Alisha, Ian and Olivia. Not surprisingly, all three are Gators. Education specialist **Alisha Green Wyche** works for her county school district in Marietta, Georgia, and 2018-19 UF Student Body President **Ian Green** is now a senior analyst at Procter & Gamble, in Orlando. Their youngest, **Olivia Green**, is a second-year student studying economics and is currently president of her sorority.

The Greens say other parents often ask them for advice on how to motivate children and teens to become UF material, especially since the university's rise to Top 5 status.

"I'd love to tell you that we told our kids, 'You must do this, you must go here,' but really, they were self-motivated," said Val.

Foremost in their minds, the couple says, is fostering appreciation in their children for the advantages they have been

## DONATE TO THE GREEN FAMILY ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

To learn about opportunities to foster diversity at the University of Florida, contact **Ashley Rodriguez** at [arodriguez@uff.ufl.edu](mailto:arodriguez@uff.ufl.edu) or (352) 392-8596

given — and the habit of paying it forward.

"Giving is what starts it," said Vince, "whether it's your community or your college, or kids who are halfway homeless — find a cause that makes you say, 'I need to give back.'"

That same impulse led the Green family to endow a UF scholarship fund in their name through the Association of Black Alumni. Their generosity was motivated by concern over the decline in Black enrollment at the university. By 2020-21, the percentage of African American students at UF had dropped to 6%, the same figure it was when Vince was a freshman.

The Greens are part of ongoing conversations at UF about how to reverse that trend. Val notes that while it is important to build a pipeline from high school to UF for Black students, the problem is more complex than awareness or acceptance rates. Data shows that among Black students who are accepted at UF, a not-insignificant number choose to go to other schools, including historically Black colleges and universities, and institutions that offer enticing scholarship packages with job opportunities after graduation.

"Another consideration is sense of community," said Val. "Are Black students comfortable coming to the University of Florida? Are they going to find their village and feel like they belong on the campus? If they visit, are they going to see a lot of people who look like them? There are many pieces to this puzzle, and we've got to roll up our sleeves and figure this thing out."

The Greens keep working to make UF more diverse and inclusive, and they encourage their fellow Gators to lend a hand.

"For us, it's about the notion of lift as you rise," said Val. "It's always important to dream big, to never, ever let people limit you — and to lift others once you've gotten to that better place."



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A photograph of Kent Fuchs, a man with glasses wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is standing behind a wooden podium, waving his right hand. The podium has a microphone and a name tag that says "Kent". The background is blurred, showing orange and blue vertical stripes.

# A Joyful Legacy

With persistence and purposeful fun, Kent Fuchs changed UF

By Karen Dooley (MAMC '11)

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY UF PHOTOGRAPHY

**W**ith a freshly earned engineering degree from Duke University in 1977, Kent Fuchs' career took an unusual detour.

His heart was telling him to become a minister, so instead of pursuing electrical engineering, he entered divinity school.

All went well until his coursework in homiletics – a fancy word for preaching, he says. The feedback from his professor was brutal.

"I was told I couldn't write or deliver a sermon in a way that stirred people's emotions; I could inform, but I couldn't inspire," Fuchs recalls. "It's hard to be a pastor if you can't move people with your words."

Fuchs returned to his first love of engineering.

However, he committed to working every day to become a more effective communicator.

"I couldn't preach, but I could teach," Fuchs says. "In fact, I came to realize I enjoyed being an educator."

Fuchs went on to carve out an impressive career as an engineering professor and academic leader that led to the University of Florida presidency in 2015. As he prepares to transition out of that role and back to teaching, the man who chose not to become a pastor because he thought he didn't have what it takes to inspire others has guided the Gator Nation to the promised land as one of its most inspirational and consequential leaders.

**In accepting the position, Kent and Linda Fuchs decided to embrace and enjoy everything that came with the presidency, from student gatherings to athletic events to alumni events.**



“Kent Fuchs’ leadership has been nothing short of transformational,” says UF Board of Trustees Chair Mori Hosseini. “His vision and aspirations for our university have raised our collective thinking about what is possible, and as a result, more people than ever in the great state of Florida, across the nation and around the world are benefitting from the University of Florida’s impact.”

## THE NATIONAL STAGE

Fuchs announced in January that this would be his last year as president, capping an eight-year tenure characterized by unprecedented progress: UF made a steep climb in the U.S. News & World Report rankings, cracking the top 10 for the first time in its history and ascending to No. 5 among public universities. The university created 500 new faculty positions, lowering the faculty-to-student ratio to 17:1, and has nearly completed the addition of 100 new faculty in artificial intelligence, ensuring all students have the opportunity to learn how AI can be applied to their careers in their fields.

The university’s research enterprise also flourished, becoming a national powerhouse as Gator scientists pulled in more research dollars year after year, breaking the \$1 billion milestone in research spending during fiscal year 2022. That puts UF in an elite group of only a dozen other public universities nationwide.

The university also embarked on its most ambitious infrastructure project in decades, known as the



“Kent Fuchs has led UF through a remarkable period of growth and prosperity that has raised our stature even higher on the national stage,” says Anita Zucker, a member of UF’s Board of Trustees and a graduate of the UF College of Education. “And he has done so with genuine warmth, as well as love for everyone at UF.”

## PURPOSEFUL FUN

But numbers alone don’t tell the story of the Fuchs presidency. Those who have worked closest to him agree that as much as he accomplished, Fuchs’ legacy will be influenced by his kindness, sense of humor and caring nature – qualities that especially endeared him to students.

“He loves the students,” says David Bloom, former

**Fuchs often found himself surrounded by students and occasionally offered to speak to their parents using their cellphones.**

*“He loves the students ... his dedication to UF’s core mission of educating the next generation is what makes him so special.”*

**David Bloom, former chair of the UF Faculty Senate**

Strategic Campus Master Plan. The nearly \$2 billion in projects will add 1 million square feet to the campus and renovate many of its existing spaces. Some of the game-changing projects completed or underway include the Malachowsky Hall for Data Science & Information Technology, a new Student Health Care Center, the Honors Residential College and the Heavener Football Training Center.

When Fuchs arrived, the university’s yearly fundraising totals were just over \$300 million, and today they are over \$750 million. In fact, the Go Greater capital campaign, launched publicly in 2017, is likely to reach more than \$4.2 billion by the time it concludes, comfortably eclipsing its original goal of \$3 billion.

chair of the UF Faculty Senate. “It is amazing how much he accomplished in elevating UF as a leader in the academic world, but his dedication to UF’s core mission of educating the next generation is what makes him so special.”

As Fuchs and his wife of 41 years, Linda, prepared for their move to Gainesville from Ithaca, New York, where Fuchs was provost at Cornell University, they made a pact. If they were going to take on the positions of president and first lady of UF, they would welcome everything that came with the jobs.

“We decided together that we would embrace it all — the high visibility, the student events, athletics, meeting with alumni, everything,” Fuchs says. “We would lean into it and enjoy it.”



Kent and Linda Fuchs embraced the fun side of campus and even moved into a residence hall one fall semester.



Lean into it they did. In addition to attending almost every Gator event, commencement ceremony, alumni gathering and student celebration, Fuchs famously sought to spend as much time as possible around students, like the times he and Linda lived among freshmen in a residence hall for a week. Fuchs on occasion spent the first day of semesters in a chauffeur's hat, delivering students to their classes in a VIP "Campus Cab." He also became known for his elaborate April Fools' Day pranks, including a fake press conference in 2016 in which he and former FSU President John Thrasher announced plans to merge the two schools and create a "super preeminent" university on a shared campus in tiny Perry, Florida.

"Those were my favorite," Fuchs says, smiling at the memories. "We did all those things to engage with the students, and those are not things I would do naturally. I am a quiet, shy computer engineer."

Shy or not, students loved him, lining up to take selfies with him whenever he walked around campus.

"I knew he was a different kind of president when I spotted him at the annual shaving cream fight," says Zachariah Chou, a 2020 journalism graduate who worked closely with the president through his involvement with the Bob Graham Center for Public Service and as a student government senator and opinions writer and editor for the Alligator student newspaper.

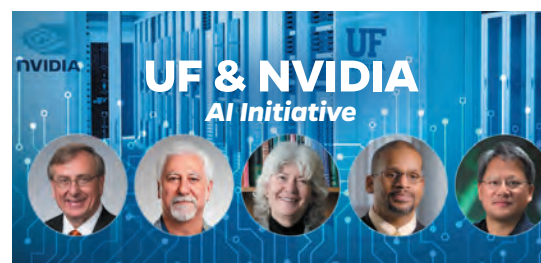
While the practice of "purposeful fun," as Fuchs calls it, is part of his approach at life and work, his tendency to feel joy has helped lighten the load of responsibilities for himself and those around him.

It also has allowed him to leverage his position in a way that has underscored the caring nature of UF and the warmth and friendliness of its students and employees.

"I work hard on the messages I communicate, whether they are in a video, a tweet or a column in the Alligator," he explains. "I want to convey that UF is an institution that indeed has aspirations; that we're working to improve in every area, but yet, we care about each other and support each other."

## AN ERA TO BE REMEMBERED

While purposeful fun was a cornerstone of the Fuchs presidency, another was his deliberate and calculated approach to help usher in several opportunities for the university that will forever alter UF's footing in the state and across the country.



- The \$1 billion AI initiative, the brainchild of Provost Joe Glover and championed by Fuchs, established UF as the first university in the country to integrate AI across academic disciplines. UF launched the initiative when Silicon Valley-based technology company NVIDIA and its co-founder Chris Malachowsky

donated one of the world's most powerful supercomputers.



- A separate UF campus to be built in West Palm Beach will provide professional degree programs in law, engineering and business. Armed with past success in leading a similar expansion for Cornell University into New York City, Fuchs and UF colleagues diligently advanced the project, working with city and county officials as well as other state universities and industry leaders in the financial and technology sectors to develop the programs, acquire land and lobby for state funding.



- UF Scripps Biomedical Research in Jupiter, Florida, was finalized in April and blends the clinical and educational experience of UF Health with one of the world's premier biomedical research enterprises aimed at accelerating the translation of scientific discoveries into clinical advances that will improve patient care and outcomes.

"As our leader, President Fuchs moved the university forward in all dimensions — more than ever before," says Win Phillips, Fuchs' executive chief of staff. "It was an era to be remembered."

That degree of momentum can often be traced to one spark that ignited the progress. For UF, it was a promise Fuchs made publicly during his first months on the job and kept repeating.

"He was the first person to say we were going to be a top 5 university," says Phillips. "I didn't believe it, and a lot of people wanted him to stop saying it."

Maybe it was his inner preacher, but Fuchs decided to use his platform as university president to passionately set the bar high. He believed moving UF

# President Kent Fuchs was ALL IN for the Gators

whether it was at work or at play. UF's meteoric rise among U.S. public universities occurred on his watch, but Fuchs also took part in all kinds of fun with an orange-and-blue vibe. Here are some highlights:



## January 2015

W. Kent Fuchs becomes the 12th president of the University of Florida.

## April 1, 2015

April Fools! Fuchs trades jobs with football coach Jim McElwain.

## August 2015

Fuchs gives first State of the University address, sharing seven university-wide goals and objectives that set the stage for UF's rise in rankings during his administration.

## September 2015

UF is 14th in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of top public colleges.

## April 1, 2016

UF and FSU announce plans to merge, in another April Fools' joke.

## August 2016

Kent and Linda Fuchs move into Jennings Hall for a week to experience residence hall life and hijinks.

## June 2017

UF announces it will hire 500 faculty above its normal hiring.

## October 2017

The public phase of UF's capital campaign, Go Greater, begins, with a \$3 billion fundraising goal.



## October 2017

The campus experiences an unwelcome visit by white nationalist Richard Spencer. About 1,000 law enforcement officers were deployed to keep order.

## April 2, 2018

This April Fools prank is no joke, as students pay parking tickets by donating food to UF's Field and Fork Pantry.





**Kent and Linda Fuchs enjoy the annual Inter-Residence Hall Association shaving cream fight with entering students.**

from No. 14 to within the top 10 was not going to be easy, but it was “absolutely achievable.”

“As we worked behind the scenes tracking every metric, publicly we needed a truly aspirational goal,” he explains. “Top 5 was a stretch, but we needed to stretch.”

Using a combination of bold optimism and mathematical precision, Fuchs and Glover engineered a strategy that addressed each of the metrics used in the U.S. News rankings and comprised participation from across the campus. In 2017, UF broke into the top 10 among all U.S. public universities, rising steadily to No. 5 in 2021.

“Rankings are important to the outside world, and therefore, they are important for us,” he says. “What I’m most proud of is that every one of our 16 colleges is stronger today than it was in 2014. Not many universities can say that.”

Cammy Abernathy, dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering, says her college was thrilled when an engineer was chosen to the lead UF.

“It was the first time the UF president was an engineer, and President Fuchs has made us proud by providing exceptional leadership across the entire UF enterprise,” she says. “As we have forged new initiatives and risen in the ranks nationally, more and more people are drawn to UF, including students, faculty and industry.”

With success and praise came inevitable challenges, none greater than the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although UF faced public scrutiny and criticism at certain points during the pandemic, Fuchs kept his focus on ensuring the university’s 60,000 students and 35,000 employees were as safe as possible, while keeping the university operating. When the long-anticipated COVID-19 vaccines were finally released, he was first in line to encourage uptake of the shot by inviting a videographer to watch him be vaccinated.

“I am proud of how the university has managed many of these situations despite our constraints — how people came together and worked for the good of everyone,” Fuchs says.

David R. Nelson, M.D., senior vice president for health affairs UF and president of UF Health, says he, too, admired how Fuchs guided the university community and supported the health system during the pandemic.

“The mark of a true leader is how they answer the call to serve and how they step up in the face of challenging times,” Nelson says. “And when vaccines became available, Kent was among the first to roll up his sleeve as part of a massive vaccination effort, demonstrating the importance of cultivating a culture of care and compassion for each other during especially trying times. He has demonstrated a whole lot of Gator spirit and has been a key part of what makes this university so great.”

Chou, who now serves as an opinions editor for Gannett newspapers in Georgia, believes the university was “blessed to have President Fuchs at the helm during COVID.”

“He handled things with grace, and he stuck the landing as he guided us through those tough times,” Chou says.

Fuchs looks forward to returning to the classroom, where he plans to teach digital logic, an auditorium-size class for engineering undergraduates, but he will miss his current job.



**Kent Fuchs at a home basketball game as the ultimate Rowdy Reptile, Darth Vader.**

“I’m so proud that we fulfilled the commitments we made to the Board of Trustees and to the university,” Fuchs says. “Linda and I also met our personal goal to have fun and to enjoy the ride.”

He also takes pride in how the university community has united to create a culture of high achievement as well as caring and fun.

“I tried to touch people’s emotions and reach their hearts, not just their minds.”

## September 2018

UF ranks 9th in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of top public colleges.

## September 2019

UF ranks 8th in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of top public colleges.

## November 2019

UF opens new homes for La Casita and the Institute of Black Culture.

## March 2020

UF goes into lockdown, using remote instruction to finish the semester, as the coronavirus pandemic takes hold around the world.

## June 2020

Fuchs announces campuswide anti-racism initiative.

## July 2020

UF announces \$70 million partnership with NVIDIA to support artificial intelligence research and education and becomes home to the fastest AI supercomputer in higher education.

## August 2020

UF announces a campus reopening plan for fall semester.

## September 2020

UF ranks 6th in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of top public colleges.

## April, May 2021

Fuchs presides over 27 commencement ceremonies as UF catches up on graduations delayed by COVID-19.

## September 2021

UF ranks 5th in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of top public colleges.

## November 2021

More than 60,000 students submit applications for the 2022-23 school year, 10,000-plus above any previous year and more than double from 8 years previous.



## February 2022

UF announces it will hire 100 new faculty with AI expertise to support a sweeping initiative to infuse artificial intelligence across the curriculum and throughout research.



## February 2022

UF's Giving Day breaks records, with 26,052 gifts to UF in 24 hours.

## April 2022

UF, Scripps Florida integrate to create UF Scripps Biomedical Research, a partnership that will tackle the world's most challenging diseases. UF also moves forward with plans to create a graduate campus in West Palm Beach.

## July 2022

UF tops \$1 billion in research expenditures in a historic first.



## September 2022

For the second year in a row, UF ranks 5th in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of top public colleges.

## October 2022

UF's Go Greater campaign concludes, surpassing its \$4.2 billion goal. Annual new gifts and commitments have more than doubled in the past 8 years.

## December 2022

As Fuchs leaves office, UF is in the midst of a nearly \$2 billion building boom.

*"He handled things with grace, and he stuck the landing as he guided us through those tough times."*

Zachariah Chou, opinions editor  
for Gannett newspapers



# UF HOMECOMING QUEENS (and kings) THROUGH THE DECADES

From beauty and poise as a crowning achievement to the introduction of kings and a focus on service, follow the evolution of homecoming royalty at UF.

STORY BY BARBARA DRAKE (MFA '04)

Gator Growl — and UF Homecoming — wouldn't be complete without the annual crowning of the Homecoming queen and king. Since 1953, the pre-Growl Homecoming pageant that determines who will be deemed UF royalty has evolved from an all-white women's beauty contest to a multicultural leadership competition for men and women.

While much has changed over the years — goodbye ballgowns! — the Homecoming court still presides over Gator Growl, where the queen and king are revealed before tens of thousands of cheering Gators on the night before Game Day.

Here are key events in the history of this nearly 70-year-old UF tradition:



## 1953

### FIRST OFFICIAL UF HOMECOMING QUEEN

In the university's early decades, UF Homecoming events often featured young women referred to as "sponsors" or "queens."



("We don't know how they were selected," noted University Historian Carl Van Ness in 2021.) The tradition became official in 1953 when design student **Carolyn Stroupe Stambaugh** (BA '55), of West Palm Beach, was crowned UF's first Homecoming queen. The coed's activities were chronicled in *Look*, *Ladies Home Journal* and *Parade* magazines. She went on to become Orange Bowl Queen and co-host of the original "The Price Is Right."

## 1950s

### MY QUEENDOM FOR A FLOAT

Starting in 1953, the UF Homecoming Parade began to feature a dedicated float for the Homecoming queen and her court of princesses (finalists for the title). Here, 1957 Homecoming queen **Jana Vickers**, of Delray Beach, and her court members ride on a float sponsored by the Gainesville Chamber of Commerce.



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
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## 1947 – 1952

### UF BEAUTY CONTEST BOOM

Formerly an all-male university, UF began admitting women students year-round in 1947. The arrival of women on campus ushered in a bevy of Gator beauty pageants, including Miss University of Florida, Mrs. University of Florida and Miss F Club. For decades, nearly all contestants were from UF sororities. Here, a UF undergrad in the 1940s gazes admiringly at photos of beauty contestants.

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ARCHIVES, GEORGE A. SMATHERS LIBRARIES

## 1960

### DUTIES OF HOMECOMING ROYALTY

UF President J. Wayne Reitz presents a trophy to 1960 Homecoming queen Libby Baker, of Lockbourne, Ohio.

During this era, the Homecoming court promoted the university at events throughout the state and literally reigned over every Homecoming activity, including the Florida Blue Key banquet, a formal ball, an alumni reunion and a barbecue for politicians. According to newspaper reports, on Game Day, Baker and her princesses drove onto the field in a 1961 honey-beige Thunderbird at pregame and halftime; Florida ended up trouncing Tulane 21-6.

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ARCHIVES, GEORGE A. SMATHERS LIBRARIES



## 1970

### FIRST HISPANIC HOMECOMING QUEEN



The winds of change were blowing across campus in 1970 when environmentalism became the theme of UF Homecoming. That year saw the university crown its first Hispanic Homecoming queen, Cuban-born **Maria Junquera-Browne** (BA '72), of Plant City. She went on to serve as vice president of The Cushman School, in Miami, and married TV exec Don Browne, who would become president of Telemundo Communications Group.

PHOTO FROM 1971 UF SEMINOLE YEARBOOK, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ARCHIVES



## 1973

### FIRST BLACK HOMECOMING QUEEN

Twenty-year-old speech pathology major **Cynthia Mays**, of Jacksonville, made UF history when she was elected the university's first Black Homecoming queen in 1973. She was also featured in the January 1974 issue of *Jet* magazine. Fellow student **Samuel Lamar Wright Sr.** (BA '74) remembers the active role the Black Student Union played in nominating the scholarly Mays: "Not only was she about business academically, but she was adorned with class, style, beauty and charm."

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ARCHIVES, GEORGE A. SMATHERS LIBRARIES

## 1985

### NOW WEIGHS IN



By the mid-1980s, the UF Homecoming pageant, like many beauty contests, was coming under fire for treating women as objects. UF National Organization for Women Vice President Melissa Anderson compared UF's contestants to "meat on a meat rack" in a 1985 *Alligator* article. "Where are their credentials?" Anderson asked. "These women just get up there and are judged on their looks. I think this entire pageant is awful." *Alligator* editor **Joshua Weinstein** (BSJ '90), also assistant general chairman of Homecoming, shot back: "These women enjoy being in parades and competing in beauty pageants. We certainly aren't going to change anything because of (NOW)."

PHOTO OF EARLY NOW BUTTON, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY ARCHIVES





# 1986

## NOW HEAR THIS!

The 1986 Homecoming Court – speech communications major **Terri Hogan**, journalism major **Shelly Jackson** and finance major **Patricia Dignam** – rode in the parade on a “100 Years of Quality” float by Maas Brothers. A panel of seven judges, which included university first lady Paula Criser, judged the finalists in interview, evening gown and sportswear rounds. Anticipating more criticism from NOW, pageant officials told the Alligator they didn’t receive complaints that year, and Jackson asserted that the finalists were chosen on their abilities more than their looks. “I don’t need to wear a bathing suit to represent UF,” insisted Jackson (BSJ ’87), who was crowned queen and went on to work in journalism.

IMAGE FROM 1987 TOWER YEARBOOK COURTESY UF DIGITAL COLLECTION

# 1988

## GOLDEN AGE OF GATOR GROWL COMEDY

A perk of being UF Homecoming Queen in the ’80s was getting to clown around with the comedy greats who performed at Gator Growl. Here 1988 Homecoming Queen **Rachael Jackson Pennington** (BSJ ’89) mugs for the camera with comedian **Steven Wright** (center); at right is opening act **Jerry Seinfeld**, whose hit show “Seinfeld” would debut on NBC the following year. Other iconic comedians who performed at Gator Growl in the ’80s include **Billy Crystal**, **Robin Williams**, **Dave Chappelle**, **Rodney Dangerfield**, **George Burns** and **Bob Hope**.

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ARCHIVES, GEORGE A. SMATHERS LIBRARIES



# 1990s

## A PAGEANT EVOLVES

By the early ’90s, the UF Homecoming pageant was increasingly focused on contestants’ academic achievements and campus impact, not just their looks and popularity. The 1991 Homecoming queen, sociology major **Monica Frakes Culpepper** (BA ’91), received the President’s Outstanding Leadership Recognition Award for that year and was also a member of Mortar Board and a Florida Cicerone. Monica married Gator defensive-tackle-turned-pro **Brad Culpepper** (BA ’91, JD ’01, MESS ’01), and the Culpeppers competed together on season 27 of CBS’s “Survivor.”

PHOTO COURTESY MONICA CULPEPPER

# 2007

## FIRST HOMECOMING KING

History was made in 2007 when marketing major **Ryan Merkel** (BSBA ’08)

was crowned UF’s first Homecoming king, alongside queen **Jillian Yoerges** (BA ’08). Contest judging criteria encompassed service to the university, personal interview, resume and onstage presence, the latter determined through rounds of dancing, parading and Q&As. Men wore tuxedos and bow ties; women competed

in casual wear and evening gown rounds. Merkel is now director of development at Arena Stage, in Washington D.C. Yoerges now specializes in product operations and gTech users for Google in the San Francisco Bay Area.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RYAN MERKEL





# 2013

## 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF UF HOMECOMING QUEENS

Sixty years after becoming UF's first Homecoming queen, Carolyn Stroupe Stambaugh returned to Gainesville to crown her 2013 successor at Gator Growl. A golf cart transported her to the Swamp's midfield, where she placed the tiara on the head of public relations major Abby Whiddon Davis (BS '14). The latter now serves as director of client development for the Moore Agency, in Tampa.

PHOTO BY CAROLYN MULLINS [BA '69], VIA JACOB STROUP FAMILY BLOGSPOT



# 2016

## FROM GATOR GROWL TO "THE BACHELOR"

Nine years after UF crowned its first Homecoming king, scores of men were vying for the honor. In the pageant's spirit round, contestants wore orange and blue and expressed why they loved the Gators. The 2016 king and queen were **Brendon "BJ" Jonassaint** (BHS '17, MA '19) and **Sanah Ste. Claire** (BSA '17), respectively. Ste. Claire went on to compete in season 25 of ABC's "The Bachelor." Jonassaint is now a strategy consultant at Deloitte, in Washington D.C.

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ARCHIVES, GEORGE A. SMATHERS LIBRARIES



# 2019

## GOODBYE GOWNS & TUXEDOS

Pageant rounds were tweaked in 2019 to reflect the lifestyles of student leaders. The formal wear competition was eliminated for both men and women and replaced with business wear. UF's Career Connections Center also advised the judges on what to look for in a king or queen.

"It's not about who has the most leadership positions, it's about whether their impact on campus can be really felt," said Pageant Director **Sydney Brandenburg** (BSBA '19). This photo captures the moment when royals **Graham Boone** (BSBA '19) and **Sarah Abraham** (BSBA '20) were crowned at the 2019 Gator Growl.

PHOTO COURTESY UF HOMECOMING & GATOR GROWL



# Today

## PAGEANT CHANGES NAME

In recent years, the competition was renamed the UF Homecoming Leadership Pageant to reflect its emphasis on nurturing and recognizing student leaders. The pageant now encompasses a Game Day spirit portion, an interview session, special guest presentations and more. Judges select six students to comprise the Homecoming court, which reigns over Gator Growl on the Friday night before the Homecoming game. Only then, in front of more than 90,000 cheering Gators, are the king and queen revealed. Go Gators!

PHOTO COURTESY UF HOMECOMING & GATOR GROWL





**Football History vs.  
University of Georgia**

**GEORGIA WIN** **FLORIDA WIN** **TIE**

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## *How old is the Florida-Georgia rivalry?*

**BY CINDY SPENCE**

**T**he Gators roll into Jacksonville the weekend of Oct. 29 ready to play a landmark 100th game against the Georgia Bulldogs.

For the Bulldogs, no biggie. They celebrated the 100th game last year (with a win).

In the words of sportscaster Verne Lundquist, this rivalry is so intense, these two teams can't even agree on how many times they've played.

Whether it's 100 or 101, the Florida-Georgia game in Jacksonville is Florida's longest rivalry by far. The dispute boils down to a game in 1904, says UF historian Carl Van Ness. Georgia claims the game in its stats, Florida doesn't (ahem, Georgia won).

"In 1904, we weren't in Gainesville, we

were in Lake City," Van Ness says. "We weren't even the University of Florida at that point."

For UF, recordkeeping begins in 1906. The Buckman Act of 1905 established the modern University of Florida, and UF moved from the campus of its precursor institution in Lake City to the campus in Gainesville and fielded its first official football team in 1906.

"Therein lies the problem," Van Ness says.

Van Ness points out that UF also doesn't count the presidents of its predecessor institution or games played against Auburn or other schools prior to 1906. He says the coach of that now-defunct school was an ambitious fellow and started scheduling games with teams the Gators weren't ready to play.

"We don't claim those games," says Van



# 101!

## *Gators and Bulldogs can't agree on much of anything*

Ness, noting, "we lost them all."

The 1904 game was in Macon, Georgia. Since 1933, the game has been held in Jacksonville, except for two years in the 1990s when it was played home and home on each campus, when the aging Gator Bowl in Jacksonville was being renovated for the expansion NFL Jaguars.

Today, the game is one of only a handful of neutral site rivalries remaining in college football, something Georgia coach Kirby Smart told reporters at SEC Media Days in July he would like to change. The schools can't bring recruits to road games, so schools miss out on using the Florida-Georgia drama as a recruiting tool.

Although the rowdy rivalry game became known as the "world's largest outdoor cocktail party" in the 1950s when a Jacksonville sportswriter coined the phrase, that term has fallen out of favor in the last two decades.

Both teams have had streaks, but none like the Gator Glory of the Steve Spurrier era, when the Gators were 11-1. In his Heisman-winning year in 1966, Spurrier's Gators lost to the Bulldogs, and when he arrived as the Gators' coach with that chip on his shoulder, the record stood at 43-22-2.

He noted that one Florida tradition – "getting your tails whipped by Georgia every year" – needed to change, and he did just that. Since Spurrier's first year in 1990, Florida is 22-10-0.

There's still some catching up to do for the Gators. Before kickoff, the series stood at 53-44-2. Something to work on for the next 100 years. (Or 99, as Georgia would say.)

**The Florida-Georgia game at Florida Field on Oct. 31, 1931.**



STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORIDA



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## Memories from the front lines of the Border War

*Every now and then a Gator or a Bulldog will breach the state border. The result is a Florida-Georgia family and interesting tailgates.*

### Family ties



**Shane Best** (PR '90) says his family has a reunion each year for the Florida-Georgia game. The tradition started with his Mema, the family matriarch who passed on the football gene. Here, in year 40, G. Ronnie Best, a former associate professor at UF's Center for Wetlands, sports a 50/50 Bulldog/Gator shirt (his PhD is from Georgia). Shown with Aunt Peggy Best.

### Getting along

Sometimes Gators and Bulldogs get along, like **Mycal Hixon** (BA '09, MED '12, EDD '16) and this Georgia bulldog.



### Baby Herschel?



The 1982 game featured Georgia standout Herschel Walker, and Bulldog fans teased **Sandy Crews Stephenson** (BS '74), nine months pregnant, about whether she would name the baby "Herschel." Baby **Jennifer** (BA '05, MED '06), pictured as a baby, far left, was born two weeks later and became a Gator like her mom.

# 10 Great Gator moments

Along the way to building a 53-44-2 lead in the storied Florida-Georgia series, the Bulldogs pinned some infamous and infuriating defeats on the rival Gators (75-0 in 1942, “Fourth-and-Dumb” in ’76, “Run, Lindsay, Run!” in ’80, to name a few), but the guys in Orange & Blue had their Dog days, as well. Here are 10 worth remembering.



1928 Florida football team

- **1928 (UF 26, UGA 6)** — The Gators’ first win in the series. The game is one of only two played in Savannah, Georgia.
- **1937 (UF 6, UGA 0)** — The series moved permanently to Jacksonville in 1933, with the Gators winning just two of the first 15 played in their home state. This was the first.
- **1952 (UF 30, UGA 0)** — The Gators’ sixth victory in the series not only was their most lopsided, but locked up the program’s first major bowl berth, sending UF back to Jacksonville to face Tulsa in the Gator Bowl. Better yet, the win propelled Florida to a run of six wins over the next seven against Georgia, making the ‘50s its glory decade in the series (until later).
- **1965 (UF 14, Georgia 10)** — Steve Spurrier may have won the Heisman Trophy as a senior in 1966, but of his three cracks at the Bulldogs this was his lone victory. The 27-10 loss a year later ruined UF’s unbeaten season and shot at the SEC title, a sting the future Head Ball Coach would never forget (or let his players forget, either).

- **1984 (UF 27, Georgia 0)** — Kerwin Bell to Ricky Nattiel for 96 yards, as No. 10 Florida smashed eighth-ranked Georgia en route to clinching the first SEC title in school history ... or so the Gators thought. The title was stripped seven months later due to NCAA probation.
- **1990 (UF 38, Georgia 7)** — Spurrier’s first game in the series as coach was a preview of what was in store over his 12 seasons (as in the first of 11 wins).
- **1994 (UF 52, Georgia 14)** — “The Swamp” was lit for the series’ first game in Gainesville in 63 years. So was the Florida defense, which scored three TDs in the blowout.
- **1995 (UF 52, Georgia 17)** — The return home-and-home game to Athens (first visit since ’32) proved equally as dominant for the Gators (and embarrassing for the Dogs). UF backups Eric Kresser and Travis McGriff connected for a TD pass with just over a minute left, making Florida the first visiting opponent to score 50 “Between the Hedges” (a stated goal of Spurrier’s heading into the game, by the way).
- **2007 (UF 49, Georgia 10)** — A year after UGA coach Mark Richt ordered his players to intentionally draw an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty to set the tone of what became a big Bulldogs win, UF coach Urban Meyer, with a 39-point lead, called three timeouts in the final minute to let Richt reflect on what he did.



In 2014 a walk-on named Mike McNeely ran 21 yards with a fake field goal for the win.

- **2014 (UF 38, Georgia 20)** — Florida’s 418 rushing yards (198 by Kelvin Taylor, 192 by Matt Jones) were the most by a SEC team in 28 years, and a walk-on named Mike McNeely (who bagged groceries at Publix during the week) ran 21 yards with a fake field goal in the unranked Gators’ first series win since 2010 and upset of No. 11 UGA.

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STORY BY DAVID  
FINNERTY  
PHOTOS BY  
AARON DAYE

As kids working for their grandfather, brothers Ron and Jon Antevy talked of someday becoming business partners. Years later, they used a UF master's thesis to build a \$500 million company.


The last Monday in January 2018 was a very good day for Ron and Jon Antevy. That's when their company, e-Builder, sold for \$500 million.

The following Friday was even better.

That's when the brothers broke the news to their 200 employees and handed out plump surprise bonuses worth tens of millions in total.

Longtime workers — those who'd stood with the company through thick and thin — became instant millionaires. Even new hires, days on the job, got checks.

"I get emotional thinking about it. It was the greatest day of my life," Ron says. "To be able to thank people



in a way that meant a lot to them for everything they had done for us was such a great feeling.”

It was the right thing to do, Jon adds. “We did it because we’d made it there as a team,” he explains. “We were all crying together. None of us could keep a dry eye. It was the best day, I concur with Ron. I’ll never forget it.”

Neither will e-Builder’s workers and their families. Lives, for sure, tipped toward the sunnier that unforgettable Friday. One employee repaired his mother’s roof. Another helped a brother-in-law get on his feet. Retirement accounts were fattened, college savings funds started, dream vacations planned.

Not a bad day at all for a couple of guys who’d turned a UF master’s thesis into a fortune. That’s how e-Builder came to be. Almost 30 years ago and with the internet just finding its footing, Jon (BDES ’93, MSBC ’94) calculated that he could use the new technology to revolutionize the construction industry. Projects could be better managed, costs could be cut.

The brothers — Jon the creative risk-taker, Ron the pragmatic manager — ended up teaming up and, in time, their tenacity and old-fashioned hard work proved Jon right. But never, Ron (BSCE ’91) admits, did anyone expect e-Builder to end up a \$500 million company.

“Never in a million years,” he says. “When Jon started e-Builder I don’t think anyone knew what he was talking about.”

Even Jon had doubts.

“I wasn’t sure it was going to work,” he confesses. “But everybody around me at the university was supportive. That gave me a lot of confidence because they were excited about it.”

Back then, the brothers’ wildest, wish-on-a-falling-star hope was to build the company, flip it for \$10 million or so and retire.

“I thought, ‘Oh, I’ll start this company and in a year or two I’ll sell it and be rich,’” Jon says. “I was naive. The reality is I was broke for seven years.”

### **BROTHERS, PARTNERS, FRIENDS**

The Antevy (An-te-v) boys weren’t like most kids in their middle class south Florida neighborhood in the 1980s. While friends were goofing off, Ron and Jon were budding businessmen.

Yona Levy, their mother’s father, owned apartments and a construction company. His grandsons were his after-school and weekend



maintenance crew, laborers and occasional rent collectors. Ron and Jon liked working side-by-side. It was comfortable. Their talk would often turn to starting a construction business of their own.

“We got the construction bug early on,” Ron says. “I always loved going to job sites and seeing the progress. That’s how we got on that kick.”

“We thought there was no reason we

Jon, left, and Ron Antevy — brothers and business partners — hoped to build a \$10 million company; eBuilder sold in 2018 for \$500 million.





Jon says he is making up for lost time with his wife, Melanie, and his children. He and Melanie gave the naming gift for the College of Design, Construction and Planning's architecture building and endowed an entrepreneurship club in the college.

couldn't do something similar," Jon recalls. "Those discussions would come up while we were painting. We must have done 400 or 500 apartments together over the years. You can catch up on a lot of stuff while doing that kind of work."

E-Builder — their software-based business designed to help construction companies streamline projects — wasn't exactly the traditional building firm the brothers had in mind back then. But it was close.

With e-Builder, the Antevys had a hand in shaping skylines across America, watching hospitals, schools, homes and sports venues rise from the dirt. The Chicago Transit Authority, California's Cedars-Sinai, Minneapolis Public Schools, North Carolina's Charlotte Douglas International Airport — all those and more than 500 other organizations from coast to coast used their company's products.

Meanwhile, year after year after year, the construction industry recognized the Antevys for their ingenuity. So did their alma mater. UF's annual Gator 100 awards banquet honoring the fastest growing alumni-run companies counted e-Builder on its list over and over again. In 2022, the brothers received Gator 100's highest tribute, the S. Clark Butler Pinnacle Award for sustained excellence and leadership.

None of that — the projects or recognition — would've happened without each other, Ron and Jon maintain. Nor would it have been so sweet.

"We felt tremendous loyalty to each other," Ron says. "I needed to succeed for him and he needed to succeed for me, more than we needed to do it for ourselves."

Nothing's changed. They still enjoy each other's company — whether it's on their boat, tapping out tunes on the piano or Friday night meals with their wives, children, mother and twin brothers, Peter

and Paul. All of it's an extension of the hours and hours painting apartments together, mowing lawns and plotting their futures.

"You know how some people you just like spending time with? That's how it is with my brother," Ron says. "People would laugh at us because even when we were doing very well, when we traveled together we'd share a room. We were like, 'We grew up together. We like hanging out. What's the big deal?'"

## LESSONS FROM THE OLD COUNTRY

Like the huddled masses before them — the Irish and German, Chinese and Mexican, Italians, Poles and Swedes — Ron and Jon's ancestors came to America in pursuit of opportunity. For their grandfather and mother and father, that meant letting lives in Syria and Israel become memories, leaving who and what they'd known for a strange new place.

But there were things from the old country their ancestors clung to. Devotion to family. Belief in hard, honest work. Kindness. The Friday family dinners grew out of those habits.

"It's a cultural thing," Jon explains. "That Middle Eastern, Israeli, Jewish culture of staying close, bringing everyone together."

From their grandfather, Ron and Jon learned doggedness. Yona Levy built his businesses from little more than pure will, and despite understanding just a few English words and phrases. He also taught the boys goodness and decency. If a tenant was short with that month's rent, he'd look for ways to help. And Levy would send whatever he could afford to family he'd left behind in the homeland.

From parents Ovadia and Viktoria, the boys learned to be humble. How to run a business. To appreciate the value of a dollar earned through sweat. Ovadia and Viktoria, like Levy, were entrepreneurs who managed their businesses (in their case, interior design and commercial properties) from the kitchen table.

The brothers relied on those lessons to carry them through e-Builder's darkest times.

"We just followed what our parents and grandfather had done," Jon says. "They were hard workers, and we outworked most people. By far."

When the dreary days brightened, the brothers again looked to a lesson learned from their grandfather and parents: generosity.

Not just toward e-Builder's employees. When their company sold, the brothers and their wives turned to the University of Florida, too. Ron and Rachel (BA '98) made large contributions to the Wertheim College of Engineering and Lubavitch Chabad Jewish Student and Community

## Born to Be Gators

It seems almost like destiny. That is, if you were to believe in such things as meant-to-be. The sons of immigrants, their father without a high school education, ending up at UF — it's the stuff of storybooks.

Then again, much of brothers Ron and Jon Antevy's unlikely journey to the top is like that: their ancestors coming to Florida from the Middle East, their grandfather and parents cobbling together successful businesses in a foreign land, their own rise as innovators in the construction industry.

While the Antevy brothers' story doesn't start with UF, the university has a big part in what made it magical.

"For whatever reason, our parents were hell-bent on us going to college," Ron says. "They were like, 'We don't care what you do, but you've got to go to college. No excuses. No ifs, ands or buts about it.'"

UF was the sensible choice. It was an in-state school. A cousin was a Gator. Academics were solid. So to Gainesville the brothers went. One to be a civil engineer. The other an architect. First Ron, a couple years later Jon.

"I went to the University of Florida because Ron did. I'd like to think it was something more elegant than that. But

it's because he was my older brother and I looked up to him," Jon admits. "It turned out that the architecture and construction programs are amazing, but that was dumb luck."

Luck or not, as with so many Gators, their time at UF ended up being some of the best years of their lives. Here are some of the brothers' favorite memories:

### RON'S:

- Being a deejay at campus parties and at a downtown Gainesville club called Central City.
- Freshman year in Broward Hall.
- Tailgating and attending Gator games with friends.
- Hearing a few songs he wrote on the radio.

### JON'S:

- Working weekends at Lake Wauburg.
- Being part of UF's Fire Rescue Association and driving the Gainesville Fire Rescue mobile command unit in the Homecoming Parade.
- Ice cream socials with President John Lombardi.
- Countless days and nights with friends at the architecture studio.

Center. Jon and Melanie gave the naming gift for the College of Design, Construction and Planning's architecture building and endowed an entrepreneurship club in the college.

"We're blessed and we don't take it for granted," Ron says. "Once you can put a roof over your head and afford to eat and do things for your family, after that it's just stuff. And the stuff doesn't give you as much joy as if you can help other people ... I'm glad I'm in the position that I can give."

That Rachel is also passionate about sharing their good fortune made giving to UF even easier, he says. Next, the couple is thinking about starting a charitable foundation. If they do, Ron would welcome the chance to team up with Jon once again on some of its projects.

Jon's tomorrows, on the hand, are less clear.

"Still trying to figure it out," he says. "I haven't really thought too much about what's next, because if I do — even if it's just dabbling — I'm going to do what I do, which is throw myself into it. And I really want to have a free and clear mind for a time, and then I'll do a reset from there."

After 27 years with e-Builder, all Jon knows for sure is he wants to make up for lost moments he spent without Melanie and his kids.

"My schedule was crazy," Jon acknowledges.



"[Melanie] raised our three kids, and I popped in here and there. I was feeding this baby, e-Builder, while trying to be a good father and a good husband. It's hard to do both things. So now that we've gotten to this side, we can smell the roses."

It's a scent, for the Antevy brothers, that's every bit as nice as that long-ago smell of fresh paint wafting through their grandfather's apartments.

Ron is glad to be in a position to help others. He and his wife, Rachel, have contributed to the Wertheim College of Engineering and the Lubavitch Chabad Jewish Student and Community Center.





# GATOR NATION

## *Gators in New England*

**Preservation Institute Nantucket celebrates 50 years of history**

**By Cindy Spence and Carissa Allen**

**Suzanne Barnes** was studying architecture in the summer of 1985 when she won a summer trip to Colonial Williamsburg. She had a different practicum in mind, though, and traded in her spot at the Virginia tourist attraction.

"I swapped with another guy because I really wanted to go to Nantucket," Barnes (BDES '82, MARCH '85), recalls. "And it was a magical, magical summer."

Barnes is one of more than 700 students who have discovered the charm of Preservation Institute Nantucket, a tiny University of Florida "campus" about 1,200 miles north of Gainesville. The institute, known as PIN, is the nation's oldest continuously operating field school for historic preservation and has hosted students from more than 120 institutions.







This fall, PIN celebrates its 50th anniversary, and as 2020 alum **Alayna Jackson** notes, that makes PIN itself historic.

"It's funny because in historic preservation, that's usually the age cutoff for something to be considered historic – it has to be 50 years old – so now even PIN itself is considered historic," says Jackson (BA '18, MHP '21), an architectural historian who was a teaching assistant in 2021.

How did Gators end up with roots on a New England island?

In 1969, UF architecture Professor F. Blair Reeves went to Nantucket as part of a program to tap the expertise of college professors for historic preservation. There, he met developer Walter Beinecke Jr., who encouraged him to return and bring students, who could get hands-on education while helping the town document its history. In 1972, Beinecke made the agreement official, helping the Gators establish dormitories, a compound of three cottages for visiting faculty, and an airy classroom and laboratory in a building on a main downtown street.

**Adrienne Burke's** (MSAS '07, JD '07) choices in the summer of



2006 were PIN or a legal clerkship. The choice was easy.

"It felt quite idyllic being in a dorm and bicycling everywhere, and our classroom was in Sherburne Hall, this beautiful, light-filled historic building within walking distance of everything downtown," Burke says. "You're learning, it's school, but it doesn't feel like it, and it was just an incredible opportunity."

**Holly Backus**, PIN 2004, is an 11th generation Nantucketer and now a town planner, and even she was struck by how special the PIN experience was.

"I'm very grateful for PIN both as a student and as a native of Nantucket," Backus says. "When I look back, I see all the good PIN has done, not only on Nantucket, but in historic preservation around the world."

Nantucket was ahead of the times, becoming one of the nation's earliest historic districts in 1955. Hundreds of its structures



in the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) have been documented by PIN students, and PIN projects submitted to the Library of Congress have contributed to an archive so large that there is more data on Nantucket than any other community in the nation.

**Katie Jacob** (MHP '15), now with the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach, helped the Maria Mitchell Museum assess how to use three historic properties while protecting their integrity.

"We're constantly bombarded with different aspects of preservation, whether it ranges from climate change to development to various laws being passed," Jacob says. "We're going to need the tools to understand how to navigate that, and PIN is kind of a perfect place to explore those changes in preservation."

Backus now speaks to PIN students each year.

"I love that I get to help guide these students and help them, while they help me preserve the place I love," Backus says. "Whenever I can brag that I'm a PIN grad, I do."

Barnes says her PIN summer helped her as an architect in Orlando.

"It's not just preserving beautiful old buildings; it's understanding how to work with what we have in place. How can old buildings and new buildings work together," Barnes says.

"I'm very grateful that Walter Beinecke and Blair Reeves established such an ongoing legacy for the University of Florida," says Barnes. "I don't think Nantucket would be as fabulous as it is without UF's participation. UF can help Nantucket, and Nantucket can help UF."

*UF's College of Design, Construction and Planning has set up the Walter Beinecke Jr. Facilities Endowment, with a goal of establishing \$1 million to support the maintenance of the PIN buildings. Supporters of the endowment will be recognized in October at an anniversary celebration on the island. For more on PIN, please visit: <https://explore.research.ufl.edu/students-of-history.html>*

**Today, history is documented with tools like laser scanners, which generated this laser view of Orange Street.**







## Why UF is in Their Hearts

Each year, the board of directors for the University of Florida Alumni Association welcomes new members to its ranks. All are united by a common goal: to keep alumni and friends connected to UF.

This summer, we caught up with 10 of the newest board members and their new president to learn about their favorite UF memories and spots on campus, and their motivations for deepening their involvement with their alma mater.

New president James Gadsby (BSBA '91), below left, brings a lot of Gator know-how to the table. A strong supporter of UF Student Life, he has served on the UFAA board since 2014 and is a past

leader of the Atlanta Gator Club. As an undergraduate, he met his wife, Elizabeth Gadsby (BS '92), at a UF talent show and proposed to her during May 1992 graduation ceremonies.

Gadsby has a great team in Kim Kaupe (BSBA '08), above left, Dakeyan "Dre" Graham (BAMus '07, MMus '09), above middle, Beau Beaubien (BA '05), above right, Samantha Hockenberry (BSISE '12), below right, Regina Rodriguez (BSEN '14, PHD '18), bottom left, and B. J. Jonassaint (BHS '17, MHA '19), bottom right. Not pictured, Suezette Yasmin Robotham (BSA '03), Bryan Ruiz (BSAdv '06), and Erica Aguiar (BSTel '15).

To read more, visit [uff.to/XXXXXX](http://uff.to/XXXXXX)







The **Sarasota County Gator Club** served as baseball buddies for the Miracle League of Manasota, a baseball league that allows adults and children with disabilities to experience the joy of baseball. The game capped off the season for the league.

The **Columbia Gator Club** answered a call for blood donations in the area.



The **Rocky Mountain Gator Club** spent the morning planting trees at Willow Basin Park, lending a hand to Denver Parks and Recreation. Here, Drew Hill and Lisa (Crosby) Hill work alongside their children, Henry and Emmy.



# INTERNATIONAL GATOR DAY



The **Palm Beach County Gator Club** fanned out along the coastline for a sunny day of beach cleanup. Shown here, Charles Orozco, Sydney Linthicum, Ryan Pender.

**Emerald Coast Gator Club** fanned out along James Lee Park Public Beach in Destin, cleaning up the coastline. Among the helpers were a past scholarship winner and incoming UF freshmen Sean Dickerson and Hannah Blanton, right, who pitched in like seasoned alumni.





**Music City Gator Club** cleaned up the historic Nashville City Cemetery, which opened in 1822. Even the smallest Gator, Leo Duncan, helped with the event.

WHEN THE SUN ROSE ON INTERNATIONAL GATOR DAY 2022, GATORS REACHED OUT A HELPING HAND TO COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE NATION.

FROM PARK AND BEACH CLEANUPS TO SENIOR LUNCHESES AND BLOOD DRIVES, **GATORS MADE A DIFFERENCE.**

Martha Dulin and Leigh Penderson brought plenty of gear for the cemetery cleanup.



The **DC Gator Club** met at Bethesda Bagels at the Navy Yard, then descended on the Anacostia Riverwalk for a neighborhood cleanup.



**Gotham Gators** turned out to help the East Harlem Carter Burden Network senior center serve restaurant-style lunches and food packages.



From left to right: Bryan Nguyen, Johal Baez, Anita Patel, Raj Varghese, Bharanidharan Rajakumar and Anisha Rajakumar, future Gator.





# THESE YOUNG INNOVATORS MEAN BUSINESS

BY BARBARA DRAKE (MFA '04)

As economist Theodore Levitt once said, “Creativity is thinking up new things; innovation is doing new things.”

That innovative streak has inspired hundreds of Gator entrepreneurs — among them, several outstanding young alumni saluted at UF’s recent 40 Under 40 Awards ceremony, honoring recipients for 2020, 2021 and 2022.

They may work in different fields — finance, 3-D printing and education tech — but these three forward-thinking alums share a knack for driving innovation in the marketplace.



## STAX Suneera Madhani

Named 2018’s “Most Influential Woman in Payments,” Suneera Madhani (BSBA ’09) is founder and CEO of Stax (formerly Fattmerchant) — “the Netflix of credit card processing”

— an innovative platform that charges merchants a flat subscription fee rather than a percentage on sales. Madhani started the company in 2014 after noticing the industry’s lack of transparency and high markups. Since then, Stax has grown from startup to multimillion-dollar company, ranking No. 1 on U.S. News & World Report’s list of Best Credit Card Processing Companies in 2018. The Orlando-based business now has 300 employees and in the last eight years has processed \$23 billion in payments for more than 20,000 customers in retail, health care and professional services.

Recognizing the hurdles faced by women entrepreneurs — fewer than 2% of whose companies ever hit \$1 million in revenue — Madhani founded and hosts CEO School, a podcast featuring interviews with successful businesswomen. Recent episodes include “Building Million Dollar Brands with the OG Girlboss Sophia Amoruso” and “How to Launch a Side Hustle in 10 Days with Balanced Black Girl Les Alfred.”

“CEO School was created because nothing bad happens when women make more money,” says Madhani, a 2021 UF 40 Under 40 honoree. “In fact, it just empowers us to understand the power we have to change our lives, shift our legacy and alter the course of history.”



## FILASTRUDER Timothy Elmore

They say necessity is the mother of invention. Mechanical engineer Timothy Elmore (BSAE ’08, BSME ’08, PHD ’13) can testify to that. As a UF doctoral student seeking to make 3D-printed elements for a robotic X-ray platform, Elmore grew so frustrated at the high cost of 3D

filament that he invented his own extruder to create the substance more cheaply. The Filastruder, as it is named, generates filament from pellets, failed 3D prints and used support material, cutting filament costs up to 80% and dramatically limiting plastic waste.

In March 2013, Elmore raised \$212,000 on Kickstarter to launch his own company, also named Filastruder. Today the Atlanta-based firm is a go-to site for 3D-printing devices, accessories, parts and even filament itself. With 3D printing becoming popular among home users, Filastruder is well positioned for continued growth, and Elmore has continued to expand on his original invention. It can now make, for instance, prosthetics for amputees and stethoscopes for doctors in the Gaza Strip.

The 3D printing industry’s constant evolution is its greatest strength, as well as its attraction for him as an entrepreneur/inventor, Elmore said in a recent interview.

“Less than a decade ago, 3D printers were made from threaded rod and wood,” said the 2020 UF 40 Under 40 award recipient. “We’ve come a long way from that. Being part of an industry experiencing such rapid technological advancement is exciting.”





## KNACK Samyr Qureshi

Tampa entrepreneur Samyr Qureshi (BA '14) won UF's 2016 Big Idea Business Plan competition with his prototype of Knack, an app for helping college students find peer tutors. Grant money from that win helped Qureshi develop Knack into a full-scale platform to help higher-ed institutions develop effective peer-tutoring programs. Along the way, Qureshi attracted several million dollars from investors — including Jeff Vinik, owner of the Tampa Bay Lightning — to launch Knack in the real world.

In 2019, Knack pivoted from a student- to university-based business model. Colleges now pay Knack to run their tutoring programs (including tutor training): tutors get paid \$12 to \$15 an hour, and those being tutored typically pay nothing. Students can also choose to be tutored in person or virtually, an option that sent Knack's popularity soaring in the pandemic. Today, Knack partners with universities across 13 states, employing more than 7,000 tutors, and business is growing around 300% a year.

Qureshi credits his entrepreneurial spirit to his early experiences in Clearwater as a child immigrant from the United Arab Emirates. The challenges of adapting to the U.S. culture and its model of education fostered in him "strong persistence and long-lasting hope," he said.

"Nothing is handed to us; we have to earn it," said Qureshi, a 2021 UF 40 Under 40 honoree. "I've always had that mindset and truly believe that if you do the right things, with the right intentions, the right things will continue to happen."



## AI ATTRACTS VOBILE TO INNOVATION DISTRICT

Vobile, the worldwide leading Software-as-a-Service provider in digital content protection and monetization, will open a new R&D and Operations Center in Gainesville, the first step in Vobile's plan to create hundreds of jobs in Gainesville.

**Yangbin Wang**, (MSEE '93), founder and CEO of Vobile, said the company chose Gainesville's Innovation District because of its proximity to UF and the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering.

"In addition, UF has made significant investments in artificial intelligence (AI) research and a commitment to students being AI proficient before graduation," Wang said.

Vobile was honored as a winner of the 69th annual Technology and Engineering Emmy Awards for its innovation excellence in developing video identification technology to protect content value and copyright. Vobile is headquartered in Silicon Valley and adds the Gainesville office to locations in Los Angeles, New York City, Tokyo, London, Hong Kong, Hangzhou and beyond.

"There is little doubt that AI and machine learning is changing the way we conduct business today," said Cammy R. Abernathy, dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering. "And yet, even before its full potential is recognized by the business community as a whole, our esteemed alumnus, Yangbin, has already shown the world how it can transform an entire industry with his brainchild, Vobile."





## All the News That's Fit to... Crumple?

A successful prank requires cunning, planning and perfect timing — qualities exemplified by this classic dorm-room maneuver orchestrated in 1970 by Theresa Rogero Ferlisi (BAEd '73) in Rawlings Hall.

It was wintertime on the Gainesville campus, and Theresa concocted a scheme to prank fellow Rawlings residents Nordi Sternberg Lupinacchi (BSPT '73) and Pat Maguire (BA '73). Theresa enlisted her roommate, Karen Suhrer Militana (BA '72), along with friends Rhoda Puleo Janz (BSN '74), Mary Hill and Linda Brandon Dingee, to gather leftover bundles of the Alligator and the Gainesville Sun and stockpile them in her and Karen's dorm room (no. 5, to be exact, in the Rawlings basement).

One Saturday night when Nordi and Pat were out on a double date, the pranksters sprang into action. As Theresa describes it, they spent hours crumpling newspapers, filling Nordi and Pat's third-floor room, floor to ceiling.

"Then we had to wait for them to come home sometime after midnight," Theresa remembers. "When they opened the door, they thought it was hilarious. Then we all jumped in and frolicked in the mess. We had a blast!"

Theresa captured the frivolity on her Brownie Flashmite 20 camera, bought to document her college lifestyle for her family in California.

More than 50 years later, Theresa still stays in touch with her Rawlings friends. In 2018, she, Nordi, Pat and Rhoda got together near Palm Springs, California, left.

Theresa adds: "We lost touch with Mary Hill. I believe she was from Jacksonville, and I know she was in the KAT sorority. I'm pretty sure she graduated in 1973. I've looked for her on social media with no luck."

For more stories and photos of UF dorm living, see Gator Nation News, <https://www.uff.ufl.edu/gatornation/>



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THERESA ROGERO FERLISI (BAED '73)

**1970, Rawlings Hall, left to right: Pranksters Mary Hill, Theresa Rogero Ferlisi, Karen Suhrer Militana and Linda Brandon Dingee dive into the mess.**



## Lofty egg-speriment

Gainesville High School physics teacher Keith Watts (BS '95, MED '97) knew the perfect spot to stage one of the most iconic of all physics experiments: the egg drop.

As a sophomore, Watts lived in Beaty Towers, the third tallest buildings in town, and knew the site would be up to the challenge. "This drop is well over 160 feet, so this really gives all the egg drop containers a chance to reach what we call terminal velocity — where it's not speeding up anymore—to see what will happen if we can get all of these to reach their maximum speed."

Students were tasked with making a vessel that would keep an egg intact when launched from the 13-story building. The reward: 20% extra credit for intact eggs. Thirty-five eggs survived, 31 cracked and two got caught in trees.





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# GATORS WITH GREAT NEWS



## Home Plate Thieves

Members of the 1962 Gator baseball team enjoy the reunion at Condron Ballpark.

The 1962 Gator baseball team was the first UF team in any sport to be ranked #1 in the NCAA. The team, known for its speed, won the 1962 SEC title by scoring on four steals of home, in an 8-7 win over Mississippi State. In May, eight of the surviving members returned to campus for a reunion, touring Condron Ballpark. “What a field,” said Tom Moore, a speedy third baseman and first-team All-American. Ron Birchall, the shortstop who later signed

with the New York Mets, said, “We cherish these reunions and, of course, comparing this facility to what we played on, there are no words. I’m just really proud of Florida and the whole athletic culture.” The team is commemorating its season with a brick in the courtyard outside Emerson Alumni Hall. For a story on the 1962 season, visit [uff.to/xxxx](http://uff.to/xxxx)

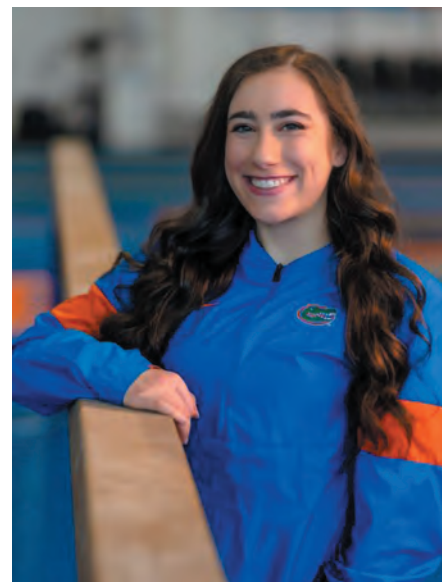
To learn more about commemorative bricks, visit [uff.to/xxxx](http://uff.to/xxxx)



## Taking their talents to Ireland

Some Gator Marching Band alumni got the travel bug in the spring and took their talents to Ireland. As part of the Second Time Arounders Marching Band – which is based in St. Petersburg and consists of anyone who has played, twirled or danced in a high school or college marching band – the alumni marched in the first St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Dublin in two years. Almost 500,000 people attended the parade, and Gator Band Alumni Association Treasurer Joe Kern (BA ’84, JD ’87) says their enthusiasm almost rivaled the excitement of the Swamp. Here, the Gators chomp after a concert at Kilkenny Castle. Bottom, left to right: GBAA board member Suki Westra Janisch (BMUS ’83), Michelle Taunton (BS ’84), Robin Oegerle (BMUS ’73), Katheryn Bolich (BS ’80). Top, left to right: Richard Brinson (BSBA ’87), John Green; Craig Eason (BMUS ’93), and Kern.





## Gymnast uses classroom skills in creating NIL game

Leah Clapper (BS '21, MAMC '22) says flipping and leaping on a 4-inch-wide balance beam is what she's known for as a Gator. But the gymnast has realized leaps and bounds of success at UF in her entrepreneurial endeavors, too.

After the NCAA changed its guidelines to allow college athletes to use their name, image and likeness (NIL), Clapper used the social media and personal branding skills she learned as an advertising major to capitalize on her standing as a Florida gymnast. She was named Scholar-Athlete of the Year at the inaugural NIL Summit this summer.

Clapper credits her success directly to UF's College of Journalism and Communications, which "doesn't feel like school; it feels like fun," she said. Her capstone project, NIL Island, may be the launch

point for her own business upon graduation — adding to her long resume of entrepreneurial initiatives. During quarantine, Clapper created a successful company called Shine Creative and developed Balance Palace, the first-ever gymnastics board game. "It exceeded our expectations and is by far the most rewarding thing I've done in NIL," she said. "Before NIL, I would not have been able to use my status as a Florida Gator to market the game. Now I was able to use my name and image to sell the product."

In the fall, she will take her fifth year of eligibility and will start her second master's in entrepreneurship, soaring both on the beam and in her studies.

For the complete story, see [uff.to/xxxx](https://uff.to/xxxx)



## New Gators get scholarships

Seven new Gators received scholarships in June from the Sarasota County Gator Club, and four were able to attend an event to welcome them to the Gator Nation. Left to right, UFAA Region II Director Lance Karp, SCGC Treasurer Mechele Leonard, SCGC President Ryan Chase, scholarship winners Connor DeMichele, Kate Fleming, Alexander Vafeas and Samuel Powers, SCGC Academic Vice President David Ursel, SCGC board member Jennifer Grosso and SCGC Secretary Cathi Bell.

## Communications for a cause

Veteran PR agent **Greg Mondschein** (BSTel '04, MS '05) has been on a roll in 2022. In April, Mondschein — founder of the NY-based PR firm SourceCode Communications — was honored as a top young alum at UF's annual 40 Gators Under 40 celebration. And the following month, a nonprofit effort he cofounded only two years

ago reached a 7-figure milestone.

In May, the Diversity Marketing Consortium (DMC) announced that it had provided \$1 million in pro-bono communications services to startups led by women and people of color, including companies such as Wagmo, Stuf, Dexai Robotics and Malomo, since its founding in July 2020.

The DMC is now expanding its ability to serve underrepresented firms by seeking additional PR agencies to join the consortium.



Mondschein recently told PRWeek he has high hopes for what the DMC can achieve: "Our vision for the future has expanded tremendously. [We hope] to become the de facto, charitable movement within the PR industry."



# Fabulous Fuzzy Fans

## NO LONGER A DOG'S WORLD

With the help of Captain Roughy, Gilligan, and Penelope, below, we have some feline fans this issue, but there's room for more furry, feathery, scaly family members of Gator Nation. Send your photos to:

**FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu**

*Include your name, occupation, town and your pet's name, along with a sentence or two about your pet.*



Or, share online **@ufalumni**  
**#gatorpets**

*This feature compiled by Carissa Allen, 4JM.*



**THE MORE GATOR FANS, THE MERRIER. THE GOLDEN BOYS, GILLIGAN AND CAPTAIN ROUGHY, ARE PROUD TO REPRESENT FELINE FANS. OWNER LYNN MARIA THOMPSON (BSBA '79) IS PRESIDENT OF THOMPSON WRITING & EDITING INC. AND IS A LIFE MEMBER OF THE UF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.**

## Ace

**Ace** adopted the Gator Nation spirit when he was just a puppy, learning how to give high-fives after each touchdown. His dad, **Tom Shille** (BA '90), is an editorial director for Medscape LLC, and his late grandpa was a professor emeritus at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine.



## Milo

**Milo** cuddles with his favorite stuffed animal: Albert the Alligator. His dad, **Warrnen Corpus** (BS '95), is president of the Palm Beach County Gator Club.

## Penelope

Owner **Brent Del Gaizo** (BA '96), a lawyer in Plantation, rescued **Penelope**, a 6-pound, 9-year-old cat he says bleeds orange and blue. Del Gaizo calls Penelope the "rally cat" and dresses her in Gator colors when the football team trails.





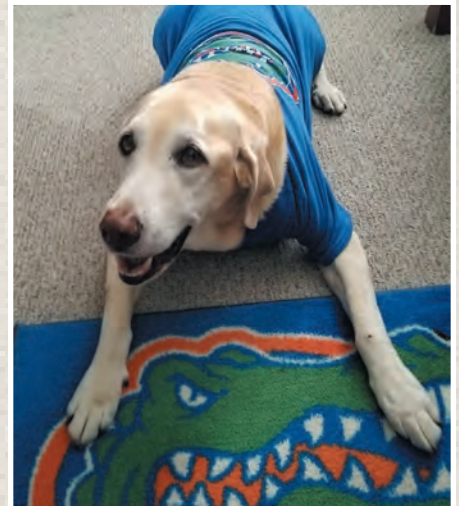
## Cooper Cudjoe

**Larry Tyree** (BA '66, MED '68, EDD '72) and **Kathleen Plinkske** (MBA '12, MS '21) keep Cooper Cudjoe warm in a Gator blanket.



## Skipper

**Skipper** flaunts his Gator spirit with a bandana and belongs to owner **Michael Debski** (BSBA '93, JD '96), an attorney in Jacksonville.



## Gator

**Gator** has been cheering on his team for 14 years. Owner **Lisa Leppo** (PHD '92) is a retired forensic anthropologist.

## Gus & Hank

No one can match George Edmondson's school spirit, but **Gus** and **Hank** give their best Mr. Two Bits impersonations. Their owner, **Alison Law** (BA '04), is the senior director of development at UF's Warrington College of Business.



## Archer

**Archer** likes to cheer on the Gators gymnastics team in style with his mom, **Katie Mills** (BS '18), a research and development engineer in Texas.



## Duke

**Duke** has spent many weekends in Gainesville rooting for the Gators with his mom, **Sarah Marville**, (BA '13), who works at Aon in Tampa. In addition to his bright blue jersey, Duke has his own alligator costume, complete with beady eyes and sharp teeth on the hood and a gator tail to wag.



## IN MEMORIAM



## Wayne McDaniel

Wayne McDaniel — the man who for a quarter century worked to keep Gators connected to the university he loved — died following a brief illness on Tuesday, May 3. The retired executive director of the UF Alumni Association was 78.

McDaniel (BSPE '67) is responsible for setting the association on its path to becoming one of the nation's best in all of higher education. Under his leadership, programs like alumni tailgates, alumni travel, Gator clubs and the International Gator Day of service took root. Two of his most visible legacies are Emerson Alumni Hall and the iconic Albert and Alberta statues in its courtyard. McDaniel led the effort to build EAH and to create the statues.

McDaniel came to UF in 1962 to play Gator football and only left Gainesville long enough to try his hand at teaching and coaching in Tennessee and Fort Myers. He soon returned, joined the UF Alumni Association's staff in 1978, and remained until his retirement in 2004. Since then, McDaniel and his wife, Melissa, had been splitting time between their homes in Florida and North Carolina, where they would spend summers.

"Watching the tremendous growth of this university and all the changes that have come about as we continue to serve our alumni will be what I remember the most when I leave," McDaniel said when he retired. "Gator fans, UF alumni and UF students are the best people you will ever meet in your life. I have been so fortunate to have had this job."

"Wayne never met a stranger," said Shirley Lynn, a longtime assistant he hired in 1987. "He made everyone feel like a best friend."

News of McDaniel's death was followed by an outpouring of comments from former presidents of the UF Alumni Association:

"I loved him, his passion for UF and just a good guy." — Delphine Jackson (BA '71, EDS '73, MED '75).

"Such a great Gator. Loved how we would always greet me with a 'Hey, partner, how's it going up in Atlanta.'" — Rahul Patel (BA '94, JD '97).

"Will never forget him sending me a beer at the SEC championship game when I was a medical student. Always making other people feel special, and a special part of the Gator Nation. I owe many great years of UFAA involvement to his encouragement and support." — Jason Rosenberg (BA '90, MS '93, MD '95)

"Wayne had high character and a great heart. As I was moving through the chairs, he once noted to me the power of the Gator Nation, before this was a catchphrase. He won my respect by watching how he treated others. His kindness toward my young daughter was notable." — Scott Hawkins (BABA '80, JD '83)



## Robert "Bob" Lanzillotti

Robert "Bob" Lanzillotti, the third dean of the Warrington College of Business, passed on July 8, 2022. He was 101 years old.

"Bob Lanzillotti's leadership was essential to building the college's current foundation of excellence," said Saby Mitra, Warrington College of Business Dean. "His focus on hiring world-class faculty and building the college's financial stability has been paramount to our success. He will be greatly missed by many Business Gators."

Lanzillotti began his bachelor's degree studies at American University before joining the United States Navy in the second year of World War II. While he was allowed to defer his deployment until after he completed his bachelor's degree in economics at Dartmouth in 1943, Lanzillotti would go on to serve in both the European and Pacific Theatres. Most notably, during his time as an officer in the Navy, Lanzillotti piloted a landing boat onto the Utah Beach shore on D-Day, about two weeks before his 23rd birthday.

Thanks to the GI Bill, Lanzillotti went on to earn his master's degree in economics from American University and his Ph.D. in the same subject area from the University of California – Berkeley in 1953.

In 1969, Lanzillotti came into the position he would hold for 17 years, dean of what was then the University of Florida College of Business.

Lanzillotti's get-things-done approach brought major changes that would set the groundwork for Warrington to become among the best business schools. In addition to increasing the rigor of faculty, Lanzillotti prioritized partnering with the corporate community in Florida. He was also a key figure in establishing the UF School of Accounting.

Even at 100 years old, Lanzillotti was still active in his work. He served as a member of Warrington's Dean's Advisory Council and consulted with companies as requested.

## Jack Wayne Martin



Jack Wayne Martin (BA '50, MA '77), a longtime part of the College of Design, Construction and Planning family and a member of the Rinker Construction Hall of Fame, died March 18, 2022, at the age of 93. Martin taught in the School of Building Construction from 1978 until his retirement in 1990 with emeritus status and was

the architecture Teacher of the Year in 1983. Martin attended UF on a partial football scholarship and was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity. After an appointment to West Point, Martin played running back under Coaches "Red" Blaik and Vince Lombardi. He graduated in the top 10% overall and was commissioned Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers in 1951, serving for 24 years. Martin and his wife Evelyn, who predeceased him, enjoyed multiple Gator sports, and they supported UF football and women's basketball, as well as other educational, music and international missions.

For more, see [uff.to/xxxx](http://uff.to/xxxx)

## Richard "Robie" Robinson



Richard "Robie" Robinson (BA '62, JD '66), who gave back to the UF Levin College of Law well after co-founding the Gray-Robinson law firm, died June 21, 2022.

A lifelong Gator fan, Robinson served as the emeritus trustee and past chair of the UF Law Center Association Board of Trustees and was a former president of the UF Law Center Alumni Council.

He was admitted to practice law in Florida in 1967 and specialized in tax, business, corporate and government finance law. He was consistently named to Best Lawyers in America and Super Lawyers, transforming a firm of four young lawyers to one with 300 practicing lawyers around the state. With his wife of 59 years, Gail, Robinson enjoyed rooting for the Gators, traveling, camping, biking and hiking.

[uff.to/xxxx](http://uff.to/xxxx)

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# GATORS GO AROUND THE WORLD

*Reader-submitted photos from across the globe*



## Egypt

**Alan** (BS '82, DVM '86) and **Beth Weldon** (DVM '86) pack a UF College of Veterinary Medicine Class of 1986 flag when they travel. Here, they stand in front of the Pyramids of Giza, but the flag has been previously towed up the mountain peaks of Patagonia and Machu Picchu. Like many other vet alums, the Weldons also carry a "flat Mikey," which represents Dr. Micheal Shear, professor emeritus and an institution at the college. Flat Mikey accompanied them down the Nile, from Abu Simbel to Alexandria.

### THE GATOR NATION IS EVERYWHERE



Please send your photos and captions to [FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu](mailto:FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu).

Include names left to right, degree and year, hometown, and a few words about what is going on in your photograph.



Or, share online [@ufalumni](https://twitter.com/ufalumni) #gatortravel

This feature compiled by Carissa Allen, 4JM.



## Paris

**Richard Weiss**, a UF Alumni Association lifetime member, represented the Gator Nation in the city of lights. Retired from the Navy after 23 years of service, Weiss now works as a test and evaluation engineer and program manager in San Diego and is a proud member of the San Diego Gator Club.

66 | FALL 2022



## Alaska

**Leslie Rak** (BA '83) celebrated her retirement and move back to Gainesville on an Alaskan cruise with **Ken Dickens**. Here, they show off their Gator gear at Mendenhall Glacier.





## Zakynthos, Greece and Sydney, Australia

**John Moe** (MBA '20) wore a Gator T-shirt to take in breathtaking views of Greece and Australia. He spent most of May and June in Greece.



## Qatar

**Alex Whittle** (BSBA '22) shows off a Florida Gator that was flown in military flight missions in both Afghanistan and Qatar, where she is deployed in the Medical Logistics division. Whittle is a first-generation graduate from UF's online military program.



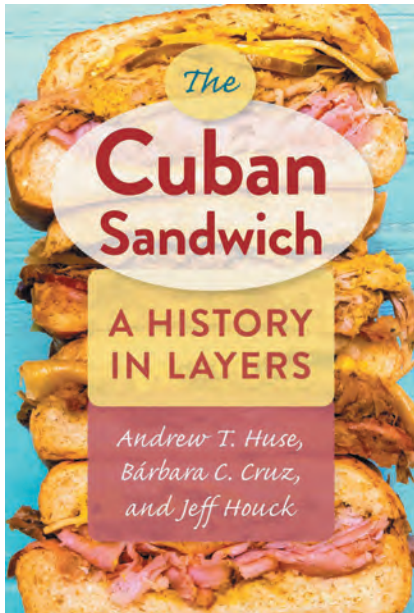
## London

**Adele Wright Crim** (BAE '74) and **Robert W. Crim** (BSCE '75) executed the iconic Gator chomp with perfect form — right arm over left — in front of St. Paul's cathedral.



# GOOD GATOR READS

## The Cuban Sandwich: A History in Layers



How did the Cuban sandwich become a symbol for a displaced people, win the hearts and bellies of America, and claim a spot on menus around the world? The odyssey of the Cubano begins with its hazy origins in the midnight cafés of Havana. It evolved into a dainty high-class hors d'oeuvre and eventually became a hearty street snack devoured by cigar factory workers. In "The Cuban Sandwich," three devoted fans—Andrew Huse, Bárbara Cruz, and **Jeff Houck** (BS '89) – sort through improbable vintage recipes, sift gossip from Florida old-timers, and wade into the fearsome Tampa vs. Miami sandwich debate (is adding salami necessary or heresy?) to reveal the social history behind how this delicacy became a lunch-counter staple in the U.S. and beyond.

The authors also interview artisans who've perfected the high arts of creating and combining expertly baked Cuban bread, sweet ham, savory roast pork, perfectly melted Swiss cheese, and tangy, crunchy pickles. Tips and expert insight for making Cuban sandwiches at home will have readers savoring the history behind each perfect bite.

Huse is curator of Florida Studies at University of South Florida Libraries; Cruz is professor of social science education and co-director of the InsideART project at the University of South Florida, and Houck is vice president of marketing for the Columbia Restaurant Group and previously worked as food editor, writer and blogger for the *Tampa Tribune*.

Read a Q&A with the professor at:

 [uff.to/xxxx](http://uff.to/xxxx)


### YOUR FLORIDA GUIDE TO BUTTERFLY GARDENING, A GUIDE FOR THE DEEP SOUTH, SECOND EDITION

University of Florida lepidopterist Jaret Daniels has put together an easy-to-use and brightly illustrated introductory guide to show beginners how to create a haven for butterflies and other flower-loving wildlife in Florida and throughout the Deep South.



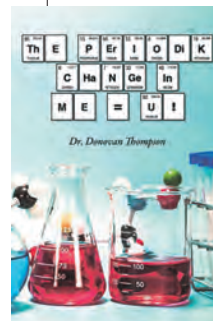
Updated in this second edition with new photographs and expanded to include additional species of butterflies, "Your Florida Guide to Butterfly Gardening" offers a thorough look at Florida's most common garden butterflies and the plants they prefer for food, shelter and egg laying. It helps you select plants that will attract butterflies year after year. The book features garden layouts designed for Florida's major growing zones and suitable for gardens in neighboring southern states.

Full-color images show common butterflies and their caterpillars, as well as food plants and host plants. Daniels also

discusses environmental threats to butterfly species, with a special focus on the monarch butterfly, describing how humans can play an important role in sustaining native wildlife populations and promoting biodiversity through our yards and home gardens. See  [uff.to/xxxx](http://uff.to/xxxx)

### THE PERIODIK CHANGE IN ME = UI!

**Donovan Thompson** (PHD '14) uses the scientific method as a basis for helping individuals understand



how to make life changes step by step. This book is for anyone going through trials and tribulations in their relationships or who would like more structure in navigating situations dealing with money, school, church and other areas. Readers are urged to 1) ask the right question, 2) have a hypothesis, 3) test the hypothesis, 4) narrow the results, 5) analyze the data, and 6) communicate results. Thompson shares personal stories of how he used the scientific method to weather a range of personal issues.

**TO HAVE YOUR BOOK CONSIDERED**, please send a short synopsis of your book along with the title, the publisher, your name, your year of graduation and degree, your location and any other line of work, and a link to the book on the web or an image of the cover to [FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu](mailto:FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu). No self-published books.

## FISHING GONE? SAVING THE OCEAN THROUGH SPORTFISHING

For English professor and department chair **Sid Dobrin**, saltwater fishing is more than just a hobby. Those who enjoy the ocean's bounty for sport, he believes, have a



responsibility to be mindful of its fate in the face of economic and environmental challenges. In his new book "Fishing, Gone?" Dobrin calls for sustainable fishing practices that don't simply reflect the interests of commercial harvesters. As the chair of the American Sportfishing Association's Advocacy Committee, Dobrin believes that,

with a new approach, anglers can help preserve the joys of saltwater fishing for generations to come. Doug Lander, the editor of Sport Fishing magazine, called the book "a thoughtful and provocative amalgamation of all things fish and fishing, saltwater-angling lore, politics, wisdom, and existential meditations. Dobrin's work is completely unlike any fishing book I've ever read."

## BAX AND HIS BUBBLES: ALL ABOUT A KID AND HIS THOUGHTS

Thoughts can be difficult to navigate at any age. So, how can we help when our children have thoughts filled with negative self-talk, anxiety, fear, or anger?



**Sonia Amin** (BS '02, DPH '06) wrote "Bax and His Bubbles" to introduce children to a simple method for choosing which thoughts to keep and which to release. The book is based on Philippians 4:8 and uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to help children ages 4-10 foster healthy thinking habits.



**Bob Graham, former Florida Senator**



**David R. Colburn, former UF Provost**

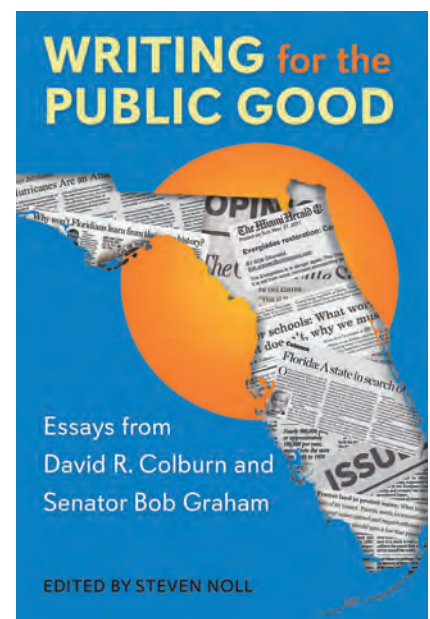
## WRITING FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

Edited by history master lecturer **Steven Noll**, "Writing for the Public Good" presents a selection of over 100 important opinion pieces from David R. Colburn (1942-2019), a former UF provost and history professor, and Bob Graham, former Florida senator and governor, two of the most influential public figures in contemporary Florida. Spanning 30 years and addressing a wide variety of topics that continue to be relevant today, these essays show the key role of Florida in modern American life and politics and illustrate the power of civic engagement in tackling issues facing the nation.

These pieces appeared as op-eds in outlets including the *Miami Herald*, the *Tampa Bay Times*, the *Tampa Tribune*, the *Orlando Sentinel*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Politico*, and *Time*. With style, intelligence, and thoughtfulness, Colburn and Graham examine subjects including the economy, race relations, public education, the environment, national intelligence and international affairs. They look to history to give context to the social problems of today, and they point forward to constructive solutions that center on the role of citizen activism.

Together, these essays chart the history of modern Florida, reflecting the state's rise to a Sunbelt powerhouse that is often at the center of national conversations. Colburn and Graham challenge readers to consider and discuss different perspectives on current issues and, above all, to respond. Readers will come away with renewed hope that their actions can make a difference to improve society and will be inspired to work for a better tomorrow.

This collection is part of the series Government and Politics in the South, edited by Sharon D. Wright Austin and Angela K. Lewis-Maddox.







# “No Ifs or Ands, Just Butts”

*Remembering The Great Underwear Dash (2005-2017)*

by Rachel Smith

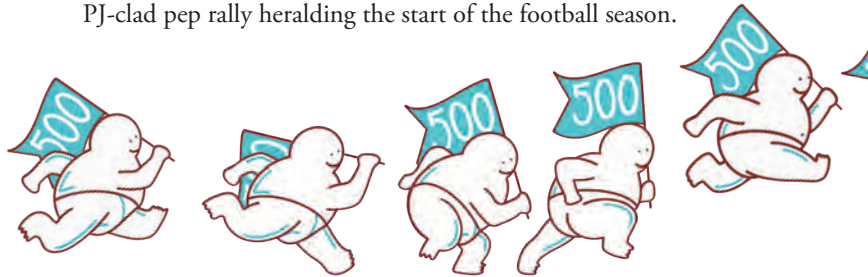
**O**n a muggy Florida night, a handful of students gather in Turlington Plaza, the air abuzz with excitement. Within minutes, dozens more arrive, then hundreds. At 11:59 p.m., a student, clad in only boxer shorts, clambers on top of a table: The run is on!

Cheers of “Go Gators!” ring out as he shouts instructions to the crowd. At his command, the students strip to their skivvies, drop their discarded clothes in a pile and sprint toward University Avenue. They’re met with curious stares, snickers and honks as they pass the hordes awaiting entry at Gainesville’s midtown haunts, then head down 13th Street and back towards campus.

This spectacle was The Great Underwear Dash, and if you attended the University of Florida between 2005 and 2017, you probably remember the cheeky tradition. Held twice a year, the student-organized events attracted thousands of participants during their heyday and were renowned for collecting bags of discarded clothing for local charities.

Those who took part look back on the Dash as a peak UF experience.

“When you’re jogging past Century Tower in nothing but your Nikes and boxers, it’s just simple, pure fun,” dasher **Anthony Davila** (BS ’09) recalls. “The most rewarding part was collecting and donating bags of clothes to charities and local community groups.”



Even those who balked at dropping their drawers remember the Dash fondly. **Stephanie Jones** (BS ’13) recalls watching with curiosity and admiration from the sidelines. “For me, it was appealing because it was a UF tradition that supported a great cause,” she says. “I thought it was a fun way to participate in something and give back at the same time with my fellow Gators.”

Seventeen years have passed since the first race, which prompts the questions: How did The Great Underwear Dash get started — and why?

Here we remember the rise, and decline, of this once-beloved, sometimes infamous, tradition.

## A Long History of Taking It Off on University Ave.

The origins of The Great Underwear Dash can be traced to an earlier student rite, now largely forgotten: the UF Pajama Parades. These began prior to World War II as a hazing ritual in which freshmen were roused from their beds by the cheerleading squad for an impromptu march down University Avenue. Over the years, the parade became an official freshmen orientation event, with the PJ-clad pep rally heralding the start of the football season.

The parades ended in the 1960s, but the urge to disrobe reignited a few years later when streaking took over colleges around the nation, including UF. The 1970s saw mobs of students stripping naked and running through campus as an act of rebellion. The fad infiltrated Gator sporting events and post-game victory parties for decades, including one notable event in January 2007 when a fan celebrating Florida’s win in the national football championship streaked naked across West University Avenue and caused a major traffic accident.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAYLOR MCKNIGHT

Runners race past the Swamp Restaurant on University Avenue in April 2006.



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
UF DIGITAL ARCHIVES

**UF freshmen parade** through the streets in their pajamas and “rat caps” in the 1940s.

## Birth of the Dash

The Great Underwear Dash itself was launched in 2005 — not by a crazed fan but by an adventurous UF art student. **Beau Bergeron** (BFA '08) originally cited performance art, body art and body positivity as his inspirations.



“The idea of all my friends running around in their underwear was this great, crazy idea,” Bergeron told the Independent Florida Alligator in 2006. “I wanted to start a college tradition.”

That wish was his big motivation, Bergeron recalls today: “To create this sort of wild college experience that I wanted, that maybe you see in movies and TV shows ... I realized I could try to make it happen.”

TheFacebook.com, as it was called at the time, was less than a year old, so Bergeron turned to sidewalk chalk, flyers and bookmarks to spread the word.

The messages he scrawled on the brick walls of Turlington Plaza were simple: a date, a time and an illustration of an underwear-clad runner that would become the Dash’s trademark.

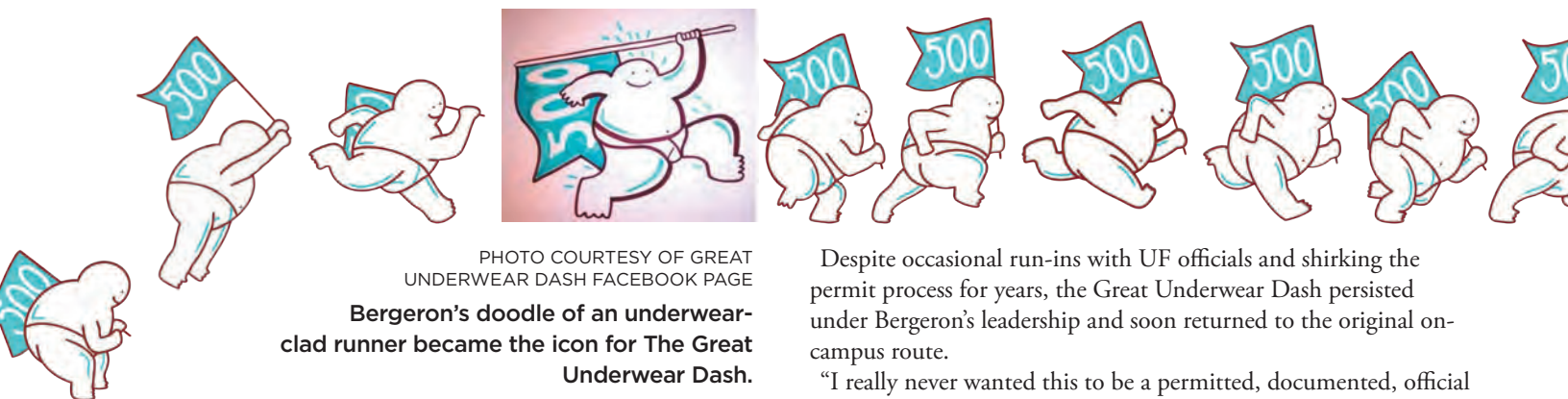


PHOTO COURTESY OF GREAT UNDERWEAR DASH FACEBOOK PAGE

**Bergeron’s doodle of an underwear-clad runner became the icon for The Great Underwear Dash.**

About 75 students attended the inaugural sprint in April 2005, dropping their clothes on Turlington Plaza to retrieve later and charting a course north from the Hub to University Avenue, then east to 13th Street and back. The following semester, more than 500 participants showed up. Clearly, a new tradition was taking root.

“The fact that it was so organic and grassroots — I think that made it so appealing,” Bergeron says. “You had to know somebody that knew somebody that was going to it. [Who] could give you the peace of mind that this was going to be fun, it’s not weird, it’s not crazy. It’s not something *that* fraternity or *that* dorm is doing, [it’s something] maybe everyone is doing.”

## Charity Drives and Police Run-Ins

Early on, philanthropic-minded Gators suggested the Dash should support a cause. In 2006, junior **Vida Tavakoli** (BA '09) decided the discarded clothes should be collected and donated to shelters in North Central Florida. More than 600 students joined the fourth dash and filled 19 bags with clothing.

With its growing popularity, the Dash soon attracted the scrutiny of university officials. Although UF Police were present at the first dashes, they just stood by to ensure everyone was safe. According

to news reports, UF officials cautioned that participating students could face indecent-exposure penalties but provided little guidance on what those standards were or how to avoid violating them, short of not running. The Gainesville Police Department, which patrolled the run once it crossed University Avenue, was less concerned with indecency. As long as they didn’t interfere with traffic, dashers could “run their little hearts out,” Sgt. Keith Kameg told the Alligator in October 2005.

After two years of looking the other way, UF officials cracked down on the Dash in 2007, stating that since organizers had failed to obtain prior authorization from the Student Activities Office, the event was canceled. The police orders came hours before the fifth run was set to commence and were ignored by a crowd of nearly-naked students, who dashed off campus at midnight and onto the neutral territory of University Avenue.

Not to be thwarted, Bergeron devised a makeup run, dubbed The Great Underwear Dash 5.5, held a few nights later. Dashers adjusted their route to skirt campus and keep safely outside of UFPD jurisdiction, making sure to pause for a group photo in front of the UF Administration building before dispersing.

Despite occasional run-ins with UF officials and shirking the permit process for years, the Great Underwear Dash persisted under Bergeron’s leadership and soon returned to the original on-campus route.

“I really never wanted this to be a permitted, documented, official or semi-unofficial thing, period,” Bergeron recalls. “The outside-of-the rules quality of it made it what it was. The university can’t really stop hundreds of students that just want to go for a jog.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF INDEPENDENT FLORIDA ALLIGATOR

**Students toss their clothes in a pile in Turlington Plaza in October 2012. Garments collected after the run were donated to local charities.**



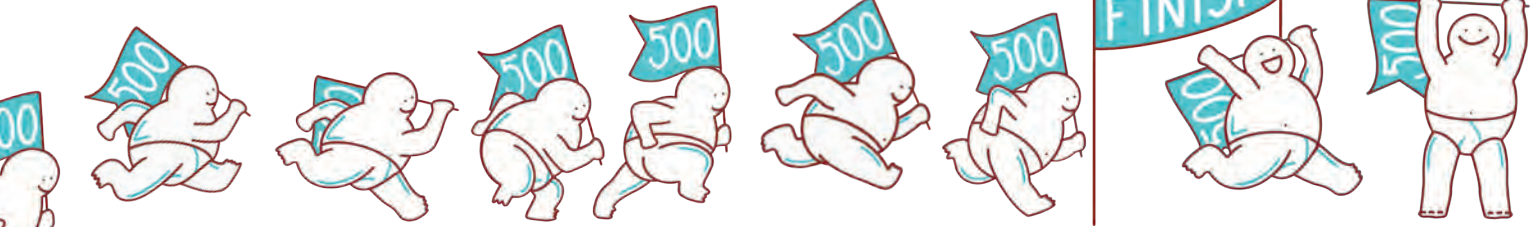
## Sports Bras, Thongs & Mankinis

Electrical engineering student and longtime participant **Jorge Gomez** (BSEE '09, MS '11) took over as Dash organizer after Bergeron graduated in 2008. By then, Gators had embraced the Dash as an outlet for personal expression and rebellion, and it was reflected in their attire.

While many dashers donned sports bras, boxers, pajamas or briefs, others raced in increasingly minimal and outrageous ensembles. "Everybody's kinda flying their freak flag anyway, so why not?" one student, clad in tighty whities, a Puerto Rican flag cape and a white cowboy hat, told the Alligator in 2009.

By then, UF had given its blessing to the event, with one caveat: no nudity. Organizers enforced the rule and hammered home the message on social media.

What could have easily become a hotbed of harassment instead maintained a focus on fun and self-empowerment – which was Bergeron's original vision.



"I really wanted it to be very inclusive and body positive," Bergeron remembers. "Even though there is a sexy, exciting quality to it, I didn't want it to be sexualized either."

"It's exhilarating, and it's not aggressive at all," Gomez told the Alligator in 2008. "When people do it, they realize how fun it is."

## From F Book to Fizzle and Fade

Under the leadership of mathematics major **Joshua Kelley** (2009-13), The Great Underwear Dash reached the pinnacle of its popularity, attracting a record 1,000+ participants and receiving recognition as an official F Book tradition in 2009.

Even as the Dash basked in its official status — on par with Gator Growl and painting the 34th Street Wall — student enthusiasm for the midnight runs started to wane in 2013. Reasons for its decline are unclear. Perhaps being an official event made the Dash less appealing to rebellious students. Or perhaps the student body as a whole had grown too studious for midnight underwear capers. Maybe the analog nature of the Dash no longer appealed to a generation that increasingly socialized online. Whatever the reason, the event continued sporadically for four more years, despite dwindling numbers and receiving little press attention. About 35 students took part in the last recorded Dash, led by **Ciara Conol** (BSISE '19) and **Dakotah Diaz** (BSBA '18, MIB '19) in 2017.

At that final event, Diaz affirmed why the Dash still held appeal for some. "It brings people together," he told the Alligator. "It's a really big self-esteem booster."

Over its 12-year run, The Great Underwear Dash attracted more than 4,000 participants and collected over 250 bags of clothing for local charities. Among the organizations that benefited from



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAYLOR MCKNIGHT

Runners sprint through campus in September 2011, during the height of The Great Underwear Dash's popularity.

students' giving were the Salvation Army, Goodwill, and St. Francis House, a homeless shelter located in Gainesville.

Five years after the last recorded Dash, it's unlikely that any participants remain on campus. However, the tradition lives on in the memories of those who experienced the run in its heyday. Some of that free-spirited exuberance is captured in this poem, posted on Facebook in 2015:

*No ifs or ands, ONLY BUTTS!  
It's time to strip and run,  
if you've got the guts!  
The most famous F Book Tradition has come at last...  
It's finally here: THE GREAT UNDERWEAR DASH!  
Come in costumes or thongs,  
Just please no nudity, no streakers!  
Keep all parts covered,  
or we'll sit you in the bleachers!  
Meet us at Turlington where we'll take the clothes off our backs,  
So we can give them to St. Francis House,  
And donate miles of piles of clothes-filled bags!  
Down Newell our jiggling asses will race,  
and around the bend down University - The more they honk, the  
more we pick up the pace!  
Turn again and up Buckman we will run,  
SHOUTING "IT'S GREAT TO BE A FLORIDA GATOR!"  
So they know what's to come!  
Butts and undies and costumes galore,  
We'll make it back to Turlington,  
and maybe run once more!  
Countdown is at 6:30 so try not to be late,  
We would hate to start without you,  
but our excited rumps just cannot wait!*



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Main Image: University of Florida's Lake Alice by Visit Gainesville, Alachua County | Swallowtail Farm Dinner: Courtesy of MAVEN Photo & Video  
Drink Gainesville Beer: Courtesy of Swamp Head Brewery | Musical Performance: Courtesy of Heartwood Soundstage





#### 2022 DATES

September 3	Utah
September 10	Kentucky
September 17	South Florida
October 1	Eastern Washington
October 8	Missouri (SCHEDULE - CHECK TO BE DED)
October 15	LSU
November 12	South Carolina

The UF Alumni Association invites all members and their guests to gather at **Emerson Alumni Hall** prior to each home football game. Located directly across the street from the Swamp, these family-friendly tailgates feature a prime view of the **Gator Walk**, live music, face painting, kids crafts, tailgate games, food and beverage for purchase from **Mojo Hogtown Barbeque** and Gator gear from the **UF Bookstore**.

For more info visit

[uff.to/tg22](http://uff.to/tg22)