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 (SBAC ‘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 $300,000 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 trust. They included UF Health’s rapid response fund. "UF Health is able to efficiently gather scientific and medical resources, deploy these resources statewide and lead our state’s rapid response fund. "UF Health is an integral part of the fight against COVID-19 and at the epicenter of 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.

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

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.

GATOR Strong

UF’s Davis United World College Scholars may have been left behind during the pandemic, but they’re proving just how savvy Gators can be.

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

A former Alligator editor mourns the loss of his best friend to COVID-19.

A former UF veterinary student offers free care for pets of area seniors.

A former U.S. Olympic track coach shares his experiences following our nation’s recent racial violence incidents and protests.

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Hip, hip, hooray for these Gators who did their part to defend against COVID-19.

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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.

(Read 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

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.
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.
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 northeast 89th boulevard in Gainesville.

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

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/3rvfVj

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 Now 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, well-being, healthy behaviors and non-communicable diseases. Partners include the UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine program and the University College of London.

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 ICJ 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.

COOL TECH: JUST A FEW OF THE LATEST UF INNOVATIONS

More details at innovateresearch.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 fool 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.

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@uflalumni.ufl.edu for a retrospective in the fall issue.

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 JAFRATE, 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/3cclhF

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

Oweiss Current DBS therapies are continuous, or always on, which can sometimes lead to undesirable side effects, including staggering and problems with 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.

HEARTRATE:

“Gators on 10-100 mph through the front sprints. They are well conditioned.”

— UF’s RON JONES

A UF student was prospecting for marbles when he saw the gators. Ron Jones is the assistant director of Florida Gators sportsmedicine. He can be reached at uff.to/gzexCfB
“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

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.

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.co/dukmwh

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“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 MARAGANOIRE, 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

“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.

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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 namesake.

Warrington saw a need, he would be the first to open his wallet — whether it was to provide his fortune. In 1990 he founded the first UF’s accounting school namesake.

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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.

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 personal relationship 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 personal relationship with career services.

Top two professional bucket list items? Work and live abroad. Pursue an advanced economics degree, either a master’s or even 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.

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

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.
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 rate, 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 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 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 tenacious nematodes that caused $130 million in cotton crop losses last year.

“As 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.

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 film, documentaries and commercial work. Find the videos, tagged “Great Storytellers,” at uff.to/ah3ksj

COURTESY OF CHLOE WEAVER

COURTESY OF LESLEY SCHUMACHER

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COURTESY OF CHLOE WEAVER

COURTESY OF LESLEY SCHUMACHER

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 rate, 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 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 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 tenacious nematodes that caused $130 million in cotton crop losses last year.

“As 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.

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

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COURTESY OF CHLOE WEAVER

COURTESY OF LESLEY SCHUMACHER
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.

People peddle this fantasy that because of slavery’s abolition 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 he 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 a nice SUV, it can’t be mine, right? 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. 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.

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 referred to, the officer told me, “You limo drivers.” Because I’m a black man in a nice SUV, it can’t be mine, right?

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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
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.

When a crowd is not able to organize peaceful protests, they are met with the police deploying tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition. The result is not only the physical harm of those who protest, but also the mental harms of those who watch.

The police are asked to protect us. But in their current form, they are often asked to enforce our current system. And when that system is flawed, we are often asked to enforce it.

What are we met with when we take to the streets? Fear. And what are we met with when we organize peaceful protests on our city streets? Silence. 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 employers being levy of us, to drive a nice car instead of fearing 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.

**FACE YOUR BIAS**

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

**IMPLICIT RACIAL BIAS**

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.

**DO YOU HARBOR HIDDEN BiASES?**

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

**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 interacting 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.
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.
41 WAYS UF ANSWERED THE CALL

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.

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 Miyush 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. http://bit.ly/2TgaSMJ

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, and Dr. Lisa Marie Grema and Kim Holton are among the many Gators who offered the public tips on keeping stress at bay during the quarantine.

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

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 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 Paul Thomas helped with their adapter and PEEP valve designs.

NO MORE FACE SHIELDS: Anesthesiology professor Dr. Bruce Spies came up with a simple solution that repurposes sterile surgical tray wrapping into masks.

FACE SHELVES: 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 (PAPRs) 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.

REAGENTS: Anesthesiology professor Dr. Bruce Spies came up with a simple solution that repurposes sterile surgical tray wrapping into masks.
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.

**HIGH SPEED BUILD**

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?...

Dr. Morris

**RETIRES 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.**

**THE KEY: BATS**

The idea of testing Villages residents began when Morris talked with UF virologist and EPI researcher John Lednicky (see page 26), 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.

**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.”

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

(UF Health COVID-19 testing)

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

**KEEPING BOREDOM AT BAY:**

Ham Museum of Art staff offered quick art fixes for homebound patrons through online videos. For instance, Assistant Curator of Asian Art Alyssa 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 Coffin Dry Garden.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

• When a nasal swab sample is collected from a study participant, it is dried 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.
MATH TO THE RESCUE: Biostatistics experts Natalia 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.

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.

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.

NO SQUARES TO SPARE: Asoo Vikhaira 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 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.

FOOD-INECURE 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.

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.

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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 Lednicky developed a severe viral respiratory infection that he never forgot. Was his illness linked to that bat? “Maybe my illness was purely coincidental,” said Lednicky. “Was it a coronavirus? I have no idea. But that’s how I got interested in bats.”

Lednicky 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.

Lednicky’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 Lednicky’s work centers on the betacoronavirus group.

Four years ago, Lednicky 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 Lednicky thought he might find.
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.

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.

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.

Chef Edouardo Jordan (BABA ’03, BSESS ’03), at right, announced on March 22 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.

Two-time James Beard Award winner Chef Edouardo Jordan
restaurants and food-service industry companies closed for the year.

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.

**Peggy Haukkanen** (BA ’98 BSEEN ’99 ME ’12), at left, launched the Gainesville Face Mask Crafters for the national shortage.

**Victoria Lio** (BSAcc ’19, MAacc ’19) developed Buffo, a free mobile app that helps coordinate 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 76ers NBA team, donated a half million dollars to COVID-19 efforts in his hometown area where he played basketball: Lansing, MI; Massachusettes and Texas.

**Jonathan Rodriguez** (BSFES ’13, MSFES ’18) and Fernando Bosch, a Gator by choice of Wellington, FL, launched a competition called “Isolation Creations” to help local children. Winner, Parker Hysall, age 6, is pictured at left.

**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.

**Attorney Dennis Giacchino** (BSPR ’05, 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.”

UF junior Daniel Klein (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) and Fernando Bosch, a Gator by choice of Wellington, FL, launched a competition called “Isolation Creations” to help local children. Winner, Parker Hysall, age 6, is pictured at left.
Saying Goodbye

INK & MEMORIES

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

BY JARED MISNER (BSPR '12)

On 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.
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.

Locked away as a contagion, far from her college years, Alison is a reminder of the many 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 hayride, which was most certainly not allowed, but it was the only place large enough to fit us all.

Alison and I drank from 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.

To this day, I can’t separate my memories at The Alligator, the two less-newsy news pages that were crowded with memorabilia 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 Davis and Laurls, which, to this day, might still be my proudest moment. We shared an office at The Alligator, the two less-newsy newsmajor and forever alter my life’s path. She made me feel brave and assured this was not a colossal mistake.

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.

I 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 Beatty 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 muumus, 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.

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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 Davis and Laurls, which, to this day, might still be my proudest moment. We shared an office at The Alligator, the two less-newsy newspeople 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 thought about that Alligator tattoo a lot.

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 — in a loaf pan; we named it Pancake. We both had a strong affinity for spice, and once she added so much cayenne pepper 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 refrigerator. 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 always was the one to carry my fragile body down the steep and narrow steps of Greg 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 jewel into the sea.

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 fails.

What would I 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.

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

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

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

FLORIDA GATOR | 39
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.

Photography by Aaron Daye
Story by Liesl O’Dell (BSJ ’92)
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 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 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 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."

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

“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.

“Stay at Home” Greek apparel, a line of customizable 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.”

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.

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.

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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 garage sale, Shanadi and McGurrin launched Greek House from their basement at the University of Florida fraternity chapter, Alpha Tau Omega. When they couldn’t find a company that met their needs — a customizable design, good price and fast turnaround time — they decided to do it themselves.

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

By BARBARA DRAKE (MFA ’04)
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?’” 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 well-being 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 creating global leaders 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 achieving world peace.

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.

When Home is 8,300 Miles Away

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.
“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 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 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, isolated campus gets lonely at times. There is one farmer hangout she longs to visit, even more than the O’Dome or The Swamp. “I used to enjoy going to The Swamp, and see all the UF traffic because everybody here is so different,” she said. “I like seeing faces — it’s like the spice of life. Now it’s empty.”

Despite the difficult time, she 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,” she 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.”
"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 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.”

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

"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 country’s most common language. When pressed, he admits he also speaks Hindi and Bhojpuri, as well as English, making him pentilingual. But his favorite means of communication is through music. "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 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.

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

"Your life really takes a turn when your dreams come true."
Carlton Ward Jr. 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 tells 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
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.

UF HONORS LEADING LADIES WITH TOP ALUMNI AWARD

JUSTICE SEEKER

Long before Jeffrey Epstein’s name became daily headline fodder, Fort Lauderdale attorney Sigrid McCawley (BA ’84, 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.

GREAT GATORS WITH GREAT NEWS

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.

“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 Trivago.com, who partnered with UK’s former Prince Harry Mountbatten-Windsor and travel companies to launch Travalyist, a company focused on travel options that support and protect local wildlife, environments and economies.
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 ’96), 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 II. 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 ’96, JD ’98) is a health care lawyer 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.

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 R. Walker Miami-Dade County 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.

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.

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.

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.

— Zac Howard

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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.

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— Zac Howard
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-rahn). 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.
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.

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.

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.
Earnst & 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 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

FIVE DEGREES OF GATOR SPIRIT
Our community is located at 5100 SW 25th Blvd. in beautiful Gainesville, Florida.
**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” Strick (BSJ ’80) toured the Amalfi Coast in Italy with his family. From left: daughter Emma, with Mary Beth, Bob and daughter Olivia overlooking the Faraglioni rock formation at the Island of Capri.

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
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.

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.

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.

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.
Rediscover Gainesville. Come cheer for the home team, but stay for the adventure. With a perfect blend of restaurants, craft breweries, outdoor excursions, a thriving music scene, theatre and the arts, you’ll have fun reminiscing about your favorite places and create fond memories discovering new ones.

Explore beautiful Gainesville at WhatsGoodGNV.com.

**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.

**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 Dobkins 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.

**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.

**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).

**WHAT’S GOOD.**

Find Events, Attractions & Activities. Rediscover Gainesville. Come cheer for the home team, but stay for the adventure. With a perfect blend of restaurants, craft breweries, outdoor excursions, a thriving music scene, theatre and the arts, you’ll have fun reminiscing about your favorite places and create fond memories discovering new ones.

Explore beautiful Gainesville at WhatsGoodGNV.com.

**Text WhatsGood to 22828**
for the weekly events guide.
Jane tags, Gator Up!

For those with plain-unique tags.

Publish photos of your

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THE ROAD?

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CREATIVE WAY OF

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SHOWING YOUR

GATOR PRIDE ON

THE ROAD?

Florida Gator

magazine wants to publish photos of your unique tags.

For those with plain-Jane tags, Gator Up! Proceeds from UF’s specialty license plates support student scholarships and alumni programs.

Send photos with your name, town, degree and occupation to:

FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu

ufalumni.ufl.edu

ufGatorUp.ufl.edu

FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu

UF recognizes this phrase from "We Are the Boys" song.

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

Mary Ellen Ingles (BSDiv ’74) of Camden, ME, retired after 25 years in global marketing at Abbott Laboratories. She says the "PS" stands for Palm Springs.

Fredrick Hanby (BSBA ’72) of Cocoa is a retired federal agent, serving as CFO of Atlantis Laboratories. He says the "PS" in global marketing at Abbott Laboratories. He says the "PS" stands for Palm Springs.

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.

Put UF and our Gators on top by purchasing a UF license plate the next time you renew a UF license plate the next time you renew your tag.

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 ’70) of Palm Springs, CA, retired after 25 years in global marketing at Abbott Laboratories. He says the “PS” stands for Palm Springs.

Alicia Miller (BS ’06) of the Southwest Florida Gator Club, has used this tag since 2006.

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

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.

Shari Meier Acosta (BSAdv ’98) of Orlando is a human capital management director for A 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), who is retiring from the U.S. Air Force, lives in Biloxi, MS, says he has used this message over the years.

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

“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.”

Members receive a plethora of benefits, but more importantly their dues support alumni programs, student scholarships and UF’s ranking as a top public university. Your UF Alumni Association is proud to keep Gators connected to campus and to each other.

JOIN TODAY by visiting ufalumni.ufl.edu or calling 352-392-1905.
MAY GRADUATES SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON FINISHING COLLEGE CAREERS AMID A GLOBAL SHUTDOWN.

THE CLASS OF 2020

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, MAIB '20), marketing, age 22 of Pompano Beach

“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

“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)

“I 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 seniors 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? Hope. I enjoy working in groups. It is more fun getting something done with a group of friends.”

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)

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, Markies.”

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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.
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.”

— GRANT HOLLOWAY (3LAS)

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.”
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