

# GATOR

FLORIDA

SUMMER 2020



***A CELEBRATION OF GATOR GOODNESS,  
GRIT AND GRACE DURING THE  
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC — page 22***

## CONFRONTING BIASES

Hear from UF's premiere implicit bias scientists and campus leaders in the aftermath of racial violence — page 18

## ALONE TOGETHER

For some international students, returning home during the quarantine was not an option — page 48

## INK AND MEMORIES

Meet one special Gator whose life was cut short by COVID-19 — page 36



# GATORS HELPING GATORS

As UF scientists, staff, students and health care workers leapt into action in February to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic, UF supporters also stepped up to help. Just five examples:

**JANE SUN** (BSAC '92) of Shanghai, China, sent face masks and a personal check to support UF's coronavirus efforts. The CEO of Trip.com Group also led her company to donate millions of masks to people at risk in numerous countries around the world. (See more on pages 17, 32 and 55.)

**THE LOUIS AND GLORIA FLANZER TRUST** supported the UF Health COVID-19 Rapid Response fund with a \$100,000 donation to advance research, delivery of testing and treatment, epidemiological studies, vaccine development, prevention efforts and other similar initiatives. These goals align well with the trust's mission of enhancing the lives of Suncoast residents and all Floridians through social services and healthcare initiatives.

The trust also gave \$139,950 for the purchase of a robot to speed coronavirus testing and results analysis in UF's Department of Pathology, Immunology and Laboratory Medicine. The robot will also aid in the study of other pathogens in addition to COVID-19.

**DR. DEAN HAUTAMAKI** (BS '86, MD '89, HS '92) of Sarasota, who is a co-trustee of the Flanzer Trust, and his wife, Lizzie, added a personal gift to the rapid response fund. "UF Health is able to efficiently gather scientific and medical resources, deploy these resources statewide and lead our state's efforts surrounding coronavirus intervention," he said.

**FLORIDA BLUE** health insurance company gave UF \$220,000 to aid the gradual reopening of UF's campus through a test-and-trace initiative, an expansive data-driven effort that will allow students, faculty and staff to return to campus as safely as possible while minimizing the risk of infection from the novel coronavirus.

**TD BANK** gave \$20,000 to aid UF Health's testing efforts, particularly those in underserved populations in Jacksonville.



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**ON THE COVER**  
Celebrate some of the alumni, faculty scientists, staff and students who put aside their own work to help others during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their stories begin on page 22.



## WHEN GATORS RISE

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PANDEMIC INCLUDE ONE COMMON THREAD: GATORS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE**

As we chart a path to reopen this fall, I want to celebrate UF's faculty, staff, students and alumni for all they have done to respond to the pandemic — and all they will continue to do.

Everyone in the UF community adjusted rapidly to the upheaval this spring, continuing their work and the university's mission in unprecedented times. What's more, many Gators acted beyond their personal sphere to help their colleagues, neighbors or the public.

I think of the anesthesiology and engineering professors who built a low-cost, open-source ventilator prototype, and the student journalists who won a national competition for virus-related coverage that helped inform the reading public. (Learn about these and many other faculty and staff efforts in "41 Reasons to be Proud of UF" on page 24).

Much the same has been true of our alumni, who have been leading contributors to public health, food security and many other efforts to lessen the impact of the pandemic in Florida, nationally and around the world (See "28 Reasons Gators Rock" on page 32).

I am very proud of UF's rise to the 7th-ranked public university in the country. But our collective response highlights a quality of our university not measured in rankings or lists: A uniquely caring culture. As important as this quality was in the first months of the pandemic, it will be even more important this fall as we work to adjust to the inevitable changes that will accompany living and learning with COVID-19.

What are those changes? We continue to address that question, but they are likely to include expanded online offerings, as well as in-person labs, studios and other classes. We have new policies and procedures in place for COVID-19 screening and testing of faculty and students — as well as rigorous sanitation, wearing of masks and physical distancing. We will continue as many social, athletic and extracurricular activities are possible safely.

For me, UF's response to the pandemic also underscores the importance of a second quality that sets us apart from many universities (including some of our peers): We are home to one of the nation's major academic health centers.

UF Health's hospitals and the six health-related colleges in our academic health center ensure exceptional clinical care. But they also give UF the ability to lead COVID-19 screening, testing and many other steps that are needed to continue our mission as safely as possible while engaging in the research we hope will end this and future pandemics. Our dedicated clinicians, epidemiologists and other researchers will remain incredibly important to UF throughout our reopening.

In about a month, we will begin the 2020-21 academic year with the return of students to Gainesville and the resumption of classes. No question, things will be different. But, sustained by our caring campus culture and guided by our exceptional UF academic health center, I believe we will achieve a wonderful year for everyone.



## UF ACTS AGAINST RACISM

At press time, President Fuchs announced a plan to address racism and inequality at UF. See his message at <http://uff.to/6k980x>. Highlights include:

- **Training** all current/new students, faculty and staff on racism, inclusion and bias;
- Offering research **grants** for studies about race, equity, justice and reconciliation;
- Focusing the 2020-21 academic year on the **Black experience**, racism and inequity;
- Organizing more **speakers, seminars** and courses in colleges and through ACCENT;
- Reevaluating and revising appropriate elements of UF's **curriculum**;
- Hosting **Town Hall meetings** and devoting Faculty Senate meeting items to this topic;
- Devoting a day in the fall to **community service and learning**;
- Appointing a task force to **document UF's history** as it relates to race and ethnicity;
- Organizing a task force to **review honorary namings** on campus (historic and current) and determine if they should be retained;
- Reviewing University Police **use-of-force policies** and engaging community input;
- Intensifying (within state and federal laws) efforts to **recruit, support and retain** students, faculty and employees of color;
- And redoubling efforts to support local small businesses and **vendor diversity**.

President Fuchs also said:

- While I know of no evidence of racism associated with our "**Gator Bait**" cheer, there is horrific historic racist imagery associated with the phrase. Accordingly University Athletics and the Gator Band will discontinue the use of the cheer.
- There are agriculture operations where UF has relied on prison/jail inmates to provide **farm labor**. Since the symbolism of inmate labor is incompatible with our university and its principles, this practice will end.
- **It is past time** for UF to commit and engage in this challenging, uncomfortable work. We know we cannot undo lifetimes of injustice and racism, but we believe **we can make progress** in education, in advancing truth, reconciliation and justice, and in working to eradicate inequities.
- This process will not be easy, and we **must work together** through the imperfections, missteps and complications that always accompany change. But the progress we seek is **fundamental to who we are** at UF and to our expectations of ourselves.

# Take care.

*And we sincerely mean that.*

When COVID-19 appeared, the world had a problem. A big problem that required big solutions from people with big ideas and even bigger hearts. COVID-19 put America on pause. Yet despite all it has taken from us, it hasn't shaken our spirit, or dampened our resolve. We're with you caring for patients, protecting our communities, and training the next generation. Because problem-solvers don't shut down, they rise up.

So please take care of yourself. Be hopeful. Stay positive. Continue to take care of business. Above all, take care. And be confident that we're doing the same — for you.



**UFHealth.org**





## DANCING TOGETHER, YET APART FOR CHILDREN

**\$2,526,418.24**

Amount **UF Dance Marathon** students raised for **UF Health Shands Children's Hospital** and **Children's Miracle Network** — all online — March 28-29. Unlike past years when the massive event was held in the Stephen C. O'Connell Center, COVID-19 quarantine restrictions led to this year's virtual fundraiser.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION AND GETTY IMAGES



**UF Health Shands  
Children's Hospital**

UF HEALTH





GETTY IMAGES

NEW CENTER FOR AUTISM

UF Health celebrated the grand opening of its **Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment** in February. The facility includes a renovated gymnasium for pediatric rehabilitation services, a telemedicine space, clinical and behavioral intervention research rooms and multi-use space for community partners. The building is adjacent to UF Health Shands Psychiatric Hospital on northwest 89th boulevard in Gainesville.



ERIC ZAMORA

From left: Mori and Forough Hosseini with president Fuchs at the Academy of Golden Gators.

A LEADER OF LEADERS

UF Trustees in March once again elected **Mori Hosseini** to be chairman. His second term will last from July 2020 to June 2022. **Tom Kuntz** was elected vice chair for the same term. Hosseini is chair and CEO of **ICI Homes**, one of the nation’s largest residential home builders/developers, and father to two UF alumni. Kuntz retired in 2013 as corporate executive vice president, president and CEO of **SunTrust Banks Florida**.

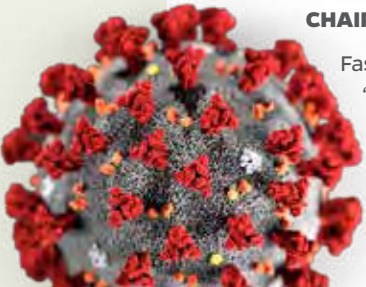


A MEMORIAL MILESTONE

It’s been **30 years** since the Gainesville community survived a serial killer’s rampage.

Email your memories and photos about that time to

**FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu** for a retrospective in the fall issue.



29

Number of free 30-minute online classes **Florida Sea Grant** hosted during the quarantine to inform the public about Florida habitats and species, fish and fisheries, coastal habitats and species, sustainability and climate change, and aquaculture and seafood. If you missed them, recordings can be found at **uff.to/9rvfvj**

445

Faculty hired for newly created academic posts, as part of **Provost Joe Glover’s Faculty 500 initiative**. These experts in their fields add to UF’s prowess in a plethora of areas and reduce UF’s faculty-to-student ratio (a key marker in the **U.S. News & World Report** university ranking). So far, this initiative has reduced UF’s ratio from 20:1 to 17:1.

1 OF 5

New **National Endowment for the Arts** research labs will be housed at UF. This one will leverage **UF’s Center for Arts in Medicine** through an **“EpiArts” lab** focusing epidemiological research. Lab staff will analyze several large, longitudinal datasets to determine how the arts influences public health outcomes, such as mental health and well-being, healthy behaviors and non-communicable diseases. Partners include the **UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine** program and the **University College of London**.

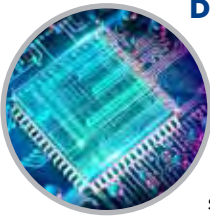
COOL TECH: JUST A FEW OF THE LATEST UF INNOVATIONS

More details at **innovate.research.ufl.edu**



DON’T BITE ME

UF researchers have discovered a new series of insecticides and repellents that are more potent than DEET, more cost effective to produce, work on mosquitoes as well as arthropods (spiders, scorpions, lice and other invertebrate insects), and could replace current compounds to which pests have become resistant.



DEFLECTING BLOWS

By adding a layer of minuscule silicone pyramid shapes to computer chips, UF researchers found they could foil hackers who use light rays to damage circuitry and gain access to personal data or intellectual property. Called optical probing attacks, the pyramid shapes reflect and scatter the light. The solution does not affect transistor performance and is cost-effective.



BETTER CANCER TREATMENTS

For cancer patients who undergo proton beam or heavy ion beam treatments, doctors need to make sure the charged particles hit tumors and not the healthy tissues around them. Doctors also need to know exactly how much of the treatment is delivered to the tumor. Until now, those assessments couldn’t be made until after each treatment. UF researchers address this with their invention of a portable imaging system that precisely aims the beam and measures the dose applied in real time through continuous 2D or 3D images.



ALL-IN-ONE INSECT TRAP

You’ll find no bait, sticky tape or funky scents in this new insect trap that UF scientists made. Traditional traps kill insects, but this one can trap them alive or preserve them for later identification, testing and analysis, which is especially helpful for farmers who need to know if the pests are spreading diseases.

HEARD IN GATORVILLE

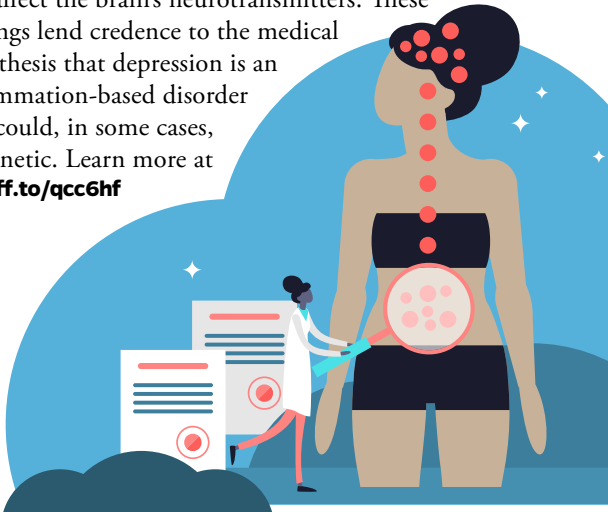
*“It’s like when you go to Disney World. If you stand in line, you can be there for two hours. If you have the right pass, you get right on. No matter how long you wait, the ride you get is the same.”*

— **DR. PETER IAFRATE**, CHAIR OF UF HEALTH’S INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Fast-tracked the review of coronavirus-related studies so they could “get on the ride” faster. One such study by **Dr. Mark Brantley** is a drug treatment that might block the deadly inflammatory response caused by the disease that curtails the lungs’ ability to function.

BELLY AND BRAIN

A UF study of people with depression has found that their intestinal microbes — or gut bacteria — are different. Furthermore, these microbes can cause inflammation in the brain and whole body, and affect the brain’s neurotransmitters. These findings lend credence to the medical hypothesis that depression is an inflammation-based disorder that could, in some cases, be genetic. Learn more at **uff.to/qcc6hf**



GETTY IMAGES

BETTER BALMS

UF researchers developed new compounds that — when used in a cream — treat skin cancers more efficiently than topical creams currently on the market. They also cost much less than surgery. The compound is non-immunogenic and non-steroidal, avoiding the adverse reactions in current steroid-based creams.

CALMING THE TREMORS

UF engineer **Karim Oweiss** and neuroscientist **Kelly Foote** will test the effectiveness of UF’s new



Oweiss

motion-activated type of deep brain stimulation (DBS) aimed at improving treatment for patients with severe essential tremor, a neurological disorder that causes involuntary shaking and usually worsens over time.

Current DBS therapies are continuous, or always on, which can sometimes lead to undesirable side effects, including stuttering and problems with walking and balance. Under a new \$3.9M NIH grant, the pair will partner with other UF researchers to test responsive DBS (R-DBS) in patients during a five-year clinical trial. They expect it will mitigate symptoms with fewer side effects while also prolonging the device’s battery life.





“The Internet of Things(IoT) is expected to transform the quality of our lives ... However, the Mirai botnet and other cyber attacks ... have revealed major security and privacy issues.”

— TUBA YAVUZ



Yavuz

Received a 2020 National Science Foundation Career award (\$498K) for her project that strives to improve the security and reliability of software that controls Internet of Things (IoT) device networks. Her project also aims to “broaden participation of women and other underrepresented groups in IoT security and software engineering.



DARPA

FIRST-PLACE WI-FI WIN FOR GATORS

Faculty and student engineers in UF’s GatorWings club came from behind to defeat 10 teams and win a \$2 million prize in the DARPA Spectrum Collaboration Challenge. The U.S. Department of Defense-funded competition solicited new wireless system autonomous software that can adjust itself to manage Wi-Fi networks amid a variety of real-world complications, such as spikes in use, natural disasters and interference. The strategies used by each team will be used to strengthen the networks that wireless devices depend upon. Learn more at [uff.to/e1kmhb](http://uff.to/e1kmhb)



“I thought making it to 90 [years old] and beyond was a pretty rare and special thing, which it is. But more than 45,000 superagers living in Florida? That’s pretty amazing.”

— DEMETRIUS MARAGANORE, UF NEUROLOGY PROFESSOR

who leads an ongoing pilot study that examines factors associated with successful aging. Superagers are people free of Alzheimer’s, dementia or stroke, living independently with few hospitalizations or emergency room visits and generally free of disease. [bit.ly/2MavK42](http://bit.ly/2MavK42)



“We have all this food that’s being thrown away [in dining halls and restaurants], and all of these people who could benefit from it.”

— ADRIAN CRUZ, A FOURTH-YEAR INDUSTRIAL AND SYSTEMS ENGINEERING STUDENT

whose UF team won the 2019 Accenture Innovation Challenge addressing food insecurity for college students and their communities. Their plan: leverage people and processes already at work in restaurants. For instance, after making a delivery, truck drivers would pick up edible leftovers and consult an app that overlays their existing route with community agencies that could distribute the food. [bit.ly/2XHP4uU](http://bit.ly/2XHP4uU)



GETTY IMAGES

YOU CAN HELP SAVE ‘THE INTERNATIONAL TRAVELER’

With Monarch butterfly numbers in sharp decline (80% down since 2000), UF/IFAS master gardener volunteer Candace Barone says everyone can do these three things to help the most recognizable butterfly:

- **Add more milkweed to your yard.** This is the only host plant on which Monarchs will lay their eggs. But make sure you choose one of Florida’s 21 native milkweed varieties instead of the non-native or exotic types.
- **Use selective herbicides.** Non-selective types kill milkweed and other plants along with the weeds you’re likely targeting.
- **Look out for OE.** Most milkweed plants can carry a parasite called ophryocystis elektroscirrha (OE). Monarch caterpillars ingest the parasite’s spores, which can deform the butterflies or cause black death.

[Learn more at bit.ly/36TE4yo](http://bit.ly/36TE4yo)



TYLER JONES | IFAS

Scott Sager at the Austin Cary Forest.

O&B TP

While most Americans were sheltering at home during the pandemic, UF/IFAS staff at the university’s Austin Cary Forest continued its functional logging operation so paper manufacturers could continue to produce toilet paper. The unit’s seven part-time UF students were sent home, but two full-time staff remained. Forest products are the state’s largest agricultural commodity, says IFAS staff, and companies such as Georgia-Pacific, which has a plant in Palatka, were concerned with keeping production up during this time, said UF forester Scott Sager.

# ONCE A GATOR, ALWAYS A GATOR!

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## GREAT GATOR

## Legacies

LEADER,  
INVESTOR, FRIEND

Al Warrington (BSBA '58) would laugh when talking about the 10-cent apple butter sandwiches he ate in college. A single one, he'd say, would feed him for days when he was a UF student.

In time, the man who cleaned fraternity houses to pay for tuition and schoolbooks would go on to become one of the university's most generous benefactors and the namesake for UF's business college. Along the way, Warrington's reputation as a no-nonsense, do-what-it-takes entrepreneur and UF guardian would make him a campus legend.

Warrington, 84, died in May.

Over the decades, he would shuttle to campus from one of his homes in Houston, Atlanta or Miami to help recruit professors, meet with fellow UF trustees or serve on an assortment of advisory boards.

"I think he bleeds orange out of his left leg and blue out of his right leg," said friend Fred Fisher (BSBA '59), UF's accounting school's namesake.

Wherever and whenever Warrington saw a need, he would be the first to open his wallet — whether it was to provide scholarships for first-generation students, upgrade sports facilities, improve the university's libraries or support professors working in agricultural sciences.

But it was the business college he most adored. Warrington's leadership and philanthropy gave it more shape and purpose. A separate accounting school was

**AT TOP:** Celebrating the business college's renaming for Warrington (orange shirt) with him are two of the college's former deans, John Kraft (far left) and Robert Lanzillotti. **ABOVE:** Al with his wife, Judy.

*"I think he bleeds orange out of his left leg and blue out of his right leg,"*

— **FRED FISHER (BSBA '59)**  
UF's accounting school namesake

created. Curricula evolved and programs were established. There was an aggressive push to attract the finest professors. And with those changes, the business college and its Fisher School of Accounting saw their national status climb.

Then, in 2014, Warrington moved his investments in UF to an even higher

level. The self-made man became the university's first \$100 million donor. His \$75 million bequest to kick off UF's *Go Greater* campaign — added to his previous \$28 million in contributions — was the capstone of his lifetime of service to the university.

Warrington's professional success began at the Arthur Andersen accounting firm. During his 32 years as an accountant and executive, the firm's Miami office became one of country's largest accounting firms. But it was in "retirement" that he made his fortune. In 1990 he founded the Houston-based environmental services company Sanifill, which within a decade

was absorbed into Waste Management Inc.'s conglomerate. He also created the Atlanta-based health and beauty aids manufacturer House of Cheatham Inc., as well as several companies in Texas, including Frontier Waste and Houston Plating and Coating.

While he often credited UF for sparking his success, his journey to Gainesville almost wasn't. Warrington was 8 years old when he started delivering newspapers in suburban Philadelphia neighborhoods. It wasn't uncommon for him to attend two or three schools a year because his parents moved so often. He was a high school senior when his father, a used car salesman, finally settled in Fort Lauderdale. But instead of switching schools once again, he remained behind in New Jersey, living with a friend and working weekends in Atlantic City to cover his bills.



Warrington's  
UF senior photo

Rutgers University offered Warrington a small scholarship. He turned it down, though, when his father spent \$75 to register his son at UF without Warrington's knowledge. But it would be up to Warrington to put himself through the rest of school, his father told him. With that, Warrington — the first in his family to go to college — became a Gator.

"My father ... thought that college was only for training doctors and dentists," Warrington said several years ago. "Dad felt if you weren't going to be one of those, you were wasting time and money."

Warrington, however, knew differently.

He is survived by his wife, **Judy**, sons **Tom Warrington** (BSESS '89) and **Al Warrington V** (BSBA '82, JD '85), daughter-in-law **Stephanie** (BSBA '89, MBA '94, MHS '94), three grandchildren and countless UF students and faculty who remain forever grateful for his support and leadership.

— David Finnerty

DRIVING  
FLORIDA'S ECONOMY

Investment banker, Eagle Scout and devout family man **Bill Hough** (MBA '38) of St. Petersburg died April 11 at age 93, just eight months after his wife of 68 years, Hazel, passed away. One of his mantras, "Philanthropy is good business" is particularly evident at UF, as the couple were namesakes of the William R. Hough Master of Science in Finance program, Hough Hall that housed the Hough Graduate School of Business and numerous other investments in Gators. Among their many donations to UF, their \$30 million gift in 2007 was — at that time — the largest UF received. Not long after he graduated from UF, Hough founded an investment bank that became the No. 1 bond management enterprise in Florida, underwriting a significant portion of the state's infrastructure projects and issues. He believed his UF education was the foundation for his success. He also said business school graduates were key to growing and sustaining the state's economy.



*"PHILANTHROPY IS GOOD BUSINESS"*

## HOUGH'S FOUR BUSINESS PRINCIPLES:

- 1. Be an expert**, do the research, know your business cold and know it better than the competition.
- 2. If new ideas come along**, figure them out yourself without teaming up with a New York expert.
- 3. Do the right thing** for your client.
- 4. There is no such thing** as working too hard!

## GROWING COMMUNITIES



Engineer, plumber, veteran and renowned construction developer **W.W. Gay** (BSENG '49) of Jacksonville died March 31 at the age of 93.

A Florida native, he lived in Jacksonville since 1939. After serving in the Merchant Marines during World War II, he earned an engineering degree at UF and worked for a plumbing contractor. By 1962, he opened the company that bears his name, W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractor, which today conducts business throughout the state and beyond. He told the Jacksonville Times Union that he started 24 other businesses during his career, including

competitive companies he allowed others to buy outright. "I saw the opportunity for them to grow, and I took it," he told the newspaper. "I had three friends help me start this company, and I like to be able to do the same for other people."

Gay continued his work into his 90s. His firm built countless facilities on UF's campus.





8 YEARS



**Diane McFarlin** has been dean of the **College of Journalism and Communications**. She announced in March her intention to retire by the end of the year. During her tenure, the college increased its enrollment by 14%, faculty posts to 92 and its endowment to more than \$70 million (up 25%). **Provost Joe Glover** hopes to be ready for dean candidates to visit campus in September.

2 TROPHIES

Earned by the **Gators Softball team** for its National Championship wins in 2014 and 2015 that will now be on view at **Katie Seashole Pressley Stadium**, thanks to a new display provided by **Mica and Mike Rywant**, 17-year Bull Gators from Newberry. Mike is an attorney with **Rywant, Alvarez, Jones, Russo et al.**



KRISTEN GRACE | FLMNH

7+ ACRES

Size of the southwest Gainesville parcel where the **Thomas C. Emmel research building** is located. Emmel was a renowned scientist and butterfly expert at the Florida Museum of Natural History who died from natural causes while traveling in Brazil in 2018. **The International Biodiversity Foundation**, a group Emmel started many years ago recently donated the land and two buildings to the museum to honor his memory.



PROVIDED PHOTO

GATORS ON THE RISE FROM THE ARMY TO AN MBA

Sanibel native, U.S. Army veteran and UF business grad **Chris DiBiase** (MBA '20) was recently singled out as a “2020 MBA to Watch” by the Poets & Quants publication. Here’s a snapshot of why the West Point alum, who majored in mechanical engineering, stands out.

Last jobs before business school?

Army infantry officer for five years in the **101st Airborne Division** (executive officer/ second-in-command of 120-soldier unit), deployed to Afghanistan, then an Army Ranger School instructor

Next job?

Senior Strategy Consultant for **Accenture**

Roles held at UF?

Elected cohort representative to the MBA Association Board, which organizes extracurricular programs; MBA Veterans Association president; career advisor and peer mentor to 40 students; advising team captain overseeing 10 mentors “When asked to interview for the [career advisor] position, I jumped at the chance to give back to my program because our career services staff had a significant impact on my future, and I wanted to do the same for other students.”

Favorite MBA professor?

**Joel Huston**. He teaches an elective on valuation that is outstanding. In class, he excels at catering to all knowledge levels and fundamentally changed the way I look at business problems.

Favorite MBA activity?

The MBA Veterans Association hosts an annual **Murph Challenge** (which is a tough workout!) and fundraiser in memory of **Lt. Michael Murphy**, a Navy SEAL and Medal of Honor winner who gave his life to allow his teammates a chance to survive. At UF, we have a special connection to the Murph Challenge because another soldier killed in the same operation was a graduate of UF’s ROTC program. I’m currently planning the Murph Challenge for this year.

Why UF’s MBA program?

I was most impressed by UF’s placement statistics and career services approach. UF’s director of career services interviewed me, but this was different from every other program where I had little to no interaction with career services as part of admissions. As a small-program with about 30-35 admits in each cohort, I realized we would have a lot of attention from career services, which was important to me leaving the military. Without a doubt, this approach enabled me to land in a top consulting firm and earn my MBA completely debt-free.

Top two professional bucket list items?

Work and live abroad. Pursue an advanced economics degree, either a master’s or potentially a doctorate.

How do you want to be remembered?

A true friend and hard-working leader who left the program better than he found it.

“Access is no longer just the responsibility of those who work in the Disability Services office; access must be a priority for all.”



— **GERRY ALTAMIRANO**,  
**UF DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER DIRECTOR**

Whose study of 1,910 disabled college students showed that **57.6% had never participated in any social or fine arts activities, nor college sports**. Leading theories in higher education highlight the importance of campus involvement as a key indicator of academic persistence and student wellness.



WALKER ARCHITECTS

Construction on Florida Ballpark is expected to be complete in June.

UF IS BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

24 ACTIVE

**Construction projects** at UF. Of those, seven are in the planning phase, 11 are in design and eight are being built, including these:

- **P.K. Yonge’s** Middle-High building
- **Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering** Nuclear Science building (85% complete)
- **Baseball Stadium**
- **Norman Hall** remodeling and addition (99% complete; may open in August)
- **Music Building** renovation (20% complete)
- **Broward Hall** renovation



LEVOLUX | TWITTER

Construction on the University of Florida **Herbert Wertheim Laboratory for Engineering Excellence**.

7%

**Fiscal year 2019 return on UF’s endowment**, which grew from **\$1.8B** to **\$1.9B** despite a difficult market. Recent changes in **UF Investment Company** policies are credited for protecting funds from the high losses encountered by many other university endowments. Among *U.S. News & World Report’s* top 10 state universities, UF’s return ranks fourth and its endowment ranks seventh nationally.



TYLER JONES | IFAS

10

Years **Jack Payne** served as **IFAS** senior vice president before retiring in March. However, he continued to aid UF through the COVID-19 crisis. During his tenure, he oversaw 2,000 faculty, 16 on-campus departments and schools, 12 research and education centers throughout the state and extension offices in all 67 Florida counties. Also, research funding reached a record \$166 million (2017-18) and new facilities included a **honey bee research center** and **Nature Coast Biological Station**.

38 YEARS

**Scott Angle** has worked in agricultural scientific research and administration. In July, he will take over leadership of **UF/ IFAS**, succeeding **Jack Payne** (above). Prior to accepting this post, Angle was director of the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, which recently moved from Washington, D.C. to Kansas City, MO.



## NO. 8

National rank of **UF's agricultural and biological engineering graduate program**, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. The areas of studies in this department include climate change, food production and scarcity, water quality and quantity, biofuels, biosensors, modeling of biological, environmental and hydrologic systems, nanobiotechnology, packaging and postharvest engineering, sustainable food systems and supply chain management.

## 8

Number of **four-week, online greenhouse training courses UF/IFAS released to the public** on

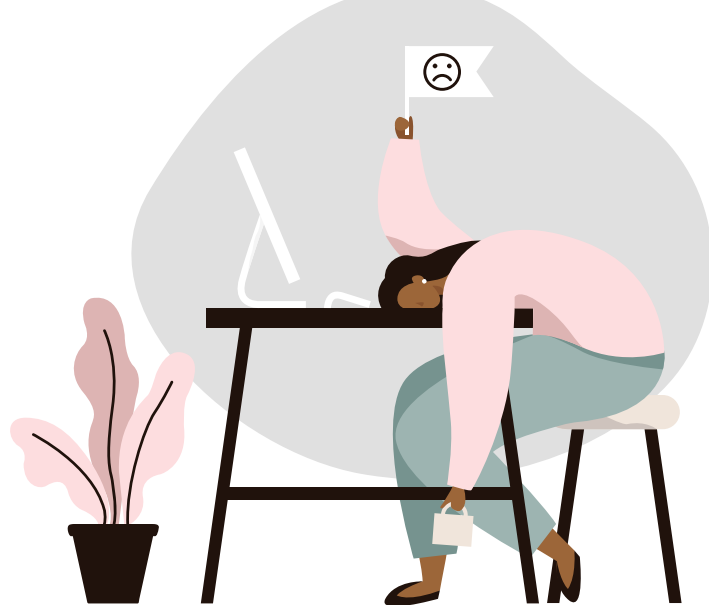
June 1. This year, the series features hydroponic vegetable production among its other offerings. Each course is completely web-based with videos, readings and assignments. For descriptions, pricing and registration details, visit [uff.to/f8xszc](http://uff.to/f8xszc)

## 18 YEARS

Length of **Ann Marie Rogers'** tenure as a UF associate athletics director (1985-2003) overseeing women's sports. During that time, lady Gators earned 60 SEC titles, seven national titles and 1,145 All-America honors. UF announced in March that a former UF swimmer, **Veronica Meinhard** (BSSE '93), and her wife, **Kristina Johnson**, donated \$1 million in honor of Rogers' service. The gift will rename the Stephen C. O'Connell Center's swimming pool.

## 25+ YEARS

Length of time **Kim** (BSJ '79) and **Danny Sams** of Clermont have supported UF with their gifts. Now, with their daughter, **Avery** (BSAg '11) and son-in-law **Bernie LeFils** (BSAg '11) of Orange City, their latest gift will add a roof to the round pens at **UF's Horse Teaching Unit**. Avery and Bernie are equestrian sports fans, while Kim and Danny are passionate about scholarships and providing well-rounded learning experiences.



## 5 EXPERT TIPS FOR PREVENTING BURNOUT

BY BARBARA DRAKE (MFA '04)

How did frontline physicians and nurses maintain their mental resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic? UF College of Medicine surgeons say the secret is to deliberately cultivate optimism and grit (growth, resilience, intensity and tenacity). Dr. Gilbert Upchurch, chair of UF's Department of Surgery, worked with Dr. Tyler Loftus and a team of investigators to produce the following ways to prevent burnout and improve performance in times of adversity. Their research was published in the *American Journal of Surgery*.

### 1. Maintain increased positivity.

Humans naturally try to avoid the negative more than they try to attain the positive. Upchurch says one needs to be three to six times more positive than negative. To increase your ratio, find the positive in negative events, seeing them as opportunities for reflection and improvement. Take a few minutes each day to recall things that have gone well. This increases your happiness with lasting benefits, a phenomenon known as the "Tetris effect."

### 2. Pursue major challenges that match personal skills.

Focus on helping others. Volunteer: No job is too small when you are helping. Upchurch says his father volunteers at a place where they hand out food each week to 120 needy families. He struggles to stand or walk, but now says he is "in charge of hugs." Like his father, Upchurch says: "help as best you can."

### 3. Deliberately practice to improve personal skills.

Most great athletes envision making the shot before it goes through the goal/hoop. Envision yourself helping others, and then go do it.

### 4. Persist in working hard for extended periods of time.

recognizing that effort can often count for more than talent. There is a lot of data suggesting that mental toughness, or grit, is important in achievement. In a group of Ivy League undergraduate students, having grit correlated with higher grade point averages, ironically even among those with lower SAT scores. Sustain your effort until you complete a task or reach a natural stopping point. Studies show that deliberate practice like this increases performance over time.

### 5. Pursue a higher meaning and purpose.

As clichéd as it might sound, many of those who work on the front lines of this pandemic all started down their paths of becoming health care workers with the same goals: to rid the world of pain and suffering and to help others. Reflect on why you chose your profession and how that relates to this difficult time, as well as in the future when our routines will return to normal. Use this new normal to reprioritize the things that are important to you and become a better you.



## THE JEKYLL AND HYDE OF WORMS

Nematodes are everywhere! The parasites that can be found in humans, animals, plants, soil, marine environments and even beer malts are so prolific that scientists say four out of five animals on the planet are nematodes. While they have a dark side, killing crops by feeding on roots, they also help remove bacteria, fungi and other pests in the soil, and add to soil nutrients.

Two UF nematologists, Billy Crow and doctoral candidate Lesley Schumacher, are studying reniform nematodes that caused \$130 million in cotton crop losses last year.

"By measuring free-living nematodes, we can assess our management methods and try to find a balance between chemical and cultural management options," Schumacher said.



COURTESY OF LESLEY SCHUMACHER

This tomato crop was part of Schumacher's and Crow's nematode study.

## EXPERTS BEHIND THE SCENES

The College of Journalism and Communications launched a new online video series called "Great Storytellers: Women and the Art of Film" to help students and community members "stay uplifted and engaged during quarantine." **Chloe Weaver** was the focus of the first installment. The cinematographer's portfolio includes well known TV shows such as **Big Bang Theory** and **Two and Half Men**, as well as narrative films, documentaries and commercial work. Find the videos, tagged "Great Storytellers," at [uff.to/4h5sxj](http://uff.to/4h5sxj)



COURTESY OF CHLOE WEAVER

## IN MEMORIAM

### 46 YEARS

Tenure of **Levin College of Law Professor Emeritus Fletcher Baldwin**, who

regularly taught law courses and seminars until 2008, and continued to lend his expertise as needed since then. He died in May at age 87. Aside from his work at UF, he and his wife, **Nancy Baldwin**, and their two children, were known for taking in college students who were hungry or needed a safe place to live. In a 2016 interview, the couple shared stories about dozens of students who became part of their family over the years. One such student is **Jane Sun**, who is now CEO of CTrip Group, named her eldest daughter after Nancy Baldwin and created a scholarship fund at UF — in part — to honor the Baldwins' generosity and self-less devotion. A gift to that fund can be made at [uffgive.to/yw5afg](http://uffgive.to/yw5afg)



### 35 YEARS

College of Dentistry professor **Dr. Marc Heft**

taught at UF. He died Feb. 8 at age 71. In addition to the scores of students he taught, he also held posts in the **Evelyn F. and William L. McKnight Brain Institute**, **College of Medicine** and **College of Public Health and Health Professions**. The focus of his research was aging, sensory aging and pain, including measurement, impact and disparities in care.



### 17 YEARS

Electrical and Computer Engineering professor **Bill Wagner** died June 26. He

taught in the department's teaching lab from 1985 to 2002 and is best known for the help and support he provided during lab courses and senior design projects. Learn more about an engineering fund created in his memory at [uff.to/t0d0hx](http://uff.to/t0d0hx)





# THROUGH MY EYES

UF AND U.S. OLYMPIC TRACK & FIELD HEAD COACH  
**MIKE HOLLOWAY** SHARES PERSONAL EXPERIENCES  
IN THE WAKE OF NATIONAL PROTESTS

BY MIKE HOLLOWAY (BA '00)

## ANGER. DISGUST. SADNESS.

Those emotions left me unable to say more than a couple words about George Floyd's death before my throat swelled and tears filled my eyes.

Some of the comments made things even worse. White friends comparing their difficult life experiences to the systemic oppression and casual racism endured by generations of black Americans. There is no comparison.

UF track and field head coach Mike Holloway at the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships in Eugene, Ore., 2017

UAA COMMUNICATIONS | TIM CASEY

People peddle this fantasy that because of slavery's abolishment the country's desegregation following the civil rights movement, and the election of our first black president not once, but twice, we are living in a post-racism society. And that's exactly what too many people in our nation are living. A fantasy. I thought Jordan Peele shattered that myth three years ago when his directorial debut, "Get Out," revealed how oblivious white Americans are to the harsh realities we confront on a daily basis. I guess too many people just saw it as entertainment.

I will admit, it's easy to buy into the fantasy when you don't live these experiences. But allow me to open your eyes to the world we live in as black Americans.

We can walk into stores wanting to buy something fairly expensive, and employees will ignore us. Because we're black, they assume we can't afford it.

Back in the days of pagers, my white girlfriend and I went into an electronics store in Gainesville. As I examined different models, she went to the bathroom. In the five minutes she was gone, nobody spoke to me. No one walked up and asked, "What are you looking for today?" But the second she came back and stood beside me, an employee made a beeline for us. She called out his ignorance, we left, and I bought a pager elsewhere.

More recently, I wanted a new television. The one I settled on was \$1,500. When I flagged down an employee and let him know which model I wanted, he condescendingly responded, "You do understand that's \$1,500, right?" Because I'm black, there is no way I can afford a \$1,500 television, right?

In other stores, some employees pay extra attention to us. They even follow us, practically stalking us as we shop. Because we are black, they assume we are thieves.

When I went to buy a car, the salesman told me, "I'm going to assume you have good credit." Another salesman tapped him, and I said, "No, let him go. Please let him go. But if I was white, would you say that to me?" Once he admitted he would not, I walked off the lot.

Police officers pull us over if we drive high-end cars. It has to be someone else's, they think, because we're black.

I was once pulled over in my SUV.



PHOTOS BY AARON DAYE | UF ADVANCEMENT

March for Our Freedom on May 30 in Gainesville

*"UNTIL YOU'VE HAD SOMEONE SPEW HATEFUL, RACIAL SLURS AT YOU SOLELY BECAUSE OF YOUR SKIN TONE, THERE IS NO WAY TO COMPREHEND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A BLACK AMERICAN."*

Justifiably. I made an illegal turn. An honest mistake, but a mistake nonetheless. "I'm tired of you people always making wrong turns," the officer said bitterly. When I asked which people his comment referenced, the officer told me, "You limo drivers." Because I'm a black man in a nice SUV, it can't be mine, right?

We are stopped, frisked, arrested or murdered in cold blood because our skin tone matches the description of a suspected criminal. Or those things might happen simply because the way we dress or the way we walk looks suspicious.

Like the Central Park Five 21 years ago. Like Kalief Browder in 2010. Like Trayvon Martin in 2012. Like Ahmaud Arbery this past February.

Until you've had someone spew hateful, racial slurs at you solely because of your skin tone, there is no way to comprehend what it means to be a black American. You just can't imagine it. You can't conjure up such a degrading feeling and experience it for yourself.

Every time my 19-year-old son leaves my house, I pray. He's a great kid, and I

don't think we live in a community where anything is going to happen. But you just never know. That fear extends to my grandson, to my nephews, my godsons, sons of my close friends. You just never know. Because we are black Americans.

We are told to dress differently, to adopt white societal norms, because we need to ensure white Americans feel comfortable. But that did not save Arbery's life.

We are told everyone is innocent before proven guilty. Unless your skin tone matches the description of a suspect. Like the Central Park Five.

We are told to comply with orders made by police officers, to just submit to their demands. Floyd submitted until he could not breathe, much like Eric Garner six years before him.

We are told to ensure our children excel in our public school systems so they can eventually earn college degrees, secure higher wages and give our grandchildren better lives than we gave our own sons and daughters. Except many of the people we tell that to live in underfunded school districts with inadequate resources, which





AARON DAYE | UF ADVANCEMENT

From left: March for Our Freedom protest in Gainesville; White Coats for Black Lives demonstration at UF Health

essentially sets far too many kids up for failure and pushes them toward a cycle of drugs, addiction and violence. The HBO show “The Wire” has taught us this much.

We are told to protest peacefully, to hold a mirror to our system’s flaws calmly and respectfully, to utilize the national platforms our activists stand atop. Unless we demonstrate during the national anthem. Protest elsewhere, they shout in anger. Show some respect, they yell repeatedly.

Once we appease the masses who are either too uncomfortable or too entrenched in their views to listen to us, to understand the need for such a demonstration, we organize peaceful protests on our city streets. And what are we met with? Fear. Anger. Resistance. Excessive force.

We are told to change this system with our votes instead of our voices, to elect officials who will weed out corruption, enact meaningful change in our communities and empower the historically disenfranchised. People I grew up with my whole life. Democracy is what this nation is built on, we are told. Your vote counts the same as ours, they like to tell us.

Except it doesn’t.

Not when the system waters down our votes through gerrymandered district lines.

## TAKE ACTION

UF’s Multicultural & Diversity Affairs team offers numerous ways for people to engage in and promote anti-racist activities. **Visit their site to learn more:** [multicultural.ufl.edu/resources/action](https://multicultural.ufl.edu/resources/action)

Hear **President Fuchs’** message to the Gator Nation [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUopSFGc93I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUopSFGc93I)

Not when our names are unjustifiably purged from voter registration rolls because we sat out a recent election. Not when hurdle after hurdle is put in front of our ability to register or physically cast a vote, hurdles which the historically disenfranchised men and women of this country eventually give up trying to clear, a fact sinister politicians within our system exploit time and time again.

We are often asked what changes we are demanding. Some are even crude enough to ask how much money it will take to end our protests or whether paying reparations to black Americans will finally free them of white guilt and silence all this talk of racism. This is not a problem money can solve.

Money will not change the fact that, despite black men and women making up

roughly 13% of America’s population, they comprise almost a third of the country’s prison population. By contrast, white Americans are roughly 60% of the general population, but just 30% of the prison population.

Those numbers drive home the point of the social injustices we deal with every day. They represent the inherent racism within the criminal justice system, which feeds off mass incarceration, plea bargains and mandatory minimum sentences.

That’s just wrong.

So how do we stop it? Not with riots and looting. I understand the frustration, but those actions are not helping. They will only cause more pain, suffering and violence.

This generation is probably stuck, and that is painful to say. Racism will exist as long as people harbor prejudicial feelings and spit such ugly rhetoric. That’s why it starts with ensuring our children (and their children, and their children’s children) do not carry either of those things into their adulthoods.

It starts with education at home, whether you’re African American, Asian, Hispanic, Latino, Native American, white or whoever you choose to identify as. Help your children understand there are good

people everywhere and to never judge somebody by the color of their skin, by the way they talk, by the way they dress, by the way they walk. Those are the things we’ve been judged by for forever.

Make sure they understand all black people are not bad people, just like all white people are not bad people and everyone with a badge is not a bad person.

Until I was in about third or fourth grade that venom was in me. I thought all white people were bad, that they didn’t care about me. A lot of them didn’t. But several of them are standing with me now — with us as black Americans. And we need them to stand by us every day until we break this cycle.

One of the toughest things in the last five years was when my son came home from school, distraught over an educational film about racism and social injustice.

“Dad, why do people have to be that way?” my 15-year-old son asked me as he bawled his eyes out on the couch, completely unable to comprehend the atrocities his fellow Americans are capable of. I told him it was, unfortunately, the world we live in. It’s something to always be cognizant of. You can’t turn a blind eye to it. You can’t think it’s going to be okay. But you can’t walk around with this chip on your shoulder and want to fight everyone either.

I’ve been watching this for 60 years. Whether it was Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X or whoever gave their lives to try and make it better, there has always been somebody behind the scenes who feels like we don’t belong,

that we don’t deserve the things we get. Because we are black.

“Racism in America is like dust in the air,” Kareem Abdul-Jabbar wrote in the Los Angeles Times. “It seems invisible — even if you’re choking on it — until you let the sun in. Then you see it’s everywhere. As long as we keep shining that light, we have a chance of cleaning it wherever it lands. But we have to stay vigilant because it’s always still in the air.”

Stay vigilant. Remember those words. Especially those of you standing beside us today. Because unless you stand with us every day, racism will continue to thrive.

Silence implies acceptance. Will you be silent next week? Next year? In 10 years? Or will you stand shoulder to shoulder with us until we rid the world of this evil?

Maybe what we’re envisioning is an unattainable utopia. But that doesn’t mean we can’t demand more from each other. And if enough people listen, if enough people understand that all we’re asking for is the ability to walk around a store without employees being leery of us, to drive a nice car without the fear of an unexpected traffic stop, to be seen as equal human beings, we can stand together as the greatest country in the world.

Because we are proud black Americans.

*Holloway finished his 13th season as UF’s combined men’s and women’s head coach for track & field and cross country. He led the men’s program for five seasons prior. USA Olympic Track & Field tapped him to be head coach last year.*



JESSE S. JONES | UF HEALTH

## FACE YOUR BIAS

BY DR. KATE RATLIFF &  
DR. COLIN SMITH, *UF psychology researchers and implicit bias experts*

**IMPLICIT RACIAL BIASES** = the automatic reactions we have toward other people that stem from the United States’ long history of racism and segregation. These implicit biases can be different from our conscious attitudes, and should not be equated with blatant prejudice, but they do reflect real associations that exist in our minds.

### 1990S

Era when the then-radical concept of implicit bias was introduced.

### 65%

Portion of non-black visitors to the **Project Implicit** website who demonstrate bias favoring white people over black people.

### DO YOU HARBOR HIDDEN BIASES?

Find out by taking any of the online surveys housed at **Project Implicit**.

[bit.ly/30saaAe](https://bit.ly/30saaAe)

### RACIAL INEQUALITY GOES FAR BEYOND IMPLICIT BIAS.

Implicit bias is one component in the broader system of historical, cultural and structural racism that perpetuates racial inequalities in the U.S. Discussions of racial inequalities should neither begin nor end with implicit bias.

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

We can work to dismantle systemic racism within our local communities by advocating for equitable health care, education and policing, and by confronting anti-black racism, no matter how subtle or blatant, when we see it. We can hold ourselves and our friends and family accountable for the things that we say and do.

### BIASES ARE COMPLEX

People have intersecting identities (gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.) that interact to influence how they perceive and how they are perceived. For example, people’s automatic race-based reactions toward cisgender black men might differ from their automatic reactions toward transgender black women.





# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

**HOW GATORS ARE WORKING TOGETHER  
DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC TO  
SAVE LIVES AND HELP OTHERS NEAR AND FAR**

COMPILED FROM REPORTS BY UF COMMUNICATORS

**W**HEN HUMANKIND WAS THREATENED with the coronavirus pandemic this spring, Gators around the world took up the fight against this deadly disease. In Gainesville, faculty and staff at Florida's flagship and premier research university came out in full force to contribute their skills and resources. In fact, the breadth and depth of disciplines that make UF one of the Top 10 universities in the nation proved to be precisely what was — and still is — needed to address such a global emergency.

Across Gator Nation, alumni work at federal, state and community levels to give aid to vulnerable citizens and address every imaginable aspect of the crisis.

While the examples on the following pages reflect a mere fraction of the Gator Good conducted in the past few months, *they serve as a reminder that it's great to be a Florida Gator.*

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES:

- **41 WAYS UF ANSWERED THE CALL:** How faculty, staff and students pitched in — page **24**
- **28 REASONS GATORS ROCK:** How some alumni helped — page **32**
- **SAYING GOODBYE:** Memories of one Gator, whose life was cut short by COVID-19 — page **36**

Photos by College of Medicine, Louis Brems, Mindy Miller, Aimee Bonamie and Jesse Jones of UF Health, UF Building Services, Harn Museum of Art, Getty Images, courtesy of Ira Longini



## 41 WAYS UF ANSWERED THE CALL



**Dr. Lauzardo**  
**COME ONE, COME ALL:** UF medical and health-field students helped test seniors and underserved communities in densely populated areas where the virus could spread quickly. From The Villages of Lake, Sumter and Marion counties to Jacksonville, thousands of patients were tested for the virus. These clinical and research testing efforts were led by Emerging Pathogens Institute Deputy Director **Dr. Michael Lauzardo** and **Dr. Glenn Morris**.

**CORONA VACCINES:** UF Innovate start-up **Ology Bioservices Inc.** and **Inovia Pharmaceuticals** received a Department of Defense contract worth \$11.9 million to rapidly manufacture vaccines that could prevent COVID-19 infections. This technology could also be used to create an inexpensive home testing kit.

**NO CELLS FOR YOU:** Working with Global Virus Network scientists, UF Health researcher **David Ostrov** found that three compounds may block coronavirus from entering cells — solving one important question about preventing viral infections.

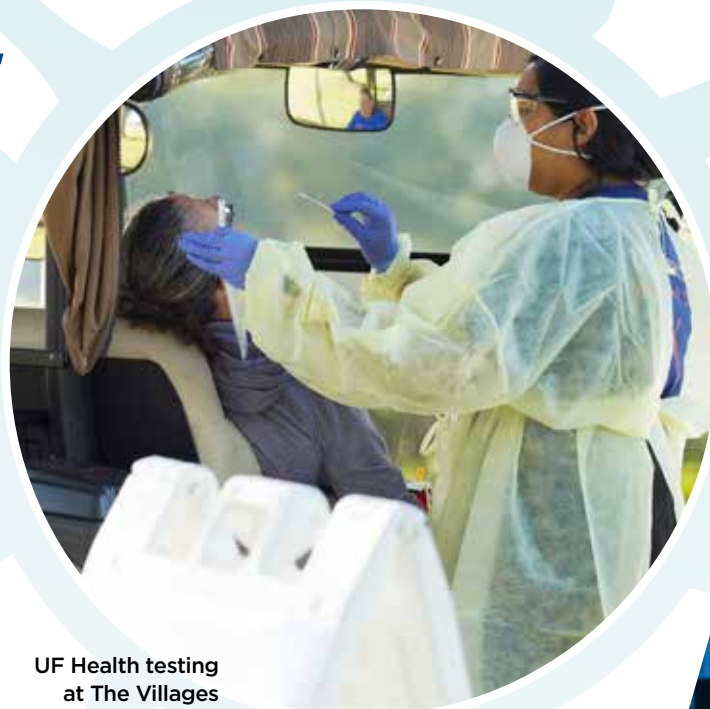


**RAPID RESULTS:** Akin to a paper strip-based pregnancy test, UF researchers developed a reliable coronavirus test that can be administered at home and relay simple results: “yes, you have it, or not,” said chemical engineering professor **Piyush Jain**. While not yet approved for commercial use, the test offers results in less than 30 minutes, and the technology is being applied to a range of diseases, such as prostate cancer, HIV and hepatitis C.

**THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES:** E-learning, Technology & Communications Director **Jason Arnold** led fellow **College of Education** faculty and staff to produce an online resource bank for parents that includes a guide for explaining the pandemic and quarantine to young children, homeschooling tips and resources, and coloring book pages.

[bit.ly/2TgaSMJ](https://bit.ly/2TgaSMJ)

**FROM THE HEART:** College of Medicine Associate Dean **Dr. Julia Close** collected scores of letters, drawings and cards from local children to encourage the residents, fellows, nurses and other healthcare staff who worked long shifts for many weeks to help patients recover.



UF Health testing at The Villages

**ALL HANDS ON DECK:** A portion of the **College of Pharmacy's** call center in Gainesville, manned by students, faculty and staff, redirected its efforts to triage potential coronavirus patients for UF Health Shands Hospital. They screened patients and set up video calls with doctors for those who had COVID-19 symptoms.

**SEEKING ZEN:** Psychologists **Andrea Guastello** and **David Chesire**, **Dr. Lisa Merlo Greene** and **Kim Holton** are among the many Gators who offered the public tips on keeping stress at bay during the quarantine.



## NO MORE SHRINKING SUPPLIES

GATORS SPRANG INTO ACTION to mitigate the following shortages caused by the COVID-19 outbreak:

**COVID-19 TESTS:** UF Health Pathology Laboratories and Emerging Pathogens Institute scientists developed their own COVID-19 tests when federal supplies dwindled. And, epidemiologist **John Lednický** developed a test that his team is using in a pandemic research study.

**REAGENTS:** Used to process the COVID-19 lab tests, this compound reached national shortage levels when **UF Health pharmacists** set out to make more. Their efforts kept UF Health's pathology lab operations online.

**VENTILATORS:** Anesthesiology professor **Sem Lampotang**, one of the inventors of the human patient simulator, led an effort to build a low-cost, open-source ventilator with abundant supplies that almost anyone could duplicate. UF engineers **Sean Niemi** and **Noel Thomas** helped with their adapter and PEEP valve designs.

**FACE MASKS:** Anesthesiology professor **Dr. Bruce Spiess** came up with a simple solution that repurposes sterile surgical tray wrapping into masks.

**FACE SHIELDS:** UF staff with 3D printers all over campus — from engineering to arts — made face shields and other personal protective equipment to aid front-line healthcare workers. Also, **UF engineers** in the Powell Family Structures and Materials Lab produced a host of healthcare tools and devices, including 100 powered air purifying respirators (PAPR) for emergency room staff.

**HAND SANITIZER:** Associate professor of chemistry **Sandra Loesgen** and **Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience** staff near St. Augustine have been spending their weekends making hand sanitizer for the lab's volunteers, staff and community shelters, elder care facilities, pharmacies, their local hospital and St. Johns County first responders.

**FROM TOP:** Anesthesiology professor **Dr. Samsun Lampotang** and a group of researchers lead the design and build of a low-cost, open source ventilator.

**Katherine Martinez**, a scientist at UF Health Medical Lab — Rocky Point, helped conduct lab tests.

UF College of Dentistry faculty and staff volunteered to make masks and other personal protective equipment.







**FROM LEFT:** UF virologist and UF Emerging Pathogens Institute (EPI) researcher John Lednicky. Lab manager, Julia Gibson, far left, with her team in the EPI lab.

**ABOVE:** UF's Building Services team sanitizes a classroom. Above, right: Arts in Medicine research student Nikita Kulkarni holds up the cards she made for COVID-19 patients at UF Health.

## HIGH SPEED BUILD



Dr. Morris

NUMEROUS UF FACULTY RESEARCHERS, STUDENTS AND LAB TECHNICIANS across campus pulled together in late March to assemble a high-capacity COVID-19 testing lab in just 10 days that helped fill an acute gap in testing capacity in the region. Ordinarily, such a lab would take six weeks to build. The effort began when a research project widened to include COVID-19 testing of residents at The Villages, Florida's largest retirement community. Why test those residents? ...

**RETIREES ARE PARTICULARLY vulnerable for contracting coronavirus because it can trigger severe complications for those with underlying medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes.**

**UF'S EMERGING PATHOGENS Institute (EPI) Director Dr. Glenn Morris said such data could help leaders "develop appropriate prevention strategies" because "we are still learning how this virus is transmitted."**

**MASS TESTING HELPS identify and isolate people who may be spreading a disease unknowingly.**

(Photos above, below: UF Health COVID-19 testing)



### KEEPING BOREDOM AT BAY:

**Harn Museum of Art** staff offered quick art fixes for homebound patrons through online videos. For instance, Assistant Curator of Asian Art **Allisa Peyton** explained why staff performed X-rays and CAT scans on an 18th-century Japanese bodhisattva and a wooden Korean sculpture. Another video explained the meaning behind the design of the David and Mary Ann Cofrin Dry Garden.

[bit.ly/2XtJvzX](https://bit.ly/2XtJvzX)



### DID YOU KNOW?

- **When a nasal swab sample is collected from a study participant**, it is stored inside a collection tube in a liquid called a "viral transport medium," which keeps viruses active so labs can isolate and grow them later. While other labs were experiencing a nationwide shortage of the medium, UF's team was able to produce Lednicky's medium recipe in large quantities.
- **As the UF team processed swab samples with Lednicky's test**, they used CDC test kits simultaneously to evaluate if Lednicky's version could be used on its own in the future. If it can, this will free up resources to devote to research without having to compete for limited tests, which are also needed for clinical cases.
- **Besides The Villages residents**, the EPI offered COVID-19 testing to emergency services professionals, underserved residents in Jacksonville and to some of Gainesville's homeless population — all groups who are at risk of infection or decreased access to medical care.
- **Results from the EPI's efforts** are expected to influence public health decision making and interventions at local, regional and national levels.

### THE KEY: BATS

The idea of testing Villages residents began when Morris talked with UF virologist and EPI researcher **John Lednicky** (see page 28), who is also a professor in UF's College of Public Health and Health Professions. A few years ago, they had paired with UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences assistant professor **John Driver** on a research study that **proved local Brazilian free-tailed bats carried coronaviruses**. For that study, Lednicky developed a test with variants to test for the two known coronavirus types, alpha and beta. When that study was completed, Lednicky said he put the tests in his freezer and forgot about them. Faced with today's growing pandemic, he tried out the old test on current COVID-19 samples and found "...it's 100% compatible" for the 2019 viral strain. Lednicky said he suspects COVID-19 "likely came from bats, too." Morris said their current test uses an approach similar to that used by European investigators and provides an alternative to the CDC's COVID-19 test.



Brazilian free-tailed bat

### ASSEMBLING THE LAB

Lednicky's lab manager, **Julia Gibson**, said The Villages' mass testing opportunity spurred her team to figure out how to scale up their lab from processing a couple dozen tests per day to about 1,300 per week. In a whirlwind 10 days, she and other EPI faculty gathered support from myriad colleagues, graduate and post-grad students, deans and other volunteers to purchase a robot that could automate numerous processing steps, recruit and train lab staff to work specific lab stations, and consolidate all lab operations into one floor in the EPI building, west of UF Health Shands Hospital. At first, the lab team was able to process results within 48 hours. But as their efficiency increased, they shortened their turnaround to 24 hours. "We kept moving back and forth between different levels of chaos," said EPI faculty member **Tony Maurelli**. "It was a real team effort. We had a variety of ... different skill sets that we were able to use."



**BEHIND THE SCENES:** All members of UF's **Building Services** team sprang into action when campus closed. Using **hydrogen peroxide spray** equipment and a new **Clorox total electrostatic spray** system on high-traffic and high-exposure areas, custodians deep cleaned everything from classrooms, restrooms, conference rooms and bus stops to vending machine buttons and disabled push plates.

**HEALING HEARTS AND MINDS:** UF's Center for **Arts in Medicine** launched a website, **COVID-19 Arts Response**, calling artists and arts leaders to become front-line messengers in the public campaign to fight the disease. Artists are creating images, videos and music to teach others about social distancing, hand washing and other protective measures, using recommendations from the United Nations' global open call to creatives. [bit.ly/2zvTH33](https://bit.ly/2zvTH33)







**MATH TO THE RESCUE:** Biostatistics experts **Natalie Dean** (left) and **Ira Longini** worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the pandemic's **predictive modeling**, which informed logistical preparations. They are also involved in the World Health Organization's efforts to create parameters for vaccine testing and to encourage collaboration between the many research teams around the world that are developing and testing vaccines.



**FASCINATING INSIGHTS:** College of Liberal Arts and Sciences experts in **math, geography, psychology, biology, political science** and other disciplines contributed research information about a myriad of topics, such as whether warmer weather slows virus transmissions, historical takeaways about the Spanish flu epidemic, how the pandemic is likely to impact election cycles and ways to cope with boredom during the quarantine. Also, **UF's Shimberg Center for Housing Studies** provided data analysis on the ways pandemic-related unemployment would impact renters in Miami.

**HANDYMEN UNITE:** Staff and faculty from the **Harn Museum of Art, College of Design, Construction and Planning**, and other colleges worked together to build acrylic boxes that healthcare staff used to limit airborne coronavirus exposure while performing emergency procedures on patients



**TUMBLEWEED ON TARMACS:** As the world's tourism and travel industries came to a screeching halt in March, **Lori Pennington-Gray**, director of **UF's Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute**, launched a series of surveys that showed how U.S. travelers' perception of coronavirus dangers changed their travel plans. The data she collected helped tourism businesses understand the fast-changing situation.



Vikhairsa

**NO SQUARES TO SPARE:** **Asoo Vikhairsa** in **UF's Supply Chain Management Center** explained the long-term consequences of herd behavior, panic buying and shortage gaming, as they relate to toilet paper manufacturers and big chain stores. Since TP is made in North America, tree resources are limited and this pandemic proved we could run out of it in the future, big chains are now overbuying, creating their own reserves.

#### **HARD-HIT BUSINESSES:**

A plethora of UF faculty offered tips for small businesses hardest hit during the pandemic's economic downturn. For instance, professors from the **Public Utility Research Center** and the **Entrepreneurship & Innovation Center** offered insights on bailouts and loans, managing payroll when staff aren't working, maintaining cash flow and creating a risk management plan.

[bit.ly/3eIGbxa](https://bit.ly/3eIGbxa)



## **HOMEBOUND HELP**

UF EXPERTS OFFERED ADVICE FOR THESE GROUPS OF PEOPLE for whom staying home was likely more challenging:



**ATHLETES:** Sports management master's student **Laura Barnes** offered practical tips to professional, collegiate, high school and recreational athletes, whose activities were shut down during the quarantine. Among her advice is to create new routines, connect with family, reach out to role models and learn a new skill, such as cooking, dancing or meditating.



**ADDICTS:** **Robert Leeman**, associate professor and the Mary F. Lane Endowed Professor in the **Department of Health Education and Behavior**, said his research shows both boredom and stresses can be triggers for addicts to slip or relapse. He offered ways physicians and therapists can help their patients cope with the quarantine, as well as some online resources that addicts can investigate on their own. His best advice: Maintain your routines as much as possible.

[bit.ly/3daTdy4](https://bit.ly/3daTdy4)

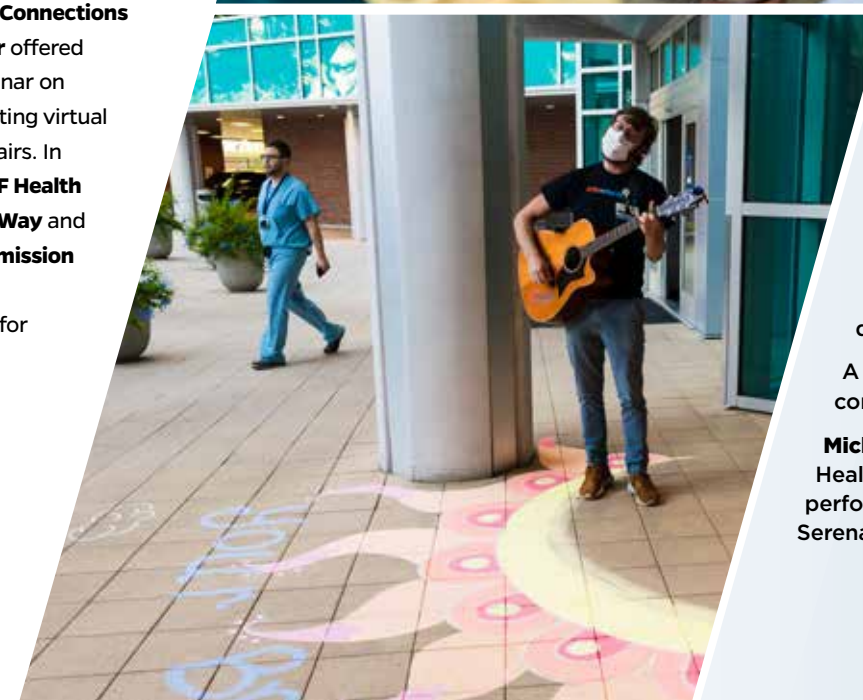


**FOOD-INSECURE FAMILIES:** **UF's Hitchcock Field & Fork food pantry** stayed open despite the closure of campus, as some students could not return to their homes. Aside from instituting online ordering, UF also partnered with countywide efforts, using UF's fleet of campus cabs to deliver two weeks' worth of food supplies to local hungry families.



**UNEMPLOYED:** **UF's Career Connections Center** offered a webinar on navigating virtual career fairs. In addition, **UF Health**

joined forces with **United Way** and the **Alachua County Commission** to discuss unemployment resources and healthcare for about 300 local homeless residents.



**FROM TOP:** UF Health Integrated Service Center team at the distribution center where totes of supplies are staged for delivery to the front lines.

A COVID-19 patient is comforted at UF Health.

**Michael Claytor** with UF Health's Arts in Medicine team performed a "Shift Change Serenade" for hospital workers.



## COVID CONNECTION FOUND

UF HEALTH VIROLOGIST JOHN LEDNICKY WAS IN THE SEVENTH GRADE living in the Philippines when he enjoyed a delicious bat stew. Fruit bat was a local delicacy. But Lednický developed a severe viral respiratory infection that he never forgot. Was his illness linked to that bat? “Maybe my illness was purely coincidental,” said Lednický. “Was it a coronavirus? I have no idea. But that’s how I got interested in bats.”

Lednický is now a leading virologist who made an outsized impact during the current coronavirus crisis. He developed the coronavirus test that is being used as part of an epidemiological public health study in The Villages to better understand how the virus moves through a community of older adults, by identifying people with early disease who are not yet exhibiting symptoms. His test, which is awaiting U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval, is being used in Jacksonville as part of the same research effort.

Lednický’s test has its roots in a study he previously conducted to track other types of coronaviruses in bats. All bats carry a stable of viruses that most of the time pose little danger to humans. There are four groups of known coronaviruses. This portion of Lednický’s work centers on the betacoronavirus group.

Four years ago, Lednický developed a test to detect betacoronaviruses in the Brazilian free-tailed bat, one of the most common bats in the Americas and one of two bat species also found in Gainesville. While the novel coronavirus causing the current pandemic is a betacoronavirus that is thought to have originated in bats, it is distinct from the betacoronaviruses Lednický thought he might find.

*“We don’t fully understand why bats can be infected with viruses that don’t seem to do much in them.”*

UF HEALTH VIROLOGIST **JOHN LEDNICKY**

UF Health virologist John Lednický in his lab

**LITTLE DITTY:** As a way of cheering up her fellow nurses as they worked to aid coronavirus patients, **UF Health Jacksonville nurse Shannon Little** wrote new lyrics to the **Dolly Parton** song “Jolene,” which Little plays on her ukulele. Her new version is called “Quarantine” and urges people to “keep your distance and please wash your hands.” [bit.ly/3gsYxi3](https://bit.ly/3gsYxi3)

**OPEN WIDE:** While the pandemic halted regular dental appointments, **Micaela Gibbs** in the College of Dentistry led a faculty effort to video conference with patients in need. Faculty say this service will remain in place for remote and disabled patients who cannot travel and for emergency patients to reduce dental-related ER visits. [bit.ly/2XkWIjQ](https://bit.ly/2XkWIjQ)

**HOMESCHOOLING HELP:** **UF’s Lastinger Center for Learning** granted access to its online learning resource Math Nation to any school district in the country free of charge through August to aid students, parents and teachers. [bit.ly/3c22V4d](https://bit.ly/3c22V4d)

**HARD-WORKIN’ STUDENTS:** Fresh **Take Florida** student journalists won the **Society of Professional Journalists’** national reporting competition on virus-related coverage after generating a tremendous volume of stories that are being published throughout Florida. [bit.ly/2XhhifM](https://bit.ly/2XhhifM)

**SO MUCH DATA:** Computer systems faculty across campus, calling themselves **#yesITcan**, paired with UF Health experts to analyze data generated when coronavirus hit Lombardy, Italy. Together with multidisciplinary teams of scientists, they will assess issues such as how the pandemic influenced climate change, pollution, case fatality rates, comorbidity risk factors and effects on children and pregnant women. [bit.ly/3guYKSb](https://bit.ly/3guYKSb)

**FOOD SAFETY:** **IFAS scientists** shared advice about how consumers can protect themselves from coronavirus transmission while grocery shopping and when handling purchased food at home. In addition, they gave tips for farmers and food processors. [bit.ly/2ZB4SCH](https://bit.ly/2ZB4SCH)

**CLEANING THE STACKS:** As libraries worldwide closed down during the pandemic, **Fletcher Durant** of UF’s Smathers Libraries became the go-to expert on cleaning entire collections of books, manuscripts and other materials.

**ART TO THE RESCUE:** Throngs of artists and **UF Center for Arts in Medicine** faculty contributed their skills during the pandemic. Their efforts ranged from informative murals and musical performances to providing art kits and live video art lessons and concerts for isolated patients and people.

**IOT INFECTION DETECTION:** Engineering researchers in **UF’s Warren B. Nelms Institute for the Connected World** are developing **TRIDENT**, a sensory system for detecting onset of infections such as COVID-19. TRIDENT is built on an Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure that utilizes a three-pronged suite of connected sensors and devices: multi-modal sensors, interactive edge devices and secure cloud-based software. Together, they provide real-time alerts to individuals and guidelines for precautionary measures

while constantly assessing the risk of contracting the virus or spreading it by alerting users when they are violated — unintentionally or not.

**MANAGING HOSPITAL OPERATIONS:** UF chemical engineer **Michele Alvarado** and anesthesiologist **Dr. Patrick Tighe** are collaborating with **UF Industrial and Systems engineers**

to develop a simulation for modeling COVID-19 hospital facility management. This tool could allow advanced mitigation planning for elective and urgent surgical procedures needed at a time when resources, such as gloves and face masks are scarce. The models could lead to semi-automated decision making for hospital administrators.



**FROM LEFT:** Nurses deliver handmade cards to COVID-19 patients at UF Health.

College of Pharmacy volunteers make PPE face shields.

The COVID-19 Command Center at UF Health Shands Hospital



## 28 REASONS GATORS ROCK

# ALUMNI YOU WANT

WHEN THE PANDEMIC HIT, THESE GATORS WERE AMONG THOSE

# IN YOUR FOXHOLE

WHO DEMONSTRATED WHAT THE GATOR GOOD IS ALL ABOUT



**FROM LEFT:** Sherri Berger (BA '93), chief strategy and operating officer at the Centers for Disease Control; Capt. Kimberly Toone (MD '97), chief medical officer for the USS Oak Hill; and Jane Sun (BSAcc '92), far right, CEO of the international travel corporation Trip.com Group.

**Sherri Berger** (BA '93) is chief strategy and operating officer of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta. While millions of people were transitioning to home offices, she was testifying before Congress about how the CDC was using the \$2.2 billion in federal aid it received to manage the outbreak. She said the CDC distributed 90% of those funds to 62 different entities nationwide to aid preparedness.

**Joseph Bertulfo** (BSN '93) is director of the CDC's Occupational Health and Safety Office in Atlanta. He is responsible for preparing CDC staff who are deployed throughout the U.S. for COVID-19 responses. For instance, he reported on the initial public health response in February, offering clinical guidance and other data that helped healthcare providers understand how the pandemic was progressing. In March, UF's College of Nursing named him one of its Nurses of the Year.

**Capt. Kimberly Toone** (MD '97) in June became executive officer for the USNS Comfort, the Navy hospital ship that was docked at Manhattan, NY, to aid and isolate the hundreds of people who became infected with the virus in the New York and New Jersey areas. She is an inductee of UF's College of Medicine Wall of Fame.

Also serving on the USNS Comfort is active Broward County Gator Club board member **Ranata Simmons** (BSN '03), who is a nurse anesthetist and Navy reservist. When she returns home — ideally in time for football season — her Gator Club family hopes she will resume her role as vice president of volunteers and watch parties. She is from Fort Lauderdale.



**Jane Sun** (BSAcc '92), CEO of the international travel corporation Trip.com Group, donated 3 million surgical masks to frontline pandemic workers in 25 countries. "Let's continue to work together to beat this challenge ... and lead the travel industry to flourish once again," she said.

**Debra Caroli** (MD '93, HS '94, HS '98), an anesthesiologist from Leesburg who was set to retire April 1, is one of the many retired or almost retired healthcare workers who stayed or returned to work to help care for patients during the pandemic. In this capacity, she was featured in a PBS story. "It's all hands on deck," she said.

**Chef Edouardo Jordan** (BABA '03, BSESS '03), at right, announced on March 23 that he was turning his acclaimed Seattle restaurant, Salare, into a community kitchen, serving meals every day for displaced restaurant industry staff who need support. In addition to the hot meals, free toiletry supplies were made available. **(COMING SOON:** A full profile of Jordan's journey is planned for the fall issue.)

Two-time James Beard Award winner Chef Edouardo Jordan





**Nikki Fried** (BA '98, MA '03, JD '03), Florida's Agriculture Commissioner, has been guiding the state's food supply chain, harvesting guidelines and worker safety issues. For instance, in April when grocery stores were struggling to keep shelves stocked, she waived specific packaging and labeling requirements for eggs to speed delivery to consumers. She also rolled out a plan to directly connect farmers and producers when many restaurants and food-service industry companies closed for the quarantine, reducing spoilage of crops



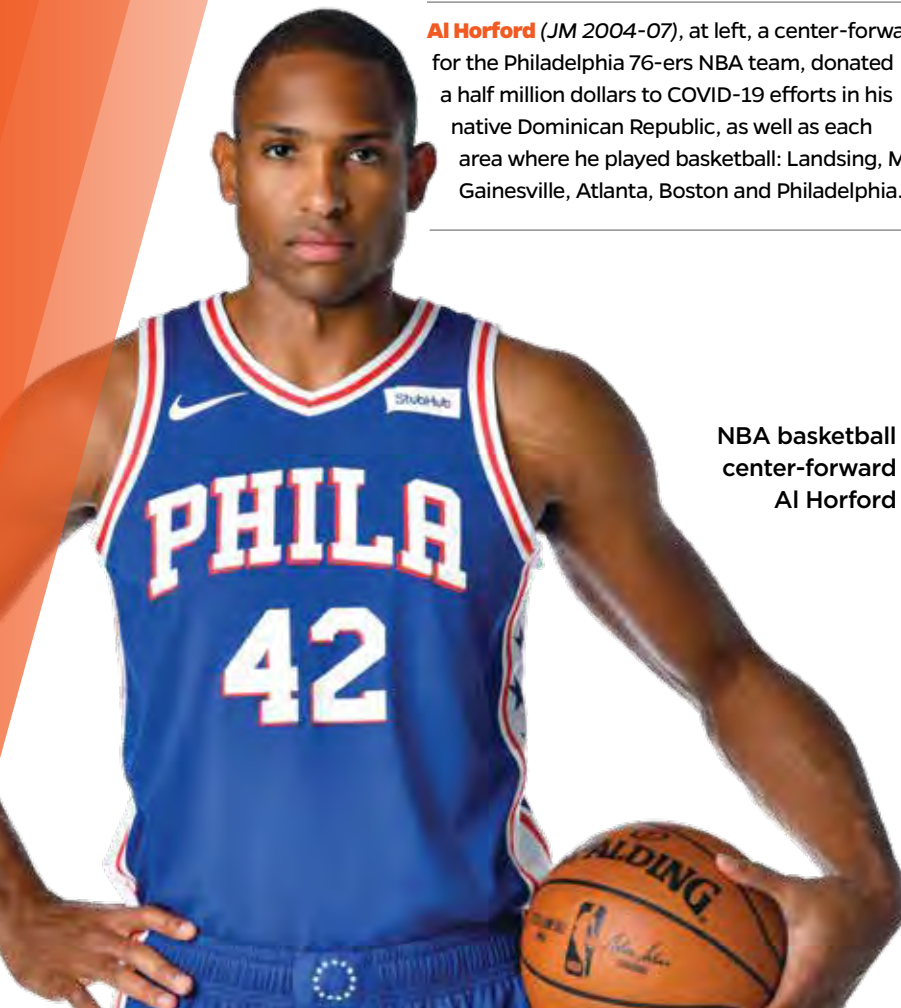
**Joseph McCabe** (BSISE '89), manager of Faulkner Plastics in Miami, shifted their plastics fabrication projects to make medical face shields, addressing the national shortage.

**Pegeen Hanrahan** (BA '89, BSEEN '89, ME '92), at left, launched the Gainesville Face Mask Crafters for COVID-19 Facebook group, in which members sign up to make cotton face masks from a sewing pattern for the community. Since it began on March 20, about 800 people joined.



**Victoria Liu** (BSAcc '19, MAcc '19) developed Byppo, a free mobile app that helps coordinate restaurant, coffee shop and other stores' curbside pickup or delivery due to coronavirus concerns. The app's tagline is "Chomp the line. Order online."

**Al Horford** (JM 2004-07), at left, a center-forward for the Philadelphia 76-ers NBA team, donated a half million dollars to COVID-19 efforts in his native Dominican Republic, as well as each area where he played basketball: Landsing, MI; Gainesville, Atlanta, Boston and Philadelphia.



NBA basketball center-forward Al Horford

**Fraternity brothers Sean O'Keefe** (BSBA '13) and **Marcus Powers** (BA '09, JD '14), who started Pontoon Brewing together in Sandy Springs, GA, used their company's brewing equipment to produce hand sanitizer for their community. Their COVID-19 action plan motto: "Raising glasses, saving asses, #WeBrewHope."

Avid runner **David Kilgore** (BSA '15) of the Bronx, NY, headed to his parents' home in Palm Bay to ride out the quarantine with his girlfriend so he could continue to train for some upcoming marathons. But when those events were cancelled, he decided to run 100 miles anyway. He started a GoFundMe drive and used proceeds to buy gift cards from struggling New York stores, which he then donated to frontline medical workers at New York hospitals.. He raised nearly \$15,000 and finished his run in 17 hours, 47 minutes and 47 seconds.

**Tom Merritt** (BS '98, MS '00) is working with a consortium on a COVID-19 vaccine at Oxford Biomedica, a gene and cell therapy group in Oxfordshire, UK. The vaccine, called ChAdOx1 nCov-19, was expected to be the UK's first COVID-19 vaccine in clinical trials in April. Tom is a senior scientist within the group, focused on Process Research & Development in Lentiviral based Gene Therapy.



**Thomas Rambo** (BSAE '10, MS '12), CEO of Altavian, a Gainesville-based drone manufacturer, shifted his company's production line from geo-spatial mapping and military-grade drones to reusable face masks that address the national shortage of personal protection equipment. He said his team worked closely with UF Health experts to design, produce and deliver the masks, and test them to ensure they block the virus. So far, the specialized masks are being used in Gainesville, Massachusettes and Texas.



**Attorney Dennis Gucciardo** (BSPR '05, BA '05, JD '09) of Washington, D.C., co-led a legal team that helped Airon Corp. of Melbourne partner with GE Healthcare and Ford Motor Company to mass produce high-tech ventilators. His team's licensing agreement arranged for 50,000 ventilators in 100 days and 30,000 more per month as needed.



**UF junior Daniel Clein** (3 Animal Science) of Wellington founded Bricks Busting Boredom in 2015 to collect new and used Lego bricks for children's hospitals, foster homes and emergency shelters. During the quarantine he launched a competition called "Isolation Creations" to help local children. Winner, Parker Hysall, age 6, is pictured at left.



**UF senior Angela DiMichele** (4JM) of Orange Park, won the first Society of Professional Journalists College Coronavirus Coverage Award for her nationally publicized story on Gainesville yoga instructor **Jessica Brar** (BA '05, JD '08), who was stranded in Peru during the outbreak. The award recognizes college journalists "who are admirably covering a pandemic for little or no money while struggling with online classes."

**Kurt** (BSBA '84) and **Teresa Long** of St. Petersburg, at left, ensured locals had access to a well-stocked food bank during the quarantine by offering a \$50,000 match donation to Feeding Tampa Bay. "We're not going to miss a meal," Kurt said, "but there's so many people who, even before this were living week to week, and now are living day to day."



**Albert Etheridge** (BSR '96), co-founder and COO of Pretoria Fields Collective in Albany, GA, redirected his brewery's beer production to make hand sanitizer instead. They also partnered with Southern Belle Farm to harvest and deliver fresh strawberries to local frontline health care staff.

**UF biology senior Amanda Myers** encouraged those who had coronavirus by drawing pictures of their pets. She used Facebook groups to connect with ill and recovering people, asking for photos of their furry best friends. "I couldn't offer much financially or medically, but I could make them smile." She finished her first five drawings during exam week in late April and drew more this summer.

At left, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue firefighters **Kelley Duffey** (BSPH '12, MSPH '13), Capt. **Jonathan Rodriguez** (BSFES '13, MSFES '18) and **Fernando Bosch**, a Gator by choice, worked on the pandemic's front lines.



**FROM TOP:** Health care workers thank Joseph McCabe manager of Faulkner Plastics in Miami for making their personal protection equipment.

Parker Hysall, age 6, won a Lego contest organized by UF junior Daniel Clein.

Kurt and Teresa Long, whose gift sparked mass donations to a Tampa Bay food bank  
Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue firefighters Kelley Duffey (BSPH '12, MSPH '13), Capt. Jonathan Rodriguez (BSFES '13, MSFES '18) and Fernando Bosch, a Gator by choice



# INK & MEMORIES

*A FORMER ALLIGATOR EDITOR  
MOURNS THE LOSS OF HIS  
BEST FRIEND TO COVID-19*

BY JARED MISNER (BSPR '12)

**O**N A ROOFTOP IN IOWA WHEN I WAS 23, I DECIDED TO GET AN ALLIGATOR TATTOO.

The notion initially came to me the second year after graduation on a reunion with the newsroom staff who had become more like family. A motley crew of former Independent Florida Alligator newspaper writers and editors from the final years of the aughts, who were now speckled across the country doing things like teaching first-graders to read in Charlotte, N.C., or writing about Emma Stone's lip gloss (she prefers cherry) for People magazine, descended upon the heartland in the waning days of summer 2013 to celebrate the wedding of one of our own.

Chelsea Keenan (BA '10, BSJ '10), the editor who first took a chance on my best friend, Alison Schwartz (BSJ '12), and me, invited that ragtag bunch to Des Moines to witness her event. Before the wedding, our gang of Gators visited a corn farm together and loaded into the back of tractor for a hayride, everyone so simultaneously and suddenly grown up yet so delightfully the same as they'd always been. Alison and I were the conjoined black sheep of the group — a loud Jewish girl with a lot of necklaces and, well, a loud gay man also with a lot of necklaces — tucked under the wings of a handful of bros. Together, which more often than not, we were, we called ourselves "Jalison," a buy-one-get-one package deal.

Our whole group wasn't an automatic fit, but The Alligator made it so, in its far away, vine-covered, persistently damp, raggedly old building at 1105 W. University Ave., where each of us spent hours chronicling the next day's news.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JARED MISNER

Jared Misner, at left, now 30, says this photo of he and his longtime friend, the late Alison Schwartz, is among his favorites.





**Jared said he holds onto his many memories of Alison. This one: a friend's pre-wedding hayride.**

After wading through all the memories made there — each one sparking another — as I danced on the rooftop of the Iowa State Historical Museum, under a starry September sky, I knew I had to etch forever into me a piece of UF.

Now, seven years later, as I look at my right wrist with the familiar lower-case serif-font Alligator “a,” as dark as ever, I smile, remembering not just the people who became more like family but also the memories that institution helped us create. Mostly, I’m talking about the one time we all gathered at The

Alligator office after hours for a makeshift party, which was most certainly not allowed, but it was the only place large enough to fit us all. Alison and I drank our potion from a Big Gulp-sized “Twilight” cup, and, in the absence of kitchen utensils in a newsroom, stirred our drink with a stapler.

That tattoo means much more now. Alison died in April at the age of 29 after a miserable and relentlessly devastating fight with COVID-19. She was kept alive by a ventilator for three weeks, the days in between interrupted by misplaced optimism and extubations.

Locked away as a contagion, far from her family and from me, she died on Zoom, alone in a hospital bed, her final last breaths muffled by the cacophony of her loved ones’ faraway sobs and shrieks that she could not hear.

Let’s not remember her that way, lifeless, a collection of tubes and machines rather than flesh and blood. Instead, let me tell you the story of Alison Schwartz, as I would have told my children.

...

It was 2008 and Tropical Storm Fay was not helping Alison’s newly and expensively applied keratin hair treatment. In truth, it was a mess for all of us at UF. The college canceled our orientation, the campus flooded, and certainly, the hair of many other jean shorts- and flip-flop-wearing 18-year-old Floridians had seen better days.

Alison and I had both been assigned to live in Beaty Towers that first year. My roommates befriended her roommates at a communal event, and so I began to spend time at Alison’s place. Though, to be sure, it wasn’t “Alison’s place” then. It was “Michelle’s place” to me at first.

Alison overheard me talking one night about a boy I liked, and she came stomping in — certainly in one her ubiquitous blue muumuus, though, that may just be how I remember her — eager to make new friends, saying her high school best friend was gay, too. What a funny coincidence!

“I’m not gay,” I deadpanned. She fumbled with her words — something I would later learn was incredibly rare for her — and shuffled out, mortified. “Just kidding!” I yelled, and now, 12 years later, I’m writing her obituary.

It’s a morbid and grim way to commemorate our friendship, but it’s also strangely appropriate. Alison was the reason I began writing.

As an overwhelmed but determined 18-year-old, I had big, capital-B, plans when I came to UF. Since the days of elementary school, I had mapped out my future as a hot-shot career environmental attorney, saving the planet one courtroom at a time. Two months at UF changed that.

I dropped a chemistry course that first fall, and, with the reality of two more chemistry classes and increasingly difficult math classes ahead, changed my major to begin study in the College of Journalism and Communications.

Alison was a writer — an incredibly good one. (To give you an idea, in 2014, two years after she started full-time at People, she wrote a companion piece to the magazine’s blockbuster annual “Sexiest Man Alive” feature, highlighting the “Sexiest Manatees Alive.”) She was the first one I called when I decided to change my major and forever alter my life’s path. She made



**Jared says, “To this day I can’t separate my memories of Gainesville with those of Alison.”**

me feel brave and assured this was not a colossal mistake.

Soon, we’d find ourselves writing about vitally important topics for The Alligator like poinsettia sales and “Twilight” movie theater sell-outs. And then she asked if I wanted to do more, to be an editor. I told her no. My coursework was too heavy, and I didn’t need the stress.

“C’mon,” she said, “I’ll only do it if you do it with me.”

So, in the fall of 2010, we became “Mr. and Ms. Metro,” covering the city’s news, including the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Haiti, the mayoral race that elected Gainesville’s first gay mayor and probably a few more flower sales just for good measure.

The following semester, Alison took over The Avenue, and I took over the opinion pages, writing the Darts and Laurels, which, to this day, might still be my proudest moment. We shared an office at The Alligator, the two less-newsy news

people stuck together. We shut the door a lot and laughed, other editors coming in to tell us to keep it down.

But, of course, our friendship thrived outside Weimer Hall and outside The Alligator. To this day, I can’t separate my memories of Gainesville with those of Alison. To name only a few because I could keep you here for days recounting the magic that was Alison Schwartz: Each semester, Alison would stay up late into the night, refreshing the registration course page, gaming the system until she could snag a final, suddenly-opened spot in a class with me. Then, after our Wednesday evening labs, we’d go back to her dorm (and later her apartment), and she’d make me tea from her exquisitely curated tea selection and not-so-exquisitely stolen Splenda packet stash. She’d often feed me dinner as well. Once, she made pancakes — but in a loaf pan; we named it PanCake. We both had a strong affinity for spice, and once she added so much cayenne pepper

*“Alison was a writer — an incredibly good one. She was the first one I called when I decided to change my major and forever alter my life’s path. She made me feel brave and assured this was not a colossal mistake.”*

to a pot of rice we shared that it gave me a canker sore the next day.

She introduced me to coffee, to wine, to the joys of watered-down Crystal Light from the ever-present pitcher in her fridge. She stayed up late during our senior year to watch and critique my Teach For America sample lesson about the Stamp Act’s inequity. She stayed up late each Wednesday night, tea in hand, to critique and edit the work I’d just turned in. And when we worked together at The Alligator, she stayed up late there too, perfecting every story, long after I would have called it quits.

She was always the one to carry my fragile body down the steep and narrow steps of Grog after we “Beat the Clock” each Friday evening. She would then feed me Pita Pit and, on one occasion, hold my necklace back when my body relinquished said Pita Pit into the trash can outside. She’d take me back to her apartment, the both of us resting under her purple tufted comforter until we would wake up the next morning and discuss our foils.

What I would give to talk about something so banal as Pita Pit now with my best friend.

On the day I knew Alison would die, I thought about that Alligator tattoo a lot. I decided to get another — a beehive — in reference to a coffee shop we found in Monroeville, Ala., on one of our many trips we took throughout our friendship.

I’ll get it right above The Alligator tattoo.

*Misner is a writer in Charlotte. Previously, he worked as co-metro editor of The Independent Florida Alligator alongside Alison Schwartz.*



**Jared’s tattoo is a reminder of the many memories he made while working at The Alligator newspaper.**



# Furry First Aid

## UF veterinary students offer subsidized care for pets of area seniors.

Photography by Aaron Daye  
Story by Liesl O'Dell (BSJ '92)

From the moment they walked through the front door, siblings Ginger, Oso, Miley and Simba attracted looks and comments. Trotting down the long hallway in the Alachua County Senior Center, the youngsters' not-so-quiet excitement elicited smiles, giggles and remarks from retirees in the Tai Chi class, income tax prep clinic, Scrabble and book groups they passed. Finally arriving in the last room on the left, where UF College of Veterinary Medicine students set up a make-shift clinic with tables, chairs and folded ping-pong tables to separate cats from dogs, the family was met with smiles and even some hugs from staff.

This was the dogs' first visit to UF's Veterinary Community Outreach Program — a pet care clinic — where checkups, some medicines and specialist opinions are subsidized by the College of Veterinary Medicine for pet owners who qualify. The dogs' owners, retired sisters Evelyn, 66, and Jani Pohl, 62, of Gainesville, say the clinic is “a godsend” because on their fixed income, they could not afford care nor medications for this Bichon Frise litter they inherited from their mother when she died two years ago.

Inside the clinic, five veterinary students examine these pets who provide their senior owners with safety, social and exercise opportunities, companionship and warmth. The students are in their third or fourth years of training and gain credit for participating in this elective clinical rotation under the watchful eye of two professors and four veterinary technicians from their college. Program leaders have applied for product donations and grants that they hope will maintain and even expand this service in coming years.

On this day, besides the energetic Bichons, the team visited with 28 additional patients: 13 first-time, 12 re-checks and three who have been on the clinic's waiting list. See just how important this clinic has become to the Pohls and other North Central Florida seniors on the following pages.



◀ Clients, such as sisters **Evelyn and Jani Pohl**, say their pets are important because they provide safety, warmth, opportunities to meet people, exercise and reduced stress through lower blood pressure and anxiety.

▼ **Kelly Harrison** (BSA '05, MS '07, DVM '12), who oversees the veterinary students, says the goal of this clinic in the Alachua County Senior Recreation Center is to keep pets healthy and in their own homes, since all too often animals are relinquished to shelters because of barriers to routine veterinary care.





*“My dogs mean the world to me. They are my constant companions. They’re family.”*



▲ **Jean Vincent**, 69, of Hawthorne and her Chihuahuas Romeo, 9, and Teddy, 14, were the highlight of the day for the veterinary students. UF arranged for a specialist to meet with Romeo, who has a heart murmur. The veterinarian and students conducted an ultrasound on Romeo’s heart using a new iPad and wand on loan from a medical equipment company. It served as a learning opportunity for the students and gave Vincent the answer she was hoping for: Romeo’s heart is responding to his current medication. “My dogs mean the world to me,” Vincent said. “They are my constant companions. They’re family. It’s a heartfelt bond.” Vincent, an occasional adjunct Santa Fe College geography professor, said she is thankful for the free service. “It’s really challenging to have aging pets on a fixed income. And there are so many of us [in that situation]. ... If it wasn’t for UF, we’d just have to muddle along and pray that nothing would happen to our babies. I’m so grateful for this clinic.”



▲ **The last time Janice Cornelison**, 69, of Newberry took her pit bull, Titan, 7, to see a veterinarian for his rash, she was presented with a \$260 bill. “I said, ‘Oh my



companion. In addition to the information students provided, they offered 25 days’ worth of antibiotics. “The quality of care is simply excellent,” she said. “And Titan

*“The quality of care is simply excellent.”*

gosh! I don’t have that.’ ... and they took back the medicine.” On social security and saddled with a mortgage, Cornelison said the senior center pet clinic was the “perfect opportunity” to get help for her lovable

just fell in love with the students. He’ll sit in their laps and do whatever they want.” Titan even let the students trim his nails — a task Cornelison struggled to accomplish on her own.

► **Pam Williams**, 77, who lives on the border of Payne’s Prairie in Gainesville, said she met and adopted “Will Ferrell, the feral cat” when he was a baby: He wandered up to her gate and followed her home. Now 10, Will has struggled most of his life with crystals, which are akin to kidney stones in humans. His condition requires special food, which can run \$70 per bag, leaving little room in her budget for vet bills. “Among my friends, I’ve seen times when it comes down to either paying taxes or paying a veterinarian, and you know which will come first,” she said. However, she says Will is an important part of her life. “He’s my buddy,” she said. “I live alone in a big house and he comes up to me even if I’m up in the garden. If I call him, he’ll come a runnin’. He sleeps with me at night ... He talks to me all the time. He’s a wonderful housemate. I thank the UF vet students for keeping him healthy.”



*Williams said the clinic’s students are “caring, smart, enthusiastic. You couldn’t get a better combination for this profession.”*



◀ **Joanne Saunders**, 80, of Gainesville, said she stays healthy in part by walking each morning and evening with her 7-year-old French poodle, Blanca, in the Serenola Forest Preserve next door to her home. But she’s concerned about the insects they encounter. “In the past I’ve forgotten and skipped her flea and tick medication treatments,” Saunders said, which are “a high cost for me.”

*“In the past, I have forgotten her flea and tick medication which are a high cost for me.”*

Saunders appreciates the clinic most for the veterinary students’ “advice and regular medication alerts” that have been “a great support.” And it doesn’t hurt that “Blanca loves the students.”

“I like working with the students who are studying to be veterinarians,” said Saunders. “We [seniors] are vulnerable and it warms the cockles of my heart when people reach out to support us.”



**“If** You want something done right, do it yourself,” the saying goes.

In the case of Gator entrepreneurs Karthik Shanadi (BS ’14) and Luke McGurrin (BSBA ’14), that motto can be tweaked to, “If you want something done better, faster and more economically, do it yourselves.”

In 2012, Shanadi and McGurrin were looking to get T-shirts made for an upcoming fundraiser at their UF fraternity chapter, Alpha Tau Omega. When they couldn’t find a company that met their needs – customizable design, good price and fast turnaround time – they decided to do it themselves.



**Greek House has grown to employ 40 staff and manage customers on more than 400 campuses nationwide.**

graduated in 2014, Greek House was generating more than \$100,000 yearly in sales. They plowed that money back into technology to build a robust e-commerce platform, moved to Los Angeles, hired fellow Gators and went national in March 2016.

### **The company’s rapid growth has not gone unnoticed.**

Today Greek House has 40 employees and sells to Greek organizations on more than 400 U.S. campuses. Products range from tees, tanks and sweatshirts to pillows, posters and cell phone covers, all emblazoned with custom designs. Last year, sales topped \$3.5 million, with \$6 million projected for 2020.

The company’s rapid growth has not gone unnoticed. This year, Inc. ranked Greek House among the top 16% fastest growing private businesses in the nation, and in February 2020, the firm was honored in Gainesville at the annual Gator100 ceremony for the second year in a row.

Gainesville, says McGurrin, 29, now CMO of Greek House, was the ideal “incubator” for their fledgling business.

“At UF, you have this small, localized city and you have access to knowledgeable faculty who are very willing to help,” he says. “Plus you have easy access to other business owners, as well as to the Greek system and the entire student body.”

“I’m not sure many other cities would even come close to giving you that perfect environment,” he adds.

As a former logistics manager at Amazon and a sales rep at Salesforce, Shanadi, 28, brought crucial fulfillment skills to Greek House, with an emphasis on automated technology.

“A lot of our business runs without having any direct human interaction,” says Shanadi, now Greek House’s CEO.

Not that customers associate Greek House with cold automation. The site has a friendly, personal feel, with Beau the Greek House Dog, a canine avatar, fielding common questions and walking customers through the ordering process, ready to connect with a live salesperson if needed.

A special source of pride are the designs, created by a team of 30 full-time designers from around the world. “We really try to find the best designers because that is one of our biggest differentiators from our competitors,” says McGurrin. “We do really value our team and talent.”

With the advent of COVID-19, in April they rolled out a line of “Stay at Home” Greek apparel, and debuted a line of customizable clothing for businesses and individuals. Greek House also launched a summer internship program – paid and, befitting these times, 100% remote. It is their way of helping out motivated students.

“We wanted to provide students with the opportunity to have a virtual internship and, beyond that, to gain hands-on sales and marketing experience with our team,” says Shanadi.

“I think they can learn something from us.”

For two twentysomethings who went from zero to \$3.5 million with just \$500 down, “something” is an understatement.

**KARTHIK  
& LUKE’S**  
ADVICE FOR  
UNDERGRADS

The founders of Greek House strongly urge aspiring Gator entrepreneurs to start their first business during college. Here’s why:

#### **BEST WAY TO LEARN**

“A lot of entrepreneurship is just getting down into the weeds and doing it,” says Karthik Shanadi. “You’re going to get a great experience out of it, and it will teach you so much.” Adds Luke McGurrin: “You build up the experience by doing and making mistakes.”

#### **BUILT-IN UF NETWORK**

“Realize that you have a great network at UF,” says Shanadi. “There are a lot of great resources in the start-up community, as well as professors, so utilize them now, at college.”

#### **ACCESS TO MAJOR PLAYERS**

“When you are in college, you have a big opportunity to get ahold of important people who would be untouchable outside of college,” says McGurrin. “You can approach anyone when you are a student – CEOs, CMOS, exec teams of big companies, local business owners, people on campus...You lose that unique access once you graduate – you’re just Joe Schmo in the workforce.”



# FROM BASEMENT TO Big League

Two fraternity brothers launched a multimillion-dollar business from their basement for \$500.

By **BARBARA DRAKE (MFA ’04)**

“We went directly to a screen printer in Gainesville,” says Shanadi, who with McGurrin had the T-shirts designed, produced and distributed to their frat brothers within one week — at 30% less than what commercial producers would have charged for a multi-week process.

That low-stakes gambit sparked a bigger idea: Why not make it easy for other Greek organizations to custom-order T-shirts and accessories for Rush, Bid Day and other events?

Borrowing \$500 from a friend’s father, Shanadi and McGurrin launched Greek House from the basement of Alpha Omega house that year. By the time they



WRITTEN BY BARBARA DRAKE (MFA '04)  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON DAYE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

EL SALVADOR

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

LEBANON

NEPAL

# WHEN HOME IS 8,300 MILES AWAY

*Every year, elite international students arrive at UF. When COVID-19 struck, 53 of the Davis United World College Scholars stayed behind. Here are some of their stories.*

Raised in a large, extended family, UF junior Yehya Haj, 22, usually talks to his mother once a day. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, that ritual hasn't changed — but their topics of conversation have.

"Normally, the first thing she asks me is, 'Did you eat? Do you have enough food at your house?'" said Haj. "Now, the new question is, 'Did you go outside today?'" She really doesn't want me to risk getting the virus."

Like other Gator parents, Haj's mother has been deeply concerned about her child's wellbeing during the pandemic. The difference is, she and Haj's father live more than 3,000 miles away in central Lebanon — and their son is not returning home any time soon, not while travel restrictions are still in flux and a vaccine for the virus has yet to complete clinical trials.

Fortunately, Haj did not ride out the first stage of the pandemic alone at UF. He is part of a close-knit tribe of exceptional international students — the Davis United World College (UWC) Scholars at UF — whose undergraduate studies and living expenses are covered by visionary American philanthropist Shelby Davis.

A successful mutual funds investor, Davis believes the first step to achieving world peace is to nurture cross-cultural understanding on U.S. campuses. His needs-based scholarship program supports thousands of promising undergraduates from abroad each year at American public and private universities. UF has been onboard with that mission since 2005, five years after the Davis UWC Scholars program was launched, and covers half of each student's cost of attendance, making UF a partner in



YEHYA HAJ



SHELBY DAVIS

creating global leaders. When UF suspended on-campus classes in mid-March and urged students to return home, 53 of this year's 149 Davis Scholars decided to stay put. Some could not afford the last-minute plane fares to their far-flung homes, such as Sarajevo and Kathmandu. Others did not want to risk airport infections or the uncertainties of being able to re-enter the U.S. at some unspecified future date.

And so, despite the pain of being apart from their families, the remaining Davis Scholars agreed to shelter in place, turning the deserted Gainesville campus into a mini United Nations.

*UF has been on board since 2005 and covers half of each student's cost of attendance, making UF a partner in creating global leaders.*

As the last of March's azaleas shed their petals, the "left behind" Davis Scholars adjusted to a radically different UF experience: one with wide-open, empty plazas, locked buildings and quiet streets that once hummed with honking scooters and rushing students.

Throughout the spring, these Davis Scholars settled into a new normal — one of back-to-back Zoom lectures, polite waves at a distance and occasional forays to Walmart and Publix for essentials.

Mealtimes at Gator dining halls — with glimpses of fellow Davis Scholars — took on a new significance:

"It's now the highlight of the day, walking to the Reitz lawn!" joked Durgesh Jha, a freshman physics major from Nepal, in an April interview.

The public health crisis was powerful, but so, they discovered, was their will to keep working toward their degrees as one big Gator family.

Here are stories of four Davis United World College Scholars from this past semester.

## Davis UWC Scholars

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### \$20 MILLION+

Shelby Davis' contributions to UF since 2005, paying for Davis United World College Scholars to attend.

#### 149

International Davis Scholars enrolled at UF this year. They hail from 60 different countries.

#### 18

United World College schools worldwide that partner with the Davis program to offer students an international baccalaureate degree before they continue their studies at a four-year college.

#### \$25,000

Amount granted annually to each Davis Scholar at UF to cover their expenses (up \$5,000 from previous years' grants).

#### 100

Percentage of Davis UWC Scholars who are in the UF Honors Program.

#### 30

Age of Shelby Davis when he left his post at Bank of New York to start his own mutual fund company. The son of self-made insurance broker-dealer Shelby Davis Sr. inherited little from his father's \$900 million fortune, but gained his father's skill for growing wealth and adopted his father's personal mantra, "Learn, Earn, Return," which emphasizes large-scale philanthropy.

#### 2017

Year Davis said: "We're in a global world and a global workplace, so kids from various parts of the world need to learn to live and work together. Maybe, as we integrate the world, we can have a better chance of having global peace."



## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

*“When you are at a game and you see all orange and blue, and everybody is cheering, ‘Go Gators,’ it’s so amazing!”*

### LOVING UF CULTURE: “WE’RE SO TIGHT”

Davis UWC Scholar Lejla Ramić was born in 1998, just three years after the end of a brutal war that left 100,000 dead in her homeland of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today she is flourishing as a third-year bioengineering student at UF. That would not be possible if she had stayed in Bosnia, she said recently.

“Back home, there is only one university where they teach this field,” the 21-year-old said.

But her current proximity to the latest STEM research isn’t the only reason Ramić loves UF: This studious, high-achiever is wild about Gator athletics.

“When you are at a game and you see all orange and blue, and everybody is cheering, Go Gators, it’s so amazing,” she said, a throb in her voice. “It’s something I’ve never experienced before in my life — football, basketball, volleyball, baseball, so many sports we don’t have at home.”

“I love the culture of it — we are so tight,” she added. “Everyone is united in the same spirit.”

Ramić’s journey to UF began in 2016 when she was chosen to attend United World College Mostar near Sarajevo. From war-torn ruins, the founders of UWC Mostar built an institution dedicated to uniting people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

Both of Ramić’s parents have college degrees, but attending college in the United States would have been impossible for her without the Davis scholarship.

“As you can imagine, in Bosnia the living standard is quite lower than the

living standard in the U.S.,” she said. “No matter what your pay is there, it is very hard to afford the full price of tuition here.”

With her love of math and the sciences, Ramić applied to UF after earning her International Baccalaureate diploma in 2018. She says the Davis Scholars staff at UF made her transition from Bosnia surprisingly smooth.

“I felt right away like I belonged here,” she said.

Since October 2018, Ramić has served as chair of the Engineering Student Advisory Council, and during 2019, she worked as technical staff at the O’Connell Center — giving her more opportunities to soak up UF basketball and gymnastics events.

In her spare time, she loves cooking dinner for her friends, including her favorite comfort food, trahana soup, made with fermented grains. She was looking forward to sharing new dishes after spring break — and then the pandemic led to a campus shut down. By late March, she and her RA were the only residents left in Broward Hall’s women’s wing.

She admits being on a deserted, shuttered campus gets lonely at times. There is one former hangout she especially longs to visit, even more than the O’Dome or The Swamp.

“I love the libraries here,” she said. “People don’t know about all the resources they offer. UF should advertise that as much as they can. The libraries are amazing.”

## EL SALVADOR

*“Thank God we are healthy. It would be particularly complicated for us as international students to have any health-related complications.”*

### “IT FILLS MY HEART”

Four years ago, Emilio Quiteño was “just this Salvadorian kid,” he said, sitting wide-eyed in his grandma’s living room, listening to his mother’s friend explain how her son was able to study abroad for free — first in Norway and then at NYU Abu Dhabi — thanks to a full-ride international scholarship program. On the friend’s urging, hard-working Quiteño applied, but he was deeply skeptical of his chances.

“Of course I wanted to do that — live somewhere else, get a great education — but it sounded almost crazy,” he said. “I mean, it was like someone telling you they became an astronaut and walked on Mars. ‘Great on them, but that’s never going to happen to me.’”

Much to his surprise, the UWC board accepted him and several other promising students from El Salvador and flew them to Victoria, Canada. There, at one of 18 preparatory institutions around the world in the UWC movement, Quiteño spent two years honing his English skills and earning an International Baccalaureate diploma. At age 19, based on his academic and personal merits, he received a Davis UWC Scholarship to attend UF. Now in his second year of UF’s Honors Program, Quiteño is majoring in psychology and applied kinesiology and minoring in Latin American Studies.

“It’s a great experience,” said the 21-year-old. “Being a Davis Scholar opens many doors for you. You meet people from different countries, you grow so much as a

person and you have a lot of opportunities from the university as well.”

He lives in Murphree Hall and has passionately embraced both academics and extracurriculars, such as helping lead UF’s Hispanic Heritage Month. This summer, he is welcoming new students as a Preview staffer, too — a role that convinced him to stay on campus this spring.

He remembers the “tornado” of UF students moving out in mid-March, leaving him and his roommate — another Davis Scholar, from Nigeria — behind. Now they are washing their hands often and practicing social distancing.

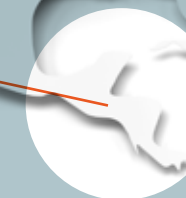
“Thank God we are healthy,” said Quiteño. “It would be particularly complicated for us as international students to have any health-related complications.”

Students far from Gainesville may miss UF life, but Quiteño says the campus is radically transformed under lockdown.

“I used to enjoy ... seeing all the UF traffic because everybody here is so different,” he said. “I like seeing faces — it’s like the spice of life. Now it’s empty.”

Despite the difficult time, he takes comfort that the Davis Scholars Program has his back and those of other scholars.

“It fills your heart, even if you can’t go out on certain days because of the quarantine,” he said. “When you close your eyes at night, you know that because of Mr. Davis, this Salvadorian kid is able to study at UF and not worry about tuition or food or housing. It has drastically changed what I can aspire to in my life.”



LEJLA RAMIĆ



EMILIO QUITENO



## LEBANON

*“My family would have never been able to afford tuition for me. Without the Davis Scholarship, I would not have gone to college.”*

### VILLAGE LIFE TO SUPERSONIC TRAVEL

Part of a large Lebanese family, third-year mechanical engineering student Yehya Haj says he is the first on his father’s side to attend college.

“They didn’t really finish their education,” said Haj, whose father works in construction. “So [my being a student at UF] is a big thing.”

Most Lebanese people remain in the same village all their lives, he explained. Few care to venture outside the support system of their extended family. But Haj, who early on showed an aptitude for science and an eagerness to experience new ways of life, was different. The UWC recruiters who interviewed him at age 16 for IB preparatory school recognized that spark.

“I really didn’t mind which school they picked for me,” he remembered. “All I cared about was the education and the personal development.”

A chance remark that he liked snow and outdoors activities landed him at UWC Red Cross Nordic, at the end of a fjord in Norway. There, as well as taking classes toward an International Baccalaureate diploma, Haj participated in remote-control builds and other group science projects. The process was so enjoyable, he decided to pursue a career where he could design and create “things that work.”

That is how he ended up in UF’s Department of Mechanical Engineering,

along with two friends from UWC Red Cross Nordic, who are now his roommates.

Like most students, Haj was 18 when he first set foot on the Gainesville campus. Other than sweating a bit more, he says the move to Gainesville has done him good. Haj is thriving in the Honors Program and making good progress toward his bachelor’s degree.

He is also a member of the UF Gatorloop Team — engineering students who compete regularly in an international competition to build the fastest single-person vehicle for Elon Musk’s SpaceX Hyperloop system, in Hawthorne, CA.

“I don’t think I would have had the opportunity to explore the things I’m doing at this point if I had stayed in Lebanon,” he said. “My family would have never been able to afford tuition for me. Without the Davis Scholarship, I would not have gone to college.”

Looking to the future, he says once he has achieved success in his field, he wants to support students who otherwise would not be able to afford to go to college — paying forward the Shelby Davis motto, “Learn, Earn, Return.”

“I want to be able to do what he does for us,” says Haj. “I know personally how amazing and life changing it is.”

## NEPAL

*“Your life really takes a turn when your dreams come true.”*

### QUENCHING THE “THIRSTY HORSE”

First-year physics student Durgesh Jha, 20, says receiving a Davis Scholarship to attend UF fulfilled his deepest dreams.

“It was like a thirsty horse getting water, as they say in my language,” he said.

That language is Maithili, spoken in southern Nepal, where Jha was born. At age 10, he was sent to boarding school in Kathmandu where he learned Nepali, the county’s most common language. When pressed, he admits he also speaks Hindi and Bhojpuri, as well as English, making him pentalingual.

But his favorite means of communication is through music.

Prior to the closure of UF, Jha liked to sing a cappella with a group of friends. Evenings would find them gathered by the lake near Simpson Hall for impromptu jam sessions.

Music has helped him connect with new people since boarding school and his two years at UWC Mostar, where he was in the class behind fellow Davis Scholar Lejla Ramić. Now that he is at UF, the Davis UWC Scholars Program provides him with a close network of friends within the large university system, he says.

Even so, Jha found it hard to adjust to UF at first. Even the “subtlest” things, such as Gainesville’s flat topography, reminded him he was far from home and even Europe.

“Back in Bosnia, there were hills all around, but here, when you see the sunset without the hills, the horizon seems much wider,” he said.

He has had a lot of time to contemplate those differences since mid-March, when he had to forgo a last-minute plane ticket to Kathmandu — “that would have been between \$1,500 and \$2,000” — and decided to hunker down in his dorm room for the duration of the pandemic’s quarantine.

To console himself, he bought a guitar and he’s back to strumming.

He is looking forward to the university opening up again; already he is plotting his path forward in the sciences.

“The universities back home [in Nepal] don’t particularly promote the culture of research,” he said, “and the Davis Scholarship has made that accessible to me, coming here. Now getting involved in research is just a matter of my taking the initiative.”

Receiving the Davis Scholarship is one of the best things that has ever happened to him, he said. Already, he is thinking of paying it forward.

“Your life really takes a turn when your dreams come true,” said Jha. “In the future, I hope to use my own privilege to make it easy for others, or rather to make it even for others to have a shot in life.”



**YEHYA HAJ**



**DURGESH JHA**





# KEEPING FLORIDA WILD

By Stella Heekin (BSPR '17)

**Carlton Ward Jr.** (MS '05) didn't need to look too far in finding his next inspiration. A renowned National Geographic conservation photographer, anthropologist and ecologist, Ward set his sights on documenting and protecting his own backyard. An eighth-generation Floridian, Ward focused his lens toward capturing the richly diverse ecological life of the Everglades and beyond in the Sunshine State. In 2010 Ward founded the Florida Wildlife Corridor, a program dedicated to conserving the vast network of land and water that runs through the state's protected lands. By connecting the Corridor, conservation efforts could establish one continuous habitat for endangered species in Florida. Ward uses his award-winning photography to tell the stories of the species and unique ecosystems that keep Florida wild, and aims to defend 300,000 acres within the Corridor by the end of 2020. His current project, Path of the Panther, follows Florida's elusive big cat through the endangered land it calls home.

Photo by Veronica Runge



# GREAT GATORS

## WITH GREAT NEWS

### UF HONORS LEADING LADIES WITH TOP ALUMNI AWARD



Retired CPA **Joelen Merkel** (BS '73), above left, and Nationwide Insurance chief administrative officer **Gale King** (BSJ '83, MA '86) are UF's 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award winners.

Merkel, of Ocean Ridge, spent her career breaking through glass ceilings. First in her family to attend a four-year college, she landed her first job at public accounting firm Arthur Andersen, where in the Miami office she was just the second woman among 100 audit staff. Later, at Chris-Craft, a NYSE company, she worked her way up to senior vice president, treasurer and chief accounting officer. She was a board member for BHC Communications Inc., an American Stock Exchange company. A longtime volunteer and supporter of UF, she was a gubernatorial appointee to UF's inaugural Board of Trustees. Her financial gifts to the Fisher School of Accounting and the Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars program, for which she was the first committee chair, are credited for significantly elevating both programs.

King also had humble beginnings growing up in Gainesville. Today, she is executive vice president, CAO and chief diversity officer for Nationwide Insurance, responsible for human resources, diversity and inclusion, corporate real estate, corporate security and aviation. As such, she manages \$1.1 billion in operating budget and benefits expenses. Supporting her belief that education changes lives, King made a significant gift to UF's College of Journalism and Communications. Her endowed fund aids first-generation college students and students in crisis, and provides professional development opportunities for both. King is on Ebony magazine's "100 Most Powerful African Americans in the United States" list and Black Enterprise's "2019 Most Powerful Women in Corporate America" list.

### JUSTICE SEEKER

Long before Jeffrey Epstein's name became daily headline fodder, Fort Lauderdale attorney **Sigrid McCawley** (BA '94, JD '97) was representing women who claim the late billionaire financier abused them. Over the last five years, she has filed six cases against Epstein, his estate or people who participated in his alleged sex trafficking system. A 2019 American Lawyer magazine Litigator of the Year, McCawley wants, ultimately, to change the statute of limitations for sex trafficking victims, as many were quite young at the time of their abuse and had difficulty comprehending their own need to press charges until they grow older.



*"Travel is a powerful means of bringing us closer ... but with travel comes the duty to protect our fragile planet. We must ensure that generations to come can follow in our footsteps sustainably and the world and its people can grow together."*

— **JANE SUN** (BSAC '92), CEO OF TRIP.COM, WHO PARTNERED WITH UK'S FORMER PRINCE HARRY MOUNTBATTEN-WINDSOR AND TRAVEL COMPANIES TO LAUNCH TRAVALYST, A COMPANY FOCUSED ON TRAVEL OPTIONS THAT SUPPORT AND PROTECT LOCAL WILDLIFE, ENVIRONMENTS AND ECONOMIES.



### FIRST AND BEST IDEA

During **Craig Meddin's** (BA '01) junior year, he started Postal Solutions, a mail and package delivery business servicing off-campus

student apartments. In August, he celebrated the beginning of his company's 20th year, also offering proprietary package logging software and electronic package lockers. Now in more than 35 markets, his company recently earned its fourth Gator100 selection (2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020) for being one of the fastest-growing Gator-owned or -led businesses in the world.





## “GO GATORS” IN ANY LANGUAGE



French, Spanish and English as a second language professor **Javier Gomez** (BA '95) started the only community college course in Japanese in the state of Mississippi. His interest in the language was sparked after participating in the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity program, which provides teachers for overseas military schools. That experience led the U.S. veteran to live in Japan

for 14 years. Gomez says his classes today include a large percentage of engineering students who want to work with Japanese companies. The 2017 Moody Institute Fellow and 2016 Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Instructor of the Year is a native of Caguas, Puerto Rico. Outside his college duties, Gomez teaches Spanish to attorneys in Jackson, MS, who strive to communicate better with the local Latino community.

## TRULY INVESTED

For the third year, **Michael Landsberg** (MBA '98), a founder and CIO of Landsberg Bennett Private Wealth Management, was recognized on the 2020 Forbes magazine best-in-state wealth advisors list with 3,000 other advisors nationwide. His firm also made UF's Gator100 list, which includes the fastest-growing Gator-owned or -led businesses.



## INSPIRE, IGNITE, INSTILL

**Ashley Vangates** (BAE '10, MEd '11), was one of four finalists for the 2021 Francisco R. Walker Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year award. The 4th-grade instructional leader at George Washington Carver Elementary School was singled out because of her “commitment to help her students who have challenges ranging from poverty, class, fragmented family structures, violence and a belief system that they are underachievers.” She created the Butter F.L.Y. Girls Mentoring program, which aims to instill: “First Love Yourself.” She was selected from among Miami-Dade County's 18,000 teachers.



## HARD WORK REWARDED

**Matt Levinson** (BSJ '93) of Weston, is chief operating officer at O'Connell & Goldberg Public Relations. He joined the agency as an account executive in January 2000 and during the past two decades has led many of its practice areas, including retail, real estate and crisis communications.



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**Mills Fleming** (BA '86, JD '89) is a health care attorney in Savannah, GA, with the firm HunterMaclean. He was among 10 people selected for the 2020 Georgia Super Lawyers list. He was also named a 2020 Rising Star.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

Tampa Mayor Jane Castor tapped **Carole Wallace Post** (BSJ '88) to lead her transition team last year before appointing her as the city's new administrator for development and economic opportunity in November. Post spent nearly two decades in New York City and held several senior positions in city government under Mayors Michael Bloomberg and Rudy Giuliani. She was the first woman to serve as commissioner of the city's Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications.

The Tampa Bay area native returned home in 2016 to join USF Health, where she ascended to associate vice president and chief administrative officer.

In her new role, Post will drive the mayor's agenda for “Transforming Tampa's Tomorrow,” which is expected to involve a wide-ranging portfolio of municipal functions. “It's really about unlocking Tampa, unlocking opportunity and doing that all over the city,” she told the *Tampa Bay Times*.

— Zac Howard



## GAVELS AND PESTLES

**Charlie Mollien** (MS '09) is the Michigan Pharmacists Association's 136th president. He is also a member of the American Pharmacists Association, where he has held numerous leadership positions, and the American Society for Pharmacy Law. When he's not volunteering, Mollien is the director of pharmacy compliance and privacy officer at the corporate office of Meijer Inc., a pharmacy chain.



## “WHAT ARE CONES?”

That was the correct question Jeopardy contestant and UF pre-med sophomore **Kayla Kalhor** gave during the quarterfinals of the game show's 2020 Spring Break College Championships on April 7. The answer: The most common form of colorblindness ... is caused by an abnormality of these cells in the retina. Kalhor was in the lead at one point during the match, but lost ground when she mispronounced “arrhythmia.” She finished with a strong \$16,501 total against her FSU competitor's \$6,400, but lost the match to Yale sophomore Nathaniel Miller of Miami who earned \$24,001. She came back in the semi-finals when producers selected her as a “wild card” addition, but lost to Northwestern's Beni Keown.

<https://www.jeopardy.com/contestant-zone/2020/college-championship>



## FOR THE KIDS

Past Tampa Gator Club President **Melissa Snively** (BA '93), front row center, is chair of the Hillsborough County School Board, the seventh largest school district in the United States and the largest employer in the county, with more than 215,000 students, 25,000 employees and a \$3 billion budget. She was elected to the board in 2014 and re-elected in 2018, representing Eastern and Southern Hillsborough County. She and her husband, **David Snively** (BS '82) live in Lithia with their four children.



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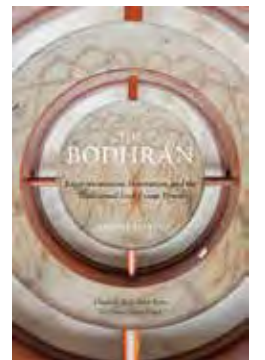


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## Good Reads

### MISSION: RECOVERY

**Barbara Andraka-Christou** (BA '08) wrote **The Opioid Fix: America's Opioid Crisis & the Solution They Don't Want You to Have** about medication-assisted treatment and its underuse in the United States. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Health Management and Informatics at the University of Central Florida and has a joint appointment in the College of Medicine.

### LIFE AFTER GRIEF

**Alison Hammer** (BSADV '01) wrote **You and Me and Us**, a heartbreaking, yet hopeful, story of a mother and daughter struggling to be a family without the one person who holds them together. Hammer is vice president and creative director at FCB ad agency in Chicago.

### INSIDER TIPS

**Renee Lopez** (MESS '04) is a former college soccer player and college coach with experience in NAIA and all NCAA divisions. During her career, she produced three All-Americans and served as NCAA compliance director. Her book **Looking for a Full Ride?** is an insider's recruiting guide aimed at students, parents, coaches and others who want to increase chances of landing an athletic scholarship. She lives in Lakeland.

### ACTIVE LEARNING

**April Smith** (MEd '14) of Towson, MD, and **Sarah Carrier** (MEd '92, PhD '99) of Chapel Hill, NC, collaborated to produce **30 Great North Carolina Science Adventures**. Smith, president of In Situ Explorers, edited the book and is a former environmental researcher. Carrier, an associate professor of science education at North Carolina State University, served as assistant editor.

### ANCIENT RHYTHMS

Ethnomusicology professor **Colin Harte** (PhD '15) of Pomona, NY, published a book about one of his favorite instruments, a drum called the bodhrán (pronounced bo-rahnn). Aside from his courses at the City University of New York, he also teaches a world music curriculum at KAPPA High School in the north Bronx, where he directs a 50-student West-African percussion ensemble, keyboard lab and music technology courses. His book is titled **The Bodhrán: Experimentation, Innovation, and the Traditional Irish Frame Drum**.



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## FIVE DEGREES OF GATOR SPIRIT



**Fernando Ojeda** (PhD '04), a language professor at St. Petersburg College's Clearwater campus, says this photo "captures the culmination of a dream that began in 1997 when my wife and I enrolled in Ph.D. programs in linguistics. Our children were ages 2 and 4 when we first got there. We had strategically chosen UF knowing full well that our children might follow in our footsteps. I told myself that if that were to come to fruition, we would memorialize it on the iconic 34th Street Wall." His wife is **Jeanna Ojeda** (PhD '04) and their children are **Adriana** (MA '17) and **Carlos Ojeda** (BSAE '18, MS '19). They live in Palm Harbor.



## HBD, HBC!

Age **Steve Spurrier** turned on April 22. He celebrated his big day at Crescent Beach, riding his bike and joining other UF coaches on a 19-way Zoom call.

## CALLING ALL GATORS

**IS YOUR COMPANY GROWING QUICKLY?** If so, apply for the Gator100. Presented by Wells Fargo, the Gator100 honors the world's fastest-growing, Gator-owned or -led businesses. Applications open Aug. 10 and close Oct. 19.

Ernst & Young confidentially calculates rankings based on each company's compound annual growth over the last three years.



Companies who make the list will be notified in December. Visit [www.Gator100.ufl.edu](http://www.Gator100.ufl.edu) for judging and submission details, as well as prior honorees.



"The Gator100 has become such an important award for us as a company. We are proud of our university, and to feel that the university is also proud of us is a huge honor! As a six-time recipient, we eagerly await the ceremony every year, hoping to be a little higher on the list than the year before.

The ceremonies are truly exciting! It's fascinating to see brands and companies that you come in contact with as a consumer and to learn that they were developed by a Gator. Orange Theory, PDQ and many other empires were founded by brilliant individuals who began right here at UF."

— **Dani McVety** (BSA '04, DVM '09) of Lutz, Lap of Love Veterinary Hospice co-owner



# GATORS AROUND THE WORLD

EDITOR'S NOTE: These photos were submitted before the coronavirus pandemic led to worldwide quarantine orders.



Three generations of Draughons traveled to Ireland this spring to celebrate **Bill** (BSAdv '67) and Dale Draughon's 50th wedding anniversary. Pictured are their son's family: **Jeff** (BSBA '94) and **Tabitha Hannaka Draughon** (BSA '95, DVM '00) with their son, Justin, near the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland. Bill is retired from Florida International University's Alumni Association and lives with Dale in Miramar. Bill served on the UF Alumni Association staff 1994-2003. Jeff's family lives in Pompano Beach where he is vice president, financial center manager for Bank of America and Tabitha owns and operates Ramblewood Animal Hospital.



**Alan** (BS '67, MD '71) and **Martha "Marti" Kruckemyer** (BSN '69) of Lenexa, KS, showed their Gator pride at Arches National Park while on a Roads Scholar adventure in the Grand Circle national parks tour in Utah.



**Phil Kellogg** (BCN '82) and **Craig Holliday** (BCN '82) of Sarasota carried their Gator flag to the hilltop above Reykjavik, Iceland.



**Dr. Joseph T. Watson** (BA '09, MPH '11) and **Katie Watson** (BAED '09, MEd '10) of Port Orange sailed through the Greek Cyclades for eight days, visiting several islands and exploring beaches and caves.



**Bianca Dominguez** (BS '14), center, paused for this photo after participating in the Hash House Harriers' weekly fun run in Grenada, West Indies.

**Robert D. "Bob" Sitrick** (BSJ '80) toured the Amalfi Coast in Italy with his family. From left: daughter Emma, wife Mary Beth, Bob and daughter Olivia overlooking the Faraglioni rock formation at the Island of Capri.



From left, **Sherri Reiter Costello** (BSPharm '82), **Karla Henning Starkey** (BSAcc '81) and **Debbie DeSantis** (BSPharm '82) broke out their Gator chops at Paro Taktsang, the Tigers Nest Buddhist Monastery in Bhutan, amid the Eastern Himalayas.



**Alison and Jamison Janke** (BSAgEng '99) of Land O Lakes traveled through Belgium and France, visiting 15 historic breweries over eight days, along with stops in Bruges, Brussels, Kortrijk and Ypres. Their stops included Au Baron, Oud Beersel, Fantome, Orval, Tilquin, Blaugies, Chimay, Westvleteren, St. Bernardus, Rodenbach, Thiriez, Bourgogne des Flanders, De Halve Maan, Het Bierkasteel and Brasserie de Cazeau.



**Deena Smith** (BSA '01) took this photo on her final day hiking the Salkantay Trail to Machu Picchu in Peru.

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





## CELEBRATING ALUMNI WHO ARE GOING GREATER

Since 2006, UF has honored outstanding young alumni who are going greater in their communities and professions. The following are eight of those named to the 2020 list. For the full list, visit [uff.to/4gu4h](https://uff.to/4gu4h).



### LAUREN REAMY (BA '04)

Legislative Director, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio's office, Falls Church, VA

Reamy manages a team of 15 policy advisors and is responsible for advancing Florida's priorities in Congress.

During her career, she has worked for the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, assisted on the confirmations of Supreme Court justices Alito, Sotomayor and Kagan, and advised her principals on immigration and courts-related issues.

She is also legislative director of the Motion Pictures Association of America, and has represented the six major movie studios before Congress on issues such as domestic and international copyright protection, content distribution, production, trade and tax.

She was on UF's equestrian team in college and shows her American Paint horse today.

### MICHAEL ORTIZ (MD '10)

Pediatrics Assistant Professor, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York City

While Ortiz specializes in care for children and young adults with rare solid tumors, particularly sarcomas and cancers of the liver and kidneys, the majority of his time is spent in translational research identifying novel biomarkers and developing rationally targeted therapies for patients with high risk and relapsed cancers.



Aside from his research, he is actively involved in the Children's Oncology Group and the American Society of Clinical Oncology. Ortiz initially aimed to spend his career in bioengineering. However, he spent one year as an oncology researcher at UF with Dr. William Dunn and later Dr. William Slayton, and was hooked on pediatric oncology.



### MARYAM KHAZRAEE

(DPharm '15)  
Regulatory Health Project Manager, Federal Drug Administration's Office of Hematology and Oncology Products, Washington, D.C.

An expert pharmacist, Khazraee is known for expediting access to medications for emergency oncology cases, supporting oncology drug approval and serving vulnerable Native American populations in remote Arizona and Alaska. A U.S. Public Health Service lieutenant with specialized Army training in managing medical care for casualties of biological and chemical warfare, her deployments focus on protecting our nation's health during natural disasters, acts of bioterrorism and public health emergencies.

Khazraee founded RxPharmacist, which provides updated board licensure exam prep guides for pharmacists and pharmacy students. She is an Asthma-Educator-Certified professional and a board-certified pharmacotherapy specialist.

### MEHER KASAM (MS '12)

Senior Software Engineer, Square, San Francisco, CA

A seasoned software engineer, Kasam is a champion of accessibility and inclusion, AI expert, author and speaker.

His work at Microsoft Research yielded several projects that have impacted millions of people with accessibility needs worldwide, including those with visual, hearing, learning and motor impairments. The American Council of the Blind, Federal Communications Commission, annual Consumer Technology Association trade show and Fast Company magazine heralded his work for improving technology for people with disabilities. His groundbreaking work was also featured on the Netflix series "Bill Nye Saves the World."

An author, he advocates for breaking down barriers to full inclusion and equality for disabled persons and other underrepresented communities, and for the power of AI to transform lives and for using technical talents for social good.

In his spare time, Kasam mentors people from underrepresented groups who transition from non-STEM fields into the technology sector.







### ABHI LOKESH (BS '09)

Fracture Co-founder, Gainesville

While an integrative biology student, Lokesh was involved with the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI), became student ambassadors president and interned at a young, fast-paced company. He also started a nonprofit with two classmates to alleviate poverty and health problems in Swaziland, Africa.

Lokesh co-founded Fracture in 2009. The photo decor company allows users to upload digital pictures, have them printed on glass and shipped in an environmentally-conscious, ready-to-mount package. The carbon-neutral company operates in a 30,000-square-foot solar-powered manufacturing facility in Alachua. He volunteers at UF as a CEI alumni ambassador and Young Entrepreneurs for Leadership and Sustainability mentor.



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### STEPHEN "BRINT" CARLTON (MHA '05)

Executive Director, Texas Medical Board, Austin, Texas



Carlton's work protects public safety through the licensure and regulation of physicians, physician assistants, acupuncturists, medical radiologic technicians and respiratory care professionals. He manages a \$13 million budget and 217 state employees. Prior to this post, he was the Orange County, Texas, judge, juvenile prosecutor and presided over the Orange County Commissioners' Court.

Carlton is also an assistant director of operations in the U.S. Reserves' 94th Aeromedical Evacuation

Squadron out of Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Georgia. The Air Force major is responsible for providing medical planning expertise in training, exercise and deployed settings. A joint medical planner and Pentagon staff officer, he has been deployed to Kuwait, Italy, Hawaii and three times to Korea.

### JULIO AVALOS (BA '03)

Former Chief Business, Strategy and Operations Officer, and General Counsel at GitHub, Fairfax, CA



The Wall Street Journal noted in 2018 that Avalos "was present at the founding of the Internet as we know it" and "helped shape the social phase of the digital era."

Best known as a tech attorney, business executive and innovator, he most recently served as chief business and strategy officer and general counsel for GitHub, a global company that provides Fit repository hosting for software development. Avalos oversaw GitHub's business operations from its early Series A financing to its acquisition by Microsoft in 2019.

The son of immigrants from Guatemala, Avalos previously represented or helped build Facebook, Yelp, Apple and LinkedIn. He represented Facebook and Mark Zuckerberg in the legal case that became the subject of the Oscar-winning film "The Social Network," in addition to litigation in Facebook's early years.

Accolades he received for his expertise on social and digital issues include Legal Innovator of the Year (The Recorder, 2014), Top In-house Technology Attorney in the U.S. (GC Magazine, 2015) and Top 100 Latino Leaders (HITEC, 2019).

### ADAM SOTOMAYOR (BSBA '10, MA '10)

Chief of Staff, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.

A Machen Florida Opportunity Scholar, Sotomayor studied international business and finance. Since graduation, he has managed commercial advertising for Turner Broadcasting networks in Latin America, promoted workforce diversity through a White House National Security Council initiative, advanced U.S. foreign policy priorities while working at U.S. embassies in Paraguay and France, and worked with multilateral organizations and foreign governments to advance global counterterrorism, political-military, public diplomacy, economic development, sanctions and human rights objectives.



Today he supports professional, educational, cultural and sports exchange programs for the assistant secretary of state to further diplomatic relations. He also volunteers on the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Advisory Council that aims to make college accessible to students from diverse backgrounds.



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**Hank Ingles** (BSPR '67, MA '69) used this for 10 years, but now has “Gator 67.” He taught for 42 years at Bristol Community College in Fall River, MA, before moving back home to Bonita Springs.



**Rick Gooch** (BS '78) of Palm Springs, CA, retired after 25 years in global marketing at Abbott Laboratories. He says the “PS” stands for Palm Springs.



**Paul Goldman** (BSEE '67) lives in Rye, NH, and says four generations of his family are Gators. In four years, it will be five.



**Sam Crouch** (BSAcc '74) of Camden, ME, says his boats over the years were all named “Sea Gator.” This is a shorter version.



**Joyce Sáenz Harris** (BSJ '75) of Dallas, TX, said anyone who knows UF recognizes this phrase from the “We Are the Boys” song.



**Scott Oke** (BS '92, MAcc '93) of Jacksonville is an accountant for the Davis family, who started Winn-Dixie grocery stores and donated many of the bells in Century Tower.



**Alicia Miller** (BSP '06), president of the Southwest Florida Gator Club, has used this tag since 2008.



**Tina Bird** (BSPR '93, JD '96) of Naperville, IL, cheers for her Gators every time she hits the road. She also framed her Gator tags that she’s had throughout the years.



**Christine Smith Mignonet** (BSBA '90) and **Scott Mignonet** (BSLA '89) of Oviedo said they “support UF wherever we live.” Scott works at Kimley-Horn & Associates. Son, **Tyler Mignonet**, is a UF senior.



**Robert Damm** (BSBA '60) is a Delta Upsilon fraternity member and retired commercial aircraft,

ship, container and heavy machinery leasing and financing professional who lives in the Villages of Lake-Sumer counties.



**Fredrick Hanby** (BSBA '72) of Cocoa is a retired federal agent, serving as CFO of Atlantis Industrial Hygiene.



**Rob Cothron** (BA '85), who is retired from the U.S. Air Force and lives in Biloxi, MS, says he has used this message over the years.



**Sharie Meier Acosta** (BSAdv '98) of Orlando is a human capital management director for ADP national and multi-national accounts.



**Jon Taylor** (BSTel '93) flew F/A-18C Hornets for 21 years before retiring to captain flights for Delta Air Lines. He and his wife, **Jenna Nehls Taylor** (BSED '95), live in Virginia Beach, VA. Their oldest daughter, **Katy Taylor**, is a UF sophomore.

WELCOME LIFE MEMBERS!



**Santo DiGangi** (BA '06, JD '09) is a West Palm Beach attorney at Critton, Luttier & Coleman, focusing his work on complex commercial litigation, personal injury, wrongful death and legal malpractice.

MEET FELLOW GATOR: SANTO DIGANGI

“As a double Gator, I spent seven unforgettable years at UF. During that time, I became part of a humongous family. The diversity of my friends, classmates and organizations helped shape my world view and contributed to my understanding of larger ideas such as equality, fairness and leadership. Joining the Alumni Association was the logical next step in extending this cultivated family into my post-graduate life, since it ensures that future generations of Gators are able to succeed. My gratitude for Florida and all it has given me is palpable in all that I do in my professional career, and I want students and young alumni to have the same appreciation and passion for the Orange and Blue as they move forward in their lives.”

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# 3 MINUTES WITH



## THE CLASS OF 2020

MAY GRADUATES SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON  
FINISHING COLLEGE CAREERS AMID A GLOBAL SHUTDOWN.

This year's UF seniors will likely appear in history books someday because of their altered experience amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The following Gators were wrapping up their college careers in May from their homes, since quarantine orders sent students away from campus. Here are their perspectives on the following quarantine-related topics.

### MAKING HISTORY:

#### How do you want your class to be remembered?

"Resilient. We did it! No one can say the class of 2020 had an easy path. Despite all the uncertainty and adjustment, we were still able to secure the bag!"

**Jelani Glass** (BSBA '20), marketing, age 22 of Atlanta, GA

### UNCERTAINTY

"As a low-income, first-generation college student I have always faced the fear of uncertainty. This made me grow into a type A person that must be in control of all aspects of my life at any given time. Everything I do and attempt has been carefully planned with detail. However, this pandemic — completely out of my control — has taught me to enjoy the little things more because regardless of how much pre-planning I may do in life I never know how quickly things may change. I have become much more appreciative of everyday life and of all of the blessings I do still have. I hope this pandemic will teach myself and those in similar situations to enjoy every single day of life rather than try to live through them."

**Tonianne Attard** (BA '20), sociology and criminology & law, age 22 of Port Saint Lucie

### BEING BACK HOME

"Coming from a single-parent household, my mom and I are very close and this was the perfect opportunity to spend time with her. Personally, I have been doing great back home. My mom and I have been busy with quarantine activities, such as painting the house, cooking meals and spending more time with our 10-month-old puppy, Marbles."

**Sabrina Chiu** (BSBA '19, MAIB '20), marketing, age 22 of Pompano Beach



### COMMUNICATION

"A lot of FaceTime to say the least. However, the quarantine has allowed me time to reach out to different people whom I have not spoken with in a while to check in and catch up. Although FaceTime does not replace seeing a person physically, it allows my friends and me to stay connected even if we are miles away."

**Sabrina Chiu** (BSBA '19, MA '20)

"Unfortunately communication has been difficult. Most of my closest friends I would normally see five or more days in the week for multiple hours I have not been able to spend time with them at all since the quarantine. Also, I have talked on the phone a lot more than I normally do and I have happily reconnected with many friends online playing video games in many PlayStation party chats with the increased free time and limited activity options."

**Jynsyn McCullough** (BS '20), aerospace engineering, age 21 of Orlando

### PLANS

"I recently accepted a full time role as a Systems Test/Integration Engineer with L3Harris Technologies at their Palm Bay location. However, it was extremely difficult to acquire not only this position, but job interviews in general since many HR departments were unsure if they were to continue with hiring or not. I also was planning on attending the National Society of Black Engineers annual convention at the end of March with the UF Gator Chapter where young engineers can network with professionals and interview with an array of engineering companies, but it got cancelled and I was truly worried that I would not be offered an opportunity to take what I have learned to Industry."

**Jynsyn McCullough** (BS '20)

"The COVID-19 pandemic has completely changed my plans for 2020. This semester was supposed to be my final one. I had weekend trips and going away celebrations planned with friends who would be leaving Florida after graduation. I planned on hosting a graduation party that family members from all over the country were going to attend, as I am the first person in my family to graduate from college. I also planned to work all summer to save money before beginning law school in August, especially considering the fact that it is recommended to remain unemployed throughout the first year. UF's commencement ceremonies were canceled which was a major disappointment as I have dreamed of my family watching me graduate since I was a little girl. COVID-19 has thrown a wrench into all of these plans, impacting me emotionally and financially."

**Tonianne Attard** (BA '20)

### BEING BACK HOME

"I like that I do not need to get groceries or cook for myself as frequently during the time being. Also, I have fewer responsibilities, allowing me more time to search for apartments and furniture. Of course I'd rather be out on my own doing whatever I want 24/7. Also, I have to fight the urge to see my friends from high school since we are supposed to be on lock down and they are significantly closer to me than when I was in Gainesville."

**Jynsyn McCullough** (BS '20)

### MEMORIES

"I will remember being surrounded by peers who are encouraging, hardworking and proud to be Florida Gators. UF has become such a big part of my life. I will carry these memories in my heart."

**Sabrina Chiu** (BSBA '19, MAIB '20)

"I'll remember experiences with my friends, attending sporting events, studying together and going out. I truly loved every moment here at UF. For this last semester, I'll remember how my senioritis ramped up to a new level. Also, the sadness I felt when I heard spring commencement was postponed indefinitely. However, I am happy that all my loved ones have remained healthy."

**Jynsyn McCullough** (BS '20)

### VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT

"I appreciate UF's effort of going through the hassle to set it up. But personally, I am not that excited for it since it sounds like it will just be a long PowerPoint presentation. I'd like to get a screenshot of my slide and celebrate with my family here at home and others via Zoom or Group FaceTime."

**Jynsyn McCullough** (BS '20)

### STUDYING REMOTELY

"Do I prefer it? Nope. I enjoy working in groups. It is more fun getting something done with a group of friends."

**Jynsyn McCullough** (BS '20)





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**SUSAN HENDERSON (DBA '18)**, who transitioned from a CPA to an assistant professor at Cal State University, Fresno

## MORE INFORMATION

→ [warrington.ufl.edu/DBA](http://warrington.ufl.edu/DBA)  
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# THE WAITING GAME

## GATORS BOUND FOR THE OLYMPICS EXPERIENCE A COMPLICATED QUARANTINE

BY PAT DOOLEY (BSJ '76)



As athletes with University of Florida connections wait out the coronavirus pandemic for an extra year of training, they can always look back at the first Gator to ever medal at the Summer Games.

She didn't wait at all.

**Catie Ball** (BAEd '73) won a gold on a swimming relay team in the 1968 Mexico City games as a high school senior.

And then she quit swimming. She wanted to go to school and enjoy it and few colleges had women's swimming programs.

"Four years seemed like a long time to wait" for the next Olympics, she said from her home in Pensacola.

Instead, she went to Florida with a scholarship that was privately funded. As a senior, she became the first ever coach of a Florida women's team in 1973.

"We were pretty good, second in the nation," she said.

Now, some may argue that Catie Ball-Condon shouldn't count in Florida's total of 126 medals won in the Games because she didn't compete while a Florida student. Nah.

There have been 177 athletes with UF connections who have competed in the Summer Games. Here are three more whose Olympic dreams are on hold, at least for a year with the Games now scheduled to start July 23, 2021.



**KELSEY STEWART (BSTEL '16)**  
**SOFTBALL**

Softball has been out of the Olympics since the 2008 Games and there is no guarantee it will be back in 2024. So the postponement of the Tokyo Games hit the softball world hard.

“When it first happened, I was kind of in shock,” Stewart said. “I cried for a little bit. It felt like someone had died.

“But then I started looking at it as a chance to be with one national team for a longer time than normal. It’s kind of like when you’re in college again. So I made it into a positive.”

How is she getting ready for an event more than a year away?

“Hitting a lot of balls off a tee and really working on fundamentals. As you get older and are playing so much, the fundamentals come naturally. But as long as we’ve been off, I can work on the little things like glove work.”

And she had to reset her internal clock.

“I have been counting it down for a long time,” she said.

“I’ve been putting my heart and soul into this since October when I made the team. Now, I just have to make it a longer countdown.”



**TRINITY THOMAS (3LAS)**  
**GYMNASTICS**

For Thomas, who will be a junior at Florida in the fall, it wasn’t only the Games that were postponed. It was making the team.

Although Thomas had an incredible sophomore season in which she scored four 10s, her goal was to make the Olympic Trials and then hope for the best. However, they were postponed and will likely take place next summer.

“The whole thing has been nerve wracking,” she said, because there was also this rumor that the Trials could take place earlier and conflict with her Florida season. Instead, the Games will be late in the summer and the Trials likely in June.

“I’m just glad that’s a decision I did not have to make,” she said.

Instead, she found herself back home in York, Pa., with no gym at which to train. She said her athletic siblings keep her in shape while she waits.

“It’s very competitive, especially in those backyard volleyball games,” Thomas said. “We go for a lot of bike rides. I definitely feel like I’m staying in shape, but gymnastics shape is a different story.”



**GRANT HOLLOWAY (3LAS)**  
**TRACK AND FIELD**

Holloway chose to pass on his senior year so he could start training for the Olympics. This delay was not part of the plan.

“Everything lines up perfectly for me,” he said. “I have no regrets. I’m able to take care of my family and do a lot of things other people can’t do.

We are still training and everything is still working out in my favor.”

Holloway bought a house in Gainesville. When the postponement happened, he took it pretty much in stride.

“My initial reaction was that it doesn’t hurt the team much but you think about the older guys,” he said. “I’m 22 and I’ll be 23 when the Games come around. So I felt like I needed to think more about them instead of thinking about me.”

The NCAA hurdles champion has spent a lot of time during the delay ... getting his lawn in shape.

“A lot of lawn maintenance,” he said. “My grass is looking green. I can’t run at the UF track because it’s closed down but I have a grass field where I can run and I lift weights in a friend’s garage.

“Sometimes, you have to shut down so you can reboot back up. That’s what I’ve done and we’re just starting to boot back up.”

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