FOOD WITH ROOTS
Chef Edouardo Jordan shares his recipe for success (which has nothing to do with his “Sexiest Chef Alive” nomination)
Page 32

HELLO, ADVENTURE!
Sherry McCampbell found her destiny when she took to the open seas for her retirement.
Page 44

30 YEARS LATER
Do you remember the Gainesville student murders? These Gators will never forget.
Page 38

THE NEXT FRONTIER
See how artificial intelligence — a UF focus — will influence the future of every industry. Page 18
ALUMNUS’ BIG DREAMS MEAN BIG ADVANCES FOR MANKIND

While some people describe Chris Malachowsky (BSEE ’80) as “incredibly intellectually curious,” “a genius” or a “true innovator,” the humble Silicon Valley visionary prefers simpler terms, such as “tinkerer” and “builder.”

All adjectives aside, those who know of Malachowsky’s vast contributions to computer technology can agree the world is a better place to live because he decided to become an electrical engineer at UF, rather than fulfilling his father’s expectation to become a doctor. After all, his computer advances led to the expansion of artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities that are helping solve the world’s biggest challenges.

Now, Malachowsky and the company he co-founded, NVIDIA, have invested $50 million at UF to integrate AI into every discipline by introducing all students to its potential, no matter their majors. Malachowsky gave an additional $20 million to create a multidisciplinary data science and information technology facility intended to be the home for AI, Data Science and related technologies at UF. Ultimately through Malachowsky’s investment, AI research, education and equitable access to these tools will ensure the very best AI-prepared workforce for Florida and beyond.

The Gator Nation is deeply grateful for his leadership, investments and big thinking that will drive innovations in every field.

Learn more about Malachowsky, NVIDIA and UF’s plan to become our nation’s premier AI university starting on page 18.
DISNEY, UF JOIN FORCES TO SLOW, STOP EXTINCTION EVENTS

Walt Disney said in 1959 that conservation “concerns all of us.” All these years later, the entertainment empire he created is saving endangered wildlife through The Disney Conservation Fund and its continued collaboration with UF.

To date, the fund has contributed more than $5 million to UF’s conservation programs. Two animals high on the organization’s priority list are sea turtles and butterflies. Enter UF’s renowned Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research and UF’s McGuire Center for Lepidoptera & Biodiversity. The Carr Center is reducing threats to sea turtles that are caused by commercial fishing, poucheding, pollution, the loss of nesting beaches and warming seas. The McGuire Center is restoring habitats, and breeding and releasing captive butterflies to replenish their dwindling numbers.

In addition, UF is contributing its expertise in water conservation and multiple other tag-team projects in departments across campus.

UF celebrates Walt Disney and The Disney Conservation Fund, and offers a hearty thank you for the fund’s longtime support and partnership.

THE KUHNSES HELP THE BAND PLAY ON

Gator Band alumni Rolf (BMUS ’72) and Anne Kuhns (BMUS ’70, MEa ’75) of Winter Garden say their time playing the clarinet and trumpet, respectively, for UF prepared them for life.

“Tell us about your experience training at UF that prepared you for life?”

“The experiences we had in the band were instrumental in shaping major moments in our lives. It taught us about teamwork, humility, work ethic and so much more, truly forming us into the people we are today,” they said.

In recognition and gratitude of those lessons, the Kuhnses have made a major estate gift to the School of Music’s Gator Marching Band, expanding their named scholarship to support more students and creating UF’s first endowed marching band directorship.

“We wanted to give back to students and the program so that generations of musicians may have the transformational experience and opportunities afforded to them by the Gator Band,” the Kuhnses said. After all, “the Gator Marching Band is like family.”

Please join UF and Gator Nation in celebrating the Kuhnses and thanking them for their generosity, thoughtfulness and encouragement of UF’s many band members.

— Brandon McKinley (BMUS, BSPR ’17)
U.F. is the nation’s 6th best public university, so says U.S. News & World Report’s Best Colleges and Universities list. Many individual UF programs earned top ranks, as well. This announcement on Sept. 14 continues UF’s upward trajectory and places it on the cusp of reaching its Top 5 goal.

The announcement marks the fourth consecutive year UF rose on the public universities list, advancing from No. 14 in 2017 to No. 6 today. During the same period, UF leapt from No. 50 to No. 30 on the U.S. News & World Report National Universities list, which includes both public and private institutions.

The recognitions come on the heels of a banner year for UF, in which faculty broke records on research expenditures and awards and leaders launched a groundbreaking artificial intelligence (AI) initiative that will set the university apart nationally.

**U.S. News & World Report’s Top 10 List**

Its top 10 public universities are:
1. University of California, Los Angeles
2. University of California, Berkeley
3. University of Michigan — Ann Arbor
4. University of Virginia
5. University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill
6. UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA*
7. University of California — Santa Barbara*
8. Georgia Institute of Technology*
9. University of California, Irvine*
10. University of California, San Diego*

*tie

**UF’s Rise**

Key factors that led to UF’s rise include:
- **Reduced student/faculty ratio** from 21.1 four years ago to 17.1 today
- **Decreased class size** to fewer than 20 students for more than 50% of the undergraduate classes, second only to the University of Michigan among leading public universities
- **UF has the lowest tuition and fees** of any leading public or private university in the Association of American Universities and the lowest cumulative debt of any class over the last six years ($20,388).

**Other Wins Across Campus**

These degree programs also earned high nationwide rankings:
- **Finance** — 25th
- **Entrepreneurship** — 27th
- **Management** — 27th
- **Civil and coastal engineering** — 26th
- **Chemical engineering** — 28th
- **Mechanical engineering** — 33rd
- **Computer science** — 48th

(First time a U.S. News & World Report ranking has been published for this program; represents top 10% rank for UF)

“Our momentum is unbreakable, and we will fulfill our potential and promise of reaching Top 5 status ... UF belongs to the people of Florida, and we owe it to them to serve as its stewards, shepherding it to a bright and successful future as a cherished resource in service to the people of our great state. ... We will not fail.”

— Mori Hosseini, UF Board of Trustees Chairman
In July, a man who had battled back from COVID-19 only to face a life-threatening crisis when his lungs began to fail has become the first person in the Southeast to receive a double-lung transplant after beating the coronavirus, thanks to the nationally ranked lung transplant team at UF Health Shands Hospital.

The patient, who is in his 50s and has asked to remain anonymous for privacy reasons, tested positive for COVID-19 in April. As the virus progressed, his lungs became severely damaged and unable to function properly. Once physicians deemed it safe, he was transported from Texas, his home state, to Florida to await a transplant.

But before the procedure could take place, the advanced lung disease multidisciplinary team at UF Health focused their efforts on physically rehabilitating him while determining whether a transplant was his best choice.

“In July, we knew the lung damage was irreversible, said Machuca. Initially, he was critically ill and unable to stand on his own. His chances of other complications, such as infection or bleeding, were high.

“This treatment brings much-needed hope that other selected patients struggling with coronavirus or its aftereffects can have a second chance,” Machuca said. “But this disease and its impact on the body certainly require further understanding.”

The patient is recovering steadily and has been disconnected from ECMO, demonstrating the resilience the team said he’s displayed from the beginning.

“Over the past several years, the advanced lung services at UF Health have increased in national prominence, as evidenced by both our U.S. News & World Report rankings and the amazing results for lung transplantation as measured by UNOS,” said UF Health Shands CEO Ed Jimenez. “It’s no surprise that UF Health and surgical director of the lung transplant program.

Due to the newness of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, it was challenging to identify the features that would signal the patient’s lung damage was irreversible, said Machuca. Initially, he was — Dr. Abbas Shahmohammadi, UF Assistant Professor of Medicine and a Lung Transplant Specialist on the Team

UF Health’s lung transplant team saved a man whose lungs were damaged by COVID-19.

A NATURAL REPELLENT FOR MOSQUITOES & TICKS

UF/IFAS scientists have endorsed just one natural compound for people who want to repel mosquitoes and ticks without manmade chemicals: oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE). The scientists say their research shows it is the most effective natural compound; lasts up to six hours and should not be confused with “lemon eucalyptus essential oil” which is not as effective. In fact, the CDC does not recommend any essential oil. While past reports suggest citronella and catnip help deter mosquitoes for short periods, those compounds have not been subjected to the same rigorous environmental testing as OLE.

STAND UP AND HOLLER, AGAIN!

Look out for videos and other information coming your way in anticipation of the third annual Gator Nation Giving Day on Feb. 18. That day, your gift, even as small as $1, can help UF fund important programs and services, as well as increase UF’s alumni participation rate, a statistic U.S. News & World Report uses to measure university strength. Last year, Gators who participated in giving day increased UF’s rate from 17% to 18%.

In February, UF hopes to receive gifts from 17,500 Gators, which would raise it even more. Come on, Gators, get up and go!
1,003
Pythons examined this summer by UF/IFAS biologists, who are working to determine the extent of an invasive worm parasite outbreak (Rh. orientalis) that used to be contained to pythons, but now is infecting native snake species. The scientists also examined 523 native snakes, of which 13 have the parasite that was native to the core python region. uf.to/dvred

$523M
Amount Gator Nation raised in FY20 through UF’s Go Gator campaign. Most gifts are earmarked for a specific purpose, from scholarships and professorships to college programs and equipment. This is the second consecutive year that annual fundraising has topped the $500 million mark, placing Gator Nation among the most charitable groups of alumni and friends in public higher education.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

COOL TECH: NEW DISCOVERIES, NEW HOPES
More details at innovate.research.ufl.edu

SPINAL CORD INJURIES
Thanks to UF scientists, people with spinal cord injuries have two more reasons to hope for regenerative therapies.
• UF researchers developed an injectable hydrogel made from decellularized nerve tissue that encourages nervous system regeneration. The decellularization process ensures the nerve scaffold can maintain the proteins and mechanical properties of the original nerve tissue around it while removing cellular components that could trigger immune system rejection. Learn more at uf.to/kgmkw1
• UF research has shown that a patient’s own secretome (proteins and other molecular structures secreted into the space between cells) can be purified and concentrated for use as an injectable low-volume, low-risk therapy that can spark tissue regeneration. What’s more, this method can be combined with other injectable therapies, such as the one above, to improve chances of regeneration success. Learn more at uf.to/pvvqy8

GOODBYE RED TIDE
When sewage, fertilizer runoff or certain household detergents make their way through stormwater runoff into streams, wetlands and aquifers, harmful algal blooms can form. “Pond scum” and “red tide” are two such blooms that are difficult to eradicate and can lead to massive fish kills and the extermination of other aquatic wildlife. In an effort to prevent such blooms, UF researchers developed a filter that quickly and safely eliminates undesirable phosphates from water sources. The filters could be used in wastewater treatment plants and in recirculating aquaculture systems, such as those used by fish farmers.

BATTERIES THAT LAST 100 YEARS
Nuclear batteries have long been considered a good idea because of their potential for a longer lifespan. However, they never took off because their layered structure results in significant efficiency loss. But now, UF researchers have solved that problem with a new structure. Invented by UF engineering faculty James Baciaik, Paul Johns and Juan Nino, these batteries are comparable, easy to manufacture and offer more efficient energy conversion, making them particularly attractive for biotechnology applications. For example, the lifespan of such a battery used in a pacemaker can exceed 100 years.

CANCEL THAT HOTEL ROOM
Out of concern for a potential spike in COVID-19 cases, UF’s Faculty Senate voted in September to cancel students’ traditional March spring break. Members decided instead to fold that time into the winter holiday break, which will begin as planned on Wednesday, Dec. 9. The break will end on Monday, Jan. 11, rather than the original date of Jan. 5.

WHY DON’T WE KNOW?
Some colleges and universities have gag rules for its student athletes that threaten them with losing their scholarship if they were to speak publicly without prior approval. After investigating this unconstitutional practice, UF’s Brechner Center for Freedom of Information produced a podcast episode called “More Than Just a Code of Silence,” revealing some of the consequences, such as the concealment of racism, abusive conditions and other injustices. This episode is a part of the center’s “Why Don’t We Know?” podcast series that examines the types of information universities often hide from public view.

HEARD IN GATORVILLE
“Most people are unaware that John is the lovechild of Don Rickles and Mother Teresa. I have long viewed his heritage as a genetic win-win.”
—JOE ALBA, the Warrington College of Business’ James W. Walter Eminent Scholar Chair, fondly describing John Kraft, who retired as dean of the Warrington College of Business this summer. Alba was one of many faculty who publicly expressed how much the college will miss Kraft’s leadership.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

KRAFT

0

TAKE A BREAK

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$900,000
Amount of losses the tomato industry experienced in 2007-08 because of a destructive disease called bacterial spot. UF/IFAS scientists have been studying causes and possible treatments of the epidemic. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has given them a $455,000 grant to aid their work.

$900,000
Age of Ralph Lowenstein when he died in August. The former College of Journalism and Communications dean served 1976 to 1994 and is credited for propelling its programs into some of the best in the country. Lowenstein oversaw the construction of Weimer Hall, established the digital/interactive media lab, launched national public radio station WUFT-FM, created the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information and conferred the college’s first two doctoral degrees.

95% ACCURACY
Rate of a UF/IFAS artificial intelligence system that detects powdery mildew disease in squash crops. Growers use a drone-mounted video camera to capture images of their crops and the system analyzes spectral (light) data to determine which plants show visible symptoms of the disease. In 2019, Florida growers harvested 7,700 acres of squash valued at $33.4 million.

WHO DECIDES HOW COMPUTERS WILL COLLECT, USE YOUR DATA?

“Some people continue to be under the impression that technology is neutral — it’s not.” — JASMINE MCNEALY

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**FACULTY SUPERSTAR: JOSÉ FORTE**
HERBERT WERTHEIM COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

**KID FROM ANGOLA FINDS HIS PASSION**

ENGINEERING PROFESSOR NAMED UF’S TOP TEACHER; WINS UNIVERSITY’S MOST PRESTIGIOUS AND OLDEST FACULTY AWARD

S

shortly after electrical and computer engineering professor José Forte learned of his selection as UF’s 2019-20 Teacher of the Year, he eagerly agreed to answer the following questions, from serious to silly. The AT&T Eminent Scholar’s research interests include cloud computing, biodiversity informatics and human-machine cooperative intelligence.

Q. Who or what motivated you to do well in school?
A. My mother. She was a homemaker who read extensively and sought perfection in everything she did. (His father was a technical draftsman “who could do anything related to engineering.”)

Q. When did you see your first computer?
A. In 1972. I was 18 years old and in my freshman year in Luanda, Angola. The computer filled an entire room.

Q. What was your first professional job?
A. I was an avionics engineer in charge of maintenance of airplane components used for communications, navigation and control. Most people do not give a second thought to an airplane having everything that a city has, including electrical power, water and sewage systems, entertainment, communication systems, air conditioning, food providers and more. ... This provided much of the motivation for me to come to the U.S. for an advanced degree.

Q. My favorite saying is ...
A. Aristotle’s “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” Everything becomes easier if one makes it a habit. It applies to work, social interactions, exercise and more.

Q. If a movie is ever made about you, what would the title be and who would you want to star in it?
A. “Not a Big Deal,” starring Tom Hanks

Q. What are some attributes of the best students you’ve taught?
A. Being self-driven, a rigorous thinker, persistent, collegial and a good communicator.

Q. What is the best part about working at UF?
A. The opportunity to pursue my own ideas working with great students, staff and colleagues.

Q. What is the greatest challenge facing college students today?
A. Remembering that education that is broad and covers fundamental knowledge will serve them better in the long run than only learning technologies which will become obsolete in a few years.

Q. If someone gave you $1 million, what would you do with it?
A. I would investigate how to build intelligent computer systems capable of providing answers to specific questions and, when they do not have sufficient confidence in their answers, finding other computers or people who can provide better answers.

Q. What is the most significant development you see coming out of your research area in the coming years?
A. We will learn how to build smart devices and systems that are sensible, i.e. that are highly knowledgeable but also self-aware of their limitations in serving humans and are capable of engaging better devices or human beings who can overcome those limitations in order to provide services. I mean sophisticated systems which might, for example, be able to diagnose diseases because they know how to analyze symptoms and medical data, to hypothesize medical remedies and to consult with experts when the system knowledge is insufficient. These systems would not replace humans but would allow humans to focus on human interactions and knowledge discovery, while greatly reducing the cost of services.

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**INTERNET OF THINGS ENGINEERS CREATE WEARABLES TO STOP COVID’S SPREAD**

Real-life smart devices emerged when students and professors at UF’s Warren B. Nelms Institute for the Connected World turned their ingenuity to the Internet of Things to solutions for the pandemic. The devices are in the prototype phase now and will get smaller, sturdier and more refined before they’re available to the masses. But they work. Here’s a look at them and how they could slow the spread of the disease.

**ADAPT SMART MASK**

This mask not only protects its wearer, but reduces the amount of virus in the air. When a sensor in the mask detects particles the size of coronavirus droplets, it releases water mist that not only blows virus-laden droplets away but clings to the airborne virus, causing the particles to fall to the ground.

Created by: Swapna Bhunia, director of the Nelms Institute at UF’s Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering and the Semmoto Endowed Professor of IoT and a team of UF researchers

**TRIDENT SMART BAND**

This wristband uses machine learning to exclude factors that can confuse temperature checks. For instance, it senses the user’s activity and area ambient temperature, while constantly monitoring their temperature via sensors on the radial artery, alerting the wearer (via an app) of potential infection so they can get tested and avoid spreading the disease.

Created by: Soumyajit Mandal

**RISKBAND**

Kids can struggle to maintain the recommended 6 feet of physical distance. A device that alerts them when they’re too close to a classmate could help, but outfitting kids with smartphones and connected wearables comes with price and privacy concerns. This wristband offers a low-cost, privacy-preserving solution. Using a type of Bluetooth that draws very little power, the band measures Bluetooth signal strength and converts it to distance. If wearers get too near to each other, the bands signal them with light and vibration. It can also help with contact tracing.

Created by: Nelms Institute for the Connected World researchers

**504**

Number of new faculty posts created — and filled — since Provost Joe Glover started his “Faculty 500” hiring initiative in November 2017. This reduces UF’s student-to-faculty ratio from 20.1 to 17.1. This data point is one component in the U.S. News & World Report’s formula for ranking universities each year. The top three colleges with the most hires are: Liberal Arts and Sciences (136), Engineering (92), and Agriculture and Life Sciences (43).

**9 PRINCIPLES**

of landscaping with native plants that are presented in a children’s book, Growing Up Florida-Friendly, illustrated by UF/IFAS master gardeners, the book educates and encourages young people to keep Florida’s water clean and to protect natural resources by selecting the right type of plants to grow.

**7 WORDS**

UF/IFAS researchers say should be used to educate the public on threats to Florida’s unique ecosystems. The researchers hope the words will help everyone protect their local natural spaces. The words to use are: native, nonnative, introduced, established, invasive, nuisance, and range change. They also suggest six words to avoid because they create confusion through their misuse and misinterpretation: native invasive, invasive exotic, invasive weed, alien foreign and nonindigenous.

23,500

Square footage in the new $24 million UF Health Surgical Center at the Oaks Mall, which now occupies the former Sears department store space. The center, serving eye and ear-nose-throat patients, includes five operating rooms, 19 pre-op and post-anesthesia care units, a waiting room and a faculty consultation room.

Colleges of Journalism and Communications students won 2020 national Hearst Journalism Awards. They are Mackenzie Behm (BSJ ’20), who placed second in the multimedia innovation storytelling and audience engagement competition and fourth in the multimedia 1 competition; Sofia Mingote (BSJ ’20), who placed second in Radio Broadcast News; and Valerie Lyons (BSJ ’20) who placed fifth in Television Broadcast News.

Colleges of Journalism and Communications students won 2020 national Hearst Journalism Awards. They are Mackenzie Behm (BSJ ’20), who placed second in the multimedia innovation storytelling and audience engagement competition and fourth in the multimedia 1 competition; Sofia Mingote (BSJ ’20), who placed second in Radio Broadcast News; and Valerie Lyons (BSJ ’20) who placed fifth in Television Broadcast News.
IN TERRI'S EYES, THE ORGAN DONATION PROCESS IS SIMPLE... ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SAY 'YES.'

During one such visit, Terri and Bryan's youngest son, Payton, put his hand on Jeff’s stomach and said, “My dad's in there.” Jeff replied: “Sure is. And I’ll try to keep him alive as long as I can.”

Although their relationship was stronger than that of most deceased non-related donations, it was about to grow even closer. In January 2019, the donated kidney from Bryan began failing. Jeff did the first thing he could think of. He called Terri. “I’m losing Bryan’s kidney,” he told her. “I’m sorry.”

“Well, I’ve got one,” Terri said. Luckily, she was a match. “This girl is an angel,” Jeff said. “She’s a single parent, and God’s gift of a parent, too. I don’t know how I could thank her, or repay her for such a wonderful life-giving gift.”

In Terri’s eyes, the organ donation process is simple. It’s a yes-or-no question. All you have to do is say ‘yes.’

“As we got closer to the surgery date, I had a lot of people coming up to me and asking, ‘What if you need it?’” Terri recalled. “And I said, ‘Well, what if I don’t?’”

Terri is familiar with how unpredictable the future can be. Her husband’s death was an accident. She reminds people that, for all she knows, she could get in a car and get hit tomorrow. “If I lived off of what ifs, I wouldn’t live,” Terri said.
When the COVID-19 pandemic forced overwhelmed doctors and unprepared policymakers to scramble for answers this spring, UF virus experts turned to artificial intelligence for clues.

Virologist Marco Salemi and epidemiologist Mattia Prosperi’s high-tech approach forecasted the pandemic’s spread, pinpointed new outbreaks and detected emerging coronavirus strains to give governors and hospitals time to prepare. Their work, arguably, saved hundreds — if not thousands — of lives.

It’s also a glimpse at artificial intelligence’s promise as UF moves to become America’s undisputed “AI university.”

“This incredible gift from Chris [Malachowsky] and NVIDIA will propel the state of Florida to new heights as it strives to be an economic powerhouse, an unrivaled leader in job creation and an international model of 21st century know-how. Over the coming years, tens of thousands of UF graduates with this unique AI-oriented background will create their futures and ours, transforming our workforce and virtually every field and every industry here in Florida and around the world.”

— Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis
“AI is the most powerful force of our time. Imagine a computer that learns from data and experience to write software no humans can... to help solve not only the region’s but the nation’s challenges.”
— Jensen Huang, NVIDIA co-founder

The university took a giant step toward that crown this summer with a partnership and a $70 million initiative that will introduce AI to all students regardless of their majors.

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

As sci-fi as that might sound, UF’s AI initiative is grounded in the here-and-now:

- Almost 600 professors and researchers from across campus collaborated last spring to plan AI’s integration into academic curricula, explore opportunities for workforce partnerships and discuss how mastering the technology will raise UF’s national profile.
- This summer, UF announced a partnership with California tech company NVIDIA to give the university the world’s fastest AI supercomputer. NVIDIA and its co-founder, alumnus Chris Malachowsky (BSEE ’80), each invested $25 million, and UF added another $20 million.
- UF’s investment comes in the form of manpower. It will hire an additional 100 faculty specifically for AI-related positions. Also, UF plans to offer an undergraduate degree in artificial intelligence and a graduate certificate. Once all that’s in place, Fuchs says, UF will be better able to “address the major challenges facing people and the planet.”

That’s important to Malachowsky.

“The U.S. has been accused of falling behind other nations in AI,” he says. “What we’ve done here in Florida addresses that. It provides a blueprint for how other states can work with their regions’ resources to make similar investments that bring their residents the benefits of AI.”

“The best is yet to come.”

Artificial intelligence, of course, is nothing new. For years it’s been changing how companies do business and people spend their time. Think self-driving cars, Siri and Alexa, robotics, computer games and autonomous drones.

And UF’s innovators are no strangers to it. The engineering and business colleges, Florida Museum of Natural History, IFAS and numerous other campus units all use artificial intelligence to some extent. A pair of the university’s recent AI breakthroughs are a process to improve crop irrigation and another, created by biomedical students, to rapidly share patients’ health changes with their caregivers. The university even has experts in law and philosophy working on the legal policies and ethics concerning artificial intelligence.

But UF’s ambition takes AI to an even higher level.

“The best is yet to come,” UF Provost Joe Glover predicts. “Health care, law, journalism, the social sciences, education, agriculture, engineering, business, the arts—all of these disciplines will advance by leaps and bounds as we harness the amazing power of this new technology.”

There’s good reason for his optimism. The university is pulling in experts from across academic disciplines to help pharmacists and doctors, election officials, bankers, farmers, scientists, educators, entertainers and others provide better care and services—which will also make the state a major player in the AI universe. That laser-like concentration on artificial intelligence will ensure a tech-savvy workforce is prepared to help the state of Florida thrive.

“We’re thrilled UF is demonstrating such national leadership and placing community engagement and training a 21st century workforce at the heart of its mission.”
— Peter McPherson, president, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

“In my 38 years at UF I have never before seen an initiative with the power to fundamentally transform so many areas of scholarship and research at such a scale,” Glover says.

It’s that cross-campus teamwork that makes the initiative special, says Cammy Abernathy, dean for the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering. She uses her college as an example:

- Agronomists and electrical engineers are using machine learning to...
We are … ‘eager to seek UF and NVIDIA expertise on how to advance our own workforce training. The goals UF has set … is an example all universities should aspire to follow.’

— Cheryl Ingstad, director, U.S. Department of Energy’s Artificial Intelligence and Technology Office

determine how plants such as switchgrass might slow climate change; Biomedical engineers and physicians are using AI to combat diabetes; Biologists, ecologists, and environmental engineers are using it to prevent coastal catastrophes such as red tide; Teachers and computer scientists are developing strategies to use AI to improve education for children. She described the collaborations as “a new horizon for AI research and education … to bring cutting-edge AI tools to advance research in areas that matter to all of us.”

Welcome to the Future

The alliance with NVIDIA means UF is the first in higher education to receive the company’s newest product (called NVIDIA DGX A100), and immediately gives the university one of the world’s most advanced AI systems. UF will boost the capabilities of its existing supercomputer, HiflyGator, with the recently announced NVIDIA DGX SuperPOD™ architecture. That technology — the brain that consolidates the performance and capabilities of UF’s entire data center — is an important building block in the university’s AI infrastructure.

With it, data that might previously have taken years for researchers to compile and analyze can be processed in minutes. Since UF’s reach touches almost every aspect of life — from health and business and arts to agriculture and tourism and engineering — artificial intelligence will have a big role as the university addresses things like rising seas, aging populations, data protection, climate change, personalized medicine, urban transportation and food insecurities.

“The University of Florida has a vision to be a national leader in artificial intelligence, and NVIDIA is an incredibly valuable partner in our quest to do so,” Fuchs says. “Across disciplines, the new NVIDIA DGX A100 will position our researchers to solve some of our world’s most pressing challenges and equip an entire generation of students with the skills that will revolutionize the future workforce.”

It’s UF’s talent for solving problems — especially with artificial intelligence as a tool — that convinced his company to team up with the university, NVIDIA Vice President Charlie Boyle says. “AI is transforming every industry, and the NVIDIA DGX A100 will help UF bring AI training, inference and data science into every field of study,” he says. “[It] will position UF to teach tomorrow’s leaders to harness the powers of AI as they take on our greatest challenges.”

Long a trailblazer in innovation and discovery, UF’s next natural step in its evolution is AI. Board of Trustees Chairman Mori Hosseini contends. “We are witnessing a significant transformation in the history of the state of Florida and UF,” he says. “It is truly a transformational turning point.”

— Brittany Wise contributed to this story

Next Steps

In order to launch this AI initiative, UF Provost Joe Glover is working with leaders campuswide to integrate the following components into UF’s colleges and units:

1. STUDENT EXPERIENCE
   • Add opportunities to receive AI credentials, certificates, bachelor’s and master’s degrees in data science and AI
   • Add basic common courses for all students. AI applications for specific majors: Frontiers of AI course to acquaint people with the field and latest developments (starts spring 2021), and bootcamps
   • Create undergraduate research opportunities through each college and the Center for Undergraduate Research and Honors Program; internships and links with employers (through Career Connections Center)

2. RESEARCH: Hire 100 faculty in AI and applications; funded research; partnerships with other universities and industry; efforts to solve the world’s grandest challenges

3. PARTNERSHIPS: Federal, industrial, NVIDIA and its NVIDIA Technology Center

4. OUTREACH: K-12 dual enrollment and bootcamps; Florida Museum of Natural History’s Scientist in Every Florida Classroom program; continuing education and upskilling through Division of Continuing Education (non-credit courses) and college offerings

RESULT: TOTAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
   • Thousands of AI-enabled graduates per year
   • Upskilling and continuing education of existing workers
   • Addressing industry needs
   • Equitable access to AI training

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FLORIDA GATOR | 23
BY BARBARA DRAKE (MFA ’04)

Daisy Zhe Wang and Kevin Butler made headlines last year when they were appointed to Goldberg Rising Star professorships in Computer Science.

Funded by a $1 million gift from PayPal senior vice president, chief product architect and senior technologist Arnold Goldberg (BSCE ’90) and his wife, Lisa, the five-year stipend supports cutting-edge investigations into computer and IT technologies for up-and-coming faculty researchers.

See for yourself why these rising stars shine so brightly in the CSRE firmament.

**MEET TWO UF COMPUTING EXPERTS, A.K.A. Goldberg RISING STARS**

**“Working on potentially impactful problems; that’s what sparks me and gets my heart racing.”**

**Daisy Zhe Wang, PhD**
Director, Data Science Research Lab

“...working on potentially impactful problems; that’s what sparks me and gets my heart racing.”

**Kevin Butler, PhD**
Associate Director, Florida Institute for Cybersecurity Research

“I tell my students cybersecurity is akin to Harry Potter’s Defense Against the Dark Arts class: You have to learn to think like an adversary.”

**“I tell my students ‘cybersecurity is akin to Harry Potter’s Defense Against the Dark Arts class: You have to learn to think like an adversary.’”**

**Butler has already developed a way to stop ransomware: credit card skimming and cell phone hackers at airports**

**“s the daughter of a computer engineer in Hangzhou, China — home to the country’s largest e-commerce company, Alibaba — Daisy Zhe Wang naturally gravitated to math and computer science. But when she began focusing on machine learning as a graduate student, Wang knew she had found her métier: using algorithms on “hard,” or existing, data to predict new outcomes (“soft data”). In other words: Teaching machines how to make better guesses about the unknown. As director of UF’s Data Science Research (DSR) Lab, Wang and her team work their analytical magic on some of the trillions of megabytes of data (text, images, audio and video files, news reports and even social media conversations) generated daily around the globe. From these sources, her researchers model the probabilities of future scenarios and unknown elements. For instance, they used their modeling approach on real-life data to analyze the murders of several high-profile politicians in the Ukraine. “We asked ... ‘What caused these deaths?’ says Wang. “Were they coincidental? Were they suicides? Or were these murders orchestrated by an organization in Russia or the Ukraine? Then we generated various hypotheses based on different media extractions.”**

While the Ukraine exercise was a purely theoretical, teaching machines to reason inductively has tremendous practical applications. Private industry, governmental agencies and nonprofits all fund the work being done at DSR and other national labs. Likewise, machine learning can aid in the quest to provide personalized healthcare.

**DSR Lab is currently partnering with UF Health scientists to help physicians make better decisions based on patients’ individual phenotypes. Their analysis will help doctors tailor treatment options based on weight, blood type, behaviors and medical history.**

“To implement this at bedside, in clinical settings, it’s still novel,” she says.

**These efforts in particular were aided by the Goldberg professorship stipend that Wang used to purchase a state-of-the-art graphics processing unit (GPU). The time she saved with this GPU was alternatively spent researching other AI possibilities, such as how technology can make information more trustworthy.**

“It is thanks to the Goldbergs that I can concentrate more on the bigger ideas,” she said.

**“Growing up in Toronto, Butler vowed to his Guyanese grandfather — an electrician who dropped out of school in fourth grade — that he would complete his education. The young computer wiz made good on his promise by earning multiple degrees in electrical engineering and a doctorate in computer science and engineering. ‘My grandfather ... was very, very happy,” Butler said.**

Today, Butler leads research in computer systems security at the Florida Institute for Cyber Security, an interdisciplinary effort between the departments of electrical engineering and computer sciences that he helped kick-start six years ago. The premier cybersecurity institute in the nation, it supports research for industry and government projects that have already made our own smart devices safer — whether it’s securing cloud systems, internet and mobile security or creating foolproof biometrics, such as fingerprint mapping and retina scans. To work in this specialized arena, you have to “think like an adversary,” he says. “I tell my students it’s akin to Harry Potter’s Defense Against the Dark Arts class: ‘How do you attack things? What are a system’s weaknesses? How can you exploit flaws?’ But our job is to use what we learn to make sure bad things don’t happen.’ In just six years at the institute, Butler has already developed a way to stop ransomware; created a device to prevent credit card scanners from ‘skimming’ a user’s data; and outsmarted hackers trying to take control of smartphones via airport USB ports. His own company, CryptoDrop, offers inexpensive software to detect real-world ransomware on home computers. When COVID-19 hit and millions of U.S. workers transitioned to remote conferencing, Butler’s UF team began examining security flaws in Zoom and other networking apps. “These systems have been adopted at a huge scale very fast, but they weren’t designed for that,” he says. “Not did they fully anticipate the security risks.” Currently, his graduate research team is experimenting with three or more safe defaults in remote networking systems so users are not susceptible to bombing-type attacks if they download a default image. Pandemic or not, Butler says privacy and security concerns are here to stay, whether the issue is working remotely, voting via internet or doing virus contact-tracing for individuals. “This new environment we find ourselves in has plenty of threats and issues to work out,” he said.

Thanks to the Goldberg professorship, Butler now has ample support to pursue innovative research that puts the institute ahead of the curve. For instance, his team is “examining areas that are less explored,” he said. “It gives us the freedom to expand our research horizons in ways that are incredibly meaningful, both to UF and to the world at large.”
A reservation doctor — and photography contest finalist — finds joy and healing in nature.

Mayer Ritchie quickly snapped this photo last summer after running outside in her pajamas when she saw the sunset sky transforming through her kids’ bedroom window.

STORY BY BARBARA DRAKE (MFA ’04)
PHOTOS BY NINA MAYER RITCHIE (BS ’04, MD ’08)

A practicing physician in Chinle, AZ, the geographic center of the Navajo Nation, Gator Dr. Nina Mayer Ritchie (BS ’04, MD ’08) considers herself an “extreme amateur” when it comes to photography. “I’ve never taken a photography class,” she said this fall. “Everything has been self-taught, from reading my camera manuals to looking up stuff online.”

So when National Geographic and Mazda kicked off an Instagram contest in October 2019 to search for Nat Geo’s “Next Great Storyteller,” Mayer Ritchie submitted five of her best nature photographs and forgot about it, figuring she had as much as a snowball’s chance in the Arizona desert.

Then came the call in January 2020. Of the thousands of photographers who had submitted work, Mayer Ritchie had been chosen as one of the three winners. The judges were wowed by her dramatic photos of colorful canyons, a lightning storm and a bear catching salmon midstream. “It was surreal,” she laughed. “I’ve never won anything before.”
Her own mother refused to believe it at first, Mayer Ritchie said. “She was like, ‘Are you sure this is Nat Geo? Maybe it’s a scam. You didn’t give them your social security number, did you?’” Things happened fast after that. Bidding goodbye to her husband, fellow Gator Dr. Eric Ritchie (BS ’04, MD ’08), and their sons Henry, 5, and James, 3, she was flown a couple of weeks later to Los Angeles. There, she and the other two Instagram winners competed in three on-location photography challenges, or “Quests,” as Nat Geo calls them, visually interpreting three themes: Master Craftsman (Takumi), Unique Reflections and Uplifted.

Their evolution as visual storytellers was documented by three separate film crews, with Nat Geo photography mentors guiding the gifted amateurs. The resulting 44-minute competition reality show, “Assignment: Inspiration,” first aired on the National Geographic Channel in September. While another contestant was crowned the winner, the heated contest pushed Mayer Ritchie to take her art to new heights.

“As someone who typically dabbles in landscape and wildlife photography … these quests took me out of my comfort zone and truly challenged me to evolve as a photographer,” she wrote on Instagram. “I’m so grateful they took a chance on me.”

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Born and raised in Tarpon Springs, Mayer Ritchie grew up loving nature and idolizing primatologist Jane Goodall. After two years at a local community college, she transferred to UF and met Eric in a peer study group for Dr. Marta Wayne’s genetics class. As aspiring physicians, Nina and Eric earned their bachelor’s degrees in 2004 and went to UF medical school together, before heading to Boston for their residency training in pediatrics and internal medicine. “Residency for us was 80 hours a week, taking ‘Call’ every third to fourth night, working most weekends. When I wasn’t in the hospital, I was trying to reconnect to that little girl who loved nature and being outside,” explained Mayer Ritchie. “I think it was almost a reaction formation to how stressful and demanding the work and medicine are,” she said. Photography soon grew into a “shared passion,” said Mayer Ritchie. A June 2009 trip to the Grand Canyon with

“...would be until we were standing in front of it,” she said.

BELOW: “I didn’t have a complete grasp on how moving and powerful this sacred place [Devils Tower in Black Hills, WY] would be until we were standing in front of it,” she said.

AT LEFT: Taken at Katmai National Park and Preserve, this image is one that caught Nat Geo contest judges’ attention.

SIGNS IN BLACK ROCK, ARIZONA REMIND PEOPLE TO WEAR MASKS.

AT LEFT: Once she was named a contest finalist, Nat Geo sent Meyer Ritchie on a “Quest” to document three themes, of which this is one.

AT LEFT: Dr. Nina Mayer Ritchie and her husband, Dr. Eric Ritchie, are both double Gators with a shared love of photography. “I got to share my creative passion with the love of my life,” says Nina.
Nina’s father sparked the couple’s love of the Southwest and eventually led to their decision to provide medical care to underserved populations through the Indian Health Service (IHS). In Chinle, Eric is the chief medical officer of the IHS hospital, and Nina works as a public health doctor with the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health. The couple “splurged” on their first professional single lens reflex camera before moving to the Navajo Nation in 2012. Photographing on hikes was easy when the children were small and portable, but once they became active toddlers, Eric offered to stay home and watch them while Nina photographed on her own. Her husband’s unwavering support has been “incredible,” she said, all the way back to the days when they would stand together on a mesa and talk about how to best position the tripod to capture a view. “I owe a lot of where I am now to having that partner in crime with me, that I could bounce ideas off and learn with,” said Mayer Ritchie. “I got to share my creative passion with the love of my life. That has augmented how important photography is to me now.”

Despite being singled out by National Geographic, Mayer Ritchie admitted she still has a lot to learn about her chosen art form. She even can laugh at her mishaps. “What’s so funny is that during the competition, when that video of me came out on YouTube, I found out that apparently I am holding my camera wrong, not like a professional photographer,” she said. “I’m supposed to have my left hand underneath my lens to support it and make it more stable. I hold it on the side. I googled it later. “That was pointed out by someone in the [video] comments, and I didn’t take offense,” she says. “I mean, it’s so funny!”

“I owe a lot of where I am now to having that partner in crime with me.”
— NINA MEYER RITCHIE

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT:
The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta is an annual family favorite event, epitomizing the joy the Ritchies have experienced living in the Southwest.
The Hope Arch “has always been a special place for us,” she said.
She photographed this mother and kid near Logan Pass in Glacier National Park before Mother’s Day.
Their children enjoy exploring Great Sand Dunes National Park.
“Nature is calling and we must go,” says Mayer Ritchie, who took their son to 24 national parks by age 3.

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His Seattle eatery JuneBaby was named America’s Best New Restaurant. Two times James Beard winner Edouardo Jordan got there by staying true to family and heritage.

By Barbara Drake (MFA ’04)

“Groundbreaking.” “Authentic.” “Elegant.” “Enticing.” “Revolutionary.” These are among the accolades lavished on Chef Edouardo Jordan’s award-winning cooking. But they apply equally to the UF alum and “40 Gators Under 40” honoree himself.

A native of St. Petersburg and chef/owner of three acclaimed Seattle restaurants, Jordan (BABA ’03, BSESS ’03) has dazzled the culinary world with his interpretations of American and Southern food — specifically, the dishes of his African American ancestors. Salare, opened in 2015, drew raves for his delicious Southern fare tweaked with French and Italian influences, a nod to his impressive culinary training. But it was JuneBaby — his ode to Black Southern cooking — that put Jordan on the map.

In May 2018, Jordan won two James Beard Foundation awards — Best Chef Northwest (for Salare) and Best New Restaurant (for JuneBaby) — making him the first African American chef in the foundation’s 34-year history to take home the latter prize. As he stood onstage with his JuneBaby staff, a proud Jordan acknowledged that his historic win also belonged to the many great Black chefs who had come before him but whose fare never got its due.

“They’ve been pounding their knives against the walls and their cutting boards, and we finally cracked through,” he said.

Since then, Jordan, 40, has won a raft of culinary awards; opened a third restaurant, Lucinda’s Grain Bar, in 2018; and launched his own retail line at Whole Foods in 2020, all while feeding displaced restaurant workers during the pandemic.

He even was a finalist in People magazine’s 2018 Sexiest Chef Alive competition.

While he credits his culinary prowess to both his familial and professional training, he said his success as a restaurateur reflects vital lessons learned at UF, where he earned dual bachelor’s degrees from the College of Health and Human Performance and the Warrington College of Business in 2003.

“I’m more than a chef. I’m a business person,” he said in a recent interview. “I think like a business person. Every step I take, I need to make sure I’m following through and asking questions before I go forward. How will this impact my employees and me? Is it legal? Is it ethical?

“UF made me a well-rounded person and gave me the broader understanding to make good decisions,” he said.
HOSPITALITY, HERITAGE & HARD WORK

Food was at the center of Jordan’s life growing up in St. Pete, whether it was Sunday dinners at the home of his paternal grandmother, Maggie Jordan, or helping his mother, Velda Jordan, put supper on the table. Both women sparked his love of cooking, in different ways.

“My grandma was all about hospitality and heritage,” he said. “We didn’t necessarily talk a lot about our history, but we gathered a lot about us through our foods.” The Georgia native’s specialties included Southern staples like fried chicken, chitlins, black-eyed peas and corn pudding, as well as snapping turtle and possum.

His mother, on the other hand, put him to work chopping vegetables after school. Only after he finished his kitchen duties could he go outside and play with the other kids.

Being conscripted as Momma Jordan’s sous-chef wasn’t something he relished at first, Jordan admitted, but it taught him a key lesson.

“I learned there’s things I have to be responsible for before I can get to the fun in life,” he said. At age 9, Jordan proudly prepared his first meal all on his own — scrambled eggs, strawberry toast, bacon and OJ — for Momma Jordan on Mother’s Day. “It wasn’t perfect,” he laughed, “but it was a start.”

By his middle school years, cooking had morphed from a chore to a pleasure. He doubled back to his grandmother’s kitchen where he pestered her with questions and pieced together recipes, some of which (Grandma’s Pound Cake, cornbread) are now on the JuneBaby menu.

Above all, his grandmother passed on the gift of balancing flavors. “Grandma, she just knew how to season her food — that was from the start,” Jordan told Wine Spectator. “So maybe that’s innate in me.”

CARVING” NEW GATOR TRACKS

An excellent student and talented athlete — he competed in track, football, cross country and wrestling in high school — Jordan received scholarships to University of Miami, Drake University and Tulane. However, touring the University of Florida campus in 1998 made a deep impression on him.

“I fell in love with the campus and the experience there,” he said. Jordan also felt ready to take on the challenge of being a minority student on a mainly white campus. Once he was accepted to UF, he joined the Black Student Union and the PAACT (Pledging to Advance Academic Capacity Together) program, an initiative, through Black Affairs, for diverse first-year students.

Nearly 7% of UF’s undergraduate student population was Black during Jordan’s freshman year, according to federal IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey data.

In his UF days, Jordan paused for this photo in Turlington Plaza with his friend Lydia Washington (BA ’06), who became student body vice president.

On earning two UF degrees in just four and a half years: “Yeah, it was crazy of me, but that’s just like my love and desire.”

Being one of 40 PAACT Peers and having the support of key figures at the Dean of Students Office gave him the confidence to grow and “carve a new way” for himself on campus, he explained. “UF, for me, was a realization of what society is,” he said.

“It was quite important that I experienced another side of the world that I wasn’t part of before since I come from an African American community.”

With the aim of becoming a sports agent, Jordan worked on two degrees: business administration and sports management. Just as he had applied himself to chopping onions and carrots in his mother’s kitchen, Jordan pulled plenty of all-nighters to reach his goal in four and a half years.

“Yeah, it was crazy of me, but that’s just like my love and desire,” he said. “I had an affinity for nutrition and science and food. But I also wanted to study business because I wanted to run my own business one day.”

In his free time, he ran an unassuming food blog, the now-defunct Tamburg.com.

He particularly remembers his first business law class. It was “hard as heck,” he said, but it taught him to consider the ethical, legal and moral implications of any choice before making a decision. He still relies on that process.

“In my UF days, Jordan paused for this photo in Turlington Plaza with his friend Lydia Washington (BA ’06), who became student body vice president.

HONING HIS CULINARY CHOPS

After graduating from UF in 2003, Jordan accepted an internship with the Tampa Bay Rays, his hometown baseball team. It should have been a dream job for the budding Jerry McGuire, but something was missing.

“I fell in love with the campus and the experience there,” he said. Jordan also felt ready to take on the challenge of being a minority student on a mainly white campus. Once he was accepted to UF, he joined the Black Student Union and the PAACT (Pledging to Advance Academic Capacity Together) program, an initiative, through Black Affairs, for diverse first-year students.

Nearly 7% of UF’s undergraduate student population was Black during Jordan’s freshman year, according to federal IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey data.

In his UF days, Jordan paused for this photo in Turlington Plaza with his friend Lydia Washington (BA ’06), who became student body vice president.

On earning two UF degrees in just four and a half years: “Yeah, it was crazy of me, but that’s just like my love and desire.”

Being one of 40 PAACT Peers and having the support of key figures at the Dean of Students Office gave him the confidence to grow and “carve a new way” for himself on campus, he explained. “UF, for me, was a realization of what society is,” he said.

“It was quite important that I experienced another side of the world that I wasn’t part of before since I come from an African American community.”

With the aim of becoming a sports agent, Jordan worked on two degrees: business administration and sports management. Just as he had applied himself to chopping onions and carrots in his mother’s kitchen, Jordan pulled plenty of all-nighters to reach his goal in four and a half years.

“Yeah, it was crazy of me, but that’s just like my love and desire,” he said. “I had an affinity for nutrition and science and food. But I also wanted to study business because I wanted to run my own business one day.”

In his free time, he ran an unassuming food blog, the now-defunct Tamburg.com.

He particularly remembers his first business law class. It was “hard as heck,” he said, but it taught him to consider the ethical, legal and moral implications of any choice before making a decision. He still relies on that process.

“I was grateful for that,” he said. “It’s automatic in me now.”

HONING HIS CULINARY CHOPS

After graduating from UF in 2003, Jordan accepted an internship with the Tampa Bay Rays, his hometown baseball team. It should have been a dream job for the budding Jerry McGuire, but something was missing.

Patient, yet determined, Jordan got his wish.

During his apprenticeship at the Laundry, he worked alongside butcher Mark Bodinet, a West Coast leader in the local-organic movement. Jordan next traveled to New York City, where he cooked at the Michelin-starred Per Se under Chef Jonathan Benno, whose leadership taught him how to manage a team under pressure. Jordan's quest for knowledge even took him to Parma, Italy, where he lived and studied with a family of ninth-generation salumi- (cured meat) and pasta-makers. There he encountered the Italian verb *salare*, which means to use salt to season, preserve or cure meats. Salare would become the name of his first restaurant, in Seattle. It references both his Italian training and the longstanding Southern tradition of pickling and curing food.

A STAR (CHEF) IS BORN

How did this Floridian chef — trained in California, New York and Italy — end up in Washington State?

"Well, I was chasing love and making everybody happy!" said Jordan, referring to his love interest at the time (now his wife). 

Seattle had a burgeoning restaurant scene and farm-to-table movement. And the moment was right for a daring, entrepreneurial chef like Jordan to venture out on his own. Financed with help from a Kickstarter campaign and opened in June 2015, Salare would become the name of the game.

Jordan took JuneBaby one step further: showcasing humble dishes passed down by generations of Black cooks that are never seen on fine dining menus. A STAR (CHEF) IS BORN

It’s important to me, I’m having fun doing it.

"DREAM BIG, MY LITTLE STAR"

Like most restaurant owners, Jordan was thrown for a loop when COVID-19 hit in March 2020. Ever resourceful, the Warrington graduate quickly pivoted JuneBaby to carry-out only. He also partnered with Seattle nonprofits to turn Salare into a community kitchen, serving hundreds of free-to-go meals to kick-off restaurant workers each day. Since March, the kitchen has served more than 26,000 meals to those experiencing food insecurity. Jordan admits profits are down, but he says staying afloat and helping others are worth it.

Since March, the kitchen has served more than 26,000 meals to those experiencing food insecurity.

Young Edouardo may have initially complained when Monima Jordan put him to work, but Akil appears to be an enthusiastic sous-chef. During the filming of the July 2020 Gator Chef episode, Akil cheerfully inspected the ingredients and sampled Jordan’s mother’s weekly meal. "He named his group at school 'Golden Gators,'” said Jordan. "I think we have a future Gator here.

Heritage is meant to be passed on. Jordan said it best in his acceptance speech for Best New Restaurant at the 2018 James Beard Awards. After thanking his mother, he dedicated the prize to Akil. "I want you to dream big, my little star," he said on stage. "We’re making history tonight, and Daddy wants you to know that if you can dream it, you can achieve it."

Players often want the ball in their hands, but not the 26,000 meals to those experiencing food insecurity. Jordan is getting back to his roots with more than just pimento cheese. The affable chef recently helped the UF Alumni Association launch its online Gator Chef cooking video series, demonstrating a spicy watermelon salad with toasted feta from his Salare menu. And, of course, there is Akil. His six-year-old son just entered first grade, and Jordan is savoring the day-to-day challenges of being a working parent. That includes letting Akil be part of his philanthropy efforts and activities in the kitchen.

JULY 2020 College of Health and Human Performance story, “SPM Alum and Chef Edouardo Jordan Aids Restaurant Workers Impacted by Pandemic” at www.bw.ufl.edu/articles/2020/07/edouardo-jordan.html

To learn more about Jordan’s philanthropy efforts and activities in the kitchen, visit his online store: www.junebabyassets.com/store

Follow Jordan on Instagram at eduardojordan

• Cook along with Jordan in his exclusive video for Gator Nation: http://uff.to/gc-jordan

• Read the Ma

• Get some cool JuneBaby swag (Chilton's State of Mind Hoodies, Gator Spirit Tote and more.) desert Rain Paradise mix, Peach Basic Jam, Red Flint Cornbread Mix) at Jordan’s online store: edobased at jordan.html

• Donate to the Restaurant Worlds Relief Program to help Salare and other businesses feed displaced restaurant workers: instagram.com/09-01/6173/

Many current UF students don’t know who they were. But for tens of thousands of UF alumni, especially those who attended the university 30 years ago, those names are forever seared in their memory, conjuring one of the most tragic and terrifying times in UF history.

Over four days in late August 1990, a serial killer brutally murdered five college students, ages 17 to 23, in apartment complexes adjacent to UF along Archer Road. Four of the victims were UF undergraduates; the fifth, Hoyt, was a chemistry honors student at then-Santa Fe Community College.

News of the first two slayings broke Sunday, Aug. 26, the day before the start of the fall semester. Until then, UF’s main preoccupation had been the arrival of its new president, John Lombardi, in March, and the December return of Steve Spurrier (BSPE ’81) as UF’s new head football coach.

On Monday, Aug. 27, and Tuesday, Aug. 28, three more students’ bodies were found. Within days of being named the 13th best place to live in the United States, according to Money Magazine, the sleepy college town of Gainesville was branded as “perhaps the most dangerous place in America” by then-CBS News anchor Dan Rather.

That semester marked a loss of innocence for a generation of Gators, says Michael Browne (BSBA ’91, MBA ’97), then UF student body president.

“You don’t expect anything like that to happen when you’re 20, 22. For most people, as you get older, you find out the world is a tough place. Well, we found out then.”

Michael Browne (BSBA ’91, MBA ’97), then-UF student body president.

People walk by the mural on SW 34th Street honoring the five students who were murdered 30 years ago. While other panels are routinely repainted, this panel is considered sacred among locals and remains untouched, except for renewal.
“You don’t expect anything like that to happen when you’re 20, 22,” says Browne, now married and the Frisco, Texas, father of two 20-something daughters. “For most people, as you get older, you find out the world is a tough place. Well, we found out then.”

Terrorized students slept in large groups in dorm rooms, guarding doors with baseball bats. Hundreds more withdrew from UF or transferred to other schools.

“Don’t be melodramatic about it, but there was a monster in our midst. A monster.”

DONYA CURRIE (BSJ ’90)

Then: UF journalism senior, age 22
Now: Digital content deputy director, American Public Health Association

On Aug. 26, Currie was sitting in a movie theater watching “Darkman” with two fellow Alligator stringers, when she got a call to rush to a Gainesville Police Department (GPD) press conference at Williamsburg Apartments. Two young women had been murdered.

“I had not yet covered the case boot ever,” she says. “I was in my last semester, and I hadn’t even yet made staff of [the Alligator].”

They arrived late, but GPD spokesperson Lt. Sadie Darnell graciously repeated her report. That story launched Currie as a crime reporter. Soon after, she was made Alligator staff. Currie juggled daily press briefings with school. She was shy and sensitive, but says she quickly learned to assert herself.

“Giant news trucks, every single newspaper in the state was there. And here I was, just this little student reporter, trying to shout out questions,” she recalls.

One morning, Currie asked the question on many minds. Had semen been found at the crime scene? “I can’t even remember the answer now, but everybody was writing down the answer,” she says. That afternoon in class, a professor gave her the ultimate J school compliment: “Good question.”

Covering the story was a double-edged sword, Currie says. Knowing more than most students gave her a feeling of control, but the yearlong effort was physically and emotionally exhausting. “And some details, such as the sight of body parts being carried out in a police bag, were impossible to forget. For that reason, she turned down the GPD’s offer to inspect the crime scene photos. “I did not want to have those images burned in my brain,” says Currie.

GPD made that offer again in 1994, when Curry, after quitting, returned to cover the trial of the man who would later be convicted and put to death for the murders.

She was shy and sensitive then, but quickly learned to assert herself in the press pool.

Tuition fees were frozen, students were allowed to miss class without academic penalties through Sept. 7, and the university hosted up its Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol (SNAP), which escorted students around campus. Santa Fe launched a program similar to SNAP.

At twice daily news briefings broadcast on Florida TV stations, Browne, President Lombardi and Vice President for Student Affairs Art Sandeen presented a united front, helping students and parents stay abreast of developments in real time, something not easily done in the days before email and the Internet.

Lombardi and Sandeen made all of the new safety measures happen fast,” says Browne. “As leaders, they could have easily stood in front of the news cameras and talked about the institution and their reputation. There was none of that. It was all about keeping the students safe.”

Browne also inspired courage. In a defining moment, the student body president stood in front of cameras and announced, “This is my university, and they’re not going to take it away from me,” urging fellow Gators to return to campus.

Rahul Patel (BA ‘94, JD ’97), then an 18-year-old freshman, remembers the chaos of a campus filled with national media, and the fear of a killer roaming free. But the guidance of Brown and other student leaders inspired him to become active at UF; he says. He credits their example with his decision to become a Preview staffer, campus diplomat and Florida Cicerone. And while Patel, now a partner at King & Spalding law firm in Atlanta, can’t say anything good came of the crisis, he notes it did reveal the caring and solidarity at the heart of the Gator Nation.

“It demonstrated that by coming together,” he says, “we could get through anything.”

A Climate of Fear

When the bulk of students returned after Labor Day, classes resumed amid an active police investigation. Hundreds of state and local officers converged in Gainesville, including experts in psychological profiling who had worked on the killings at Florida State University in 1978.

Uncertainty and panic fueled rumors about additional bodies being hid from the public and the killer being a fellow student. After a crisis hotline received thousands of calls from concerned locals, the Gainesville Police Department nabbed a mentally ill UF freshman with a violent past as a suspect. But the evidence linking the student to the murders was weak, and investigators doggedly continued their search for the real killer, with few details leaked to the public.

On Sept. 5, a drifter and career criminal named Daniel Rolling from Shreveport, LA, was arrested for robbing an Ocala supermarket and booked into the Marion County Jail. While

ABOVE: UF students Michelle Jones and Jacob Mellowheim plead with UF President John Lombardi to cancel classes on Aug. 28, 1990. BELOW: Linda Murphy, Maria Dunn and Sheila Sapp, leave Gatordowm apartments for Ocala after the bodies of Tracey Paules and Manuel Taboada were found there on Aug. 28.

Clockwise from top: UF Student Body President Michael Browne with UF President John Lombardi; students Swati and Rahul Patel; and Elizabeth Gadsby in 1990 all say their memories of that time remain vivid.

“I was there that day when he pled guilty,” says Currie. “It was really hard to be physically near him. It was really hard to be near him found guilty and later executed.

Gadsby

Patel

PROVIDED PHOTOS

Clockwise from top: UF Student Body President Michael Browne with UF President John Lombardi; students Swati and Rahul Patel; and Elizabeth Gadsby in 1990 all say their memories of that time remain vivid.
investigating that crime, officers matched the 36-year-old’s tools to marks left at the Gainesville crime scenes. A search of his abandoned campsite across from the Archer Road apartment complexes revealed audio diaries in which he hinted at the crimes.

In January 1991, police linked a tooth extracted from the suspect with DNA evidence found at the Gainesville crime scenes. More than a year later, in June 1992, he was arrested with the five murders. In February 1994, he pled guilty to all charges, and then-State Attorney Rod Smith successfully led the penalty phase of the prosecution, securing a death sentence.

“I’ve been running from first one thing and then another all my life, whether from problems at home or with the law or from myself,” the killer told the court. “But there are some things that you just can’t run from, and this being one of those.”

"You got to see a lot of folks taking care of each other."
hen Sherry McCampbell was a young girl, one of her father’s Navy buddies taught her celestial navigation, showing her a way across the waves by linking herself to the skies above. She has never stopped following seas or seeking stars.

“When you live around lights, you forget what the heavens really look like,” McCampbell (BSIE ’79) mused with wonder in her travel blog while off the coast of Belize in 2007, the year she and husband Dave began their around-the-world retirement sailing adventure. Nearly 14 years later, McCampbell is almost 45,000 nautical miles into the journey of a lifetime, although at this writing, she and Dave were stranded in the Philippines aboard their 44-foot St Francis catamaran, the S/V Soggy Paws, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Not that being stuck in a tropical paradise is a hardship, exactly. But Sherry isn’t the sitting still type. Neither is Dave. They’re eager to get cruising again, while sharing a life together that seems to have been written in the stars, too.

Cheryl “Sherry” Gray McCampbell, 63, is a self-described “Navy brat” whose father settled the family in the Keys upon his retirement. The day after she graduated salutatorian in a class of 62 kids from Marathon High School, the family set off on a year’s sailing trip around the Caribbean. “While we were sailing, a family friend who was a Gator grad applied to UF for me, and by the time we returned in June of 1975, I was heading off to college,” she says, adding with a laugh, “I didn’t really get a choice!”

She “absolutely loved” being a Gator, where she held season football tickets and enjoyed all the big social events. She sought out adventure, learning to fly airplanes and skydive while being academically inspired in the Honors Program by English professor and mentor Frank Sciadini — they became fast friends when she discovered he was building a boat in his living room. Sciadini (BA ’58, MAT ’60) died in 2004.

“We had some lively conversations, and his good guidance helped me through ‘big school’ shock my first couple of years at UF,” says McCampbell.

After graduating, she worked in industrial systems engineering and computer programming for 13 years before she and her first husband took a four-year sabbatical, sailing the Eastern Seaboard and Caribbean while homeschooling their then-five-year-old daughter.

Dave McCampbell, 74, went to Florida State before heading to the Naval Academy. He’s the son of Capt. David McCampbell, the Navy’s all-time leading flying ace who set an aerial combat record during World War II by shooting down nine enemy planes in a single mission during the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

It’s no coincidence that the McCampbells ended up docked in the region of Dave’s father’s heroic feats. When they began charting their circumnavigation of the earth, they made sure to include stops in the South Pacific to dive war-era wrecks and connect with family history.

“The McCampbells’ joint adventure started when Sherry, a Coast Guard-licensed captain, certified U.S. Sailing instructor and former sailboat racing team leader, was...
looking to date following her divorce. But she had requirements. Mainly, the guy had to have as much seawater in his veins as she did. Mechanical skills were a plus. Bonus points if he already owned a sailboat.

“A sailing friend gave me the names of three guys with boats looking for cruising partners, and Dave was actually at the bottom of that list,” McCampbell says, laughing again. “Dave’s not a party guy, and I’m kind of outgoing, but it works. He keeps me grounded. We respect each other’s abilities and make a really good couple.” They got married and set sail in the same week. Since then, they’ve visited dozens of exotic locales (with Fiji, the Solomon Islands and New Guinea being favorites so far) and return to the States about once a year (by plane) to see family and friends for the holidays, host seminars on long-distance cruising and try to catch a UF-FSU game. Email, social media and video chats keep them connected with loved ones while at sea.

They have a five-year timeline for completing their epic cruise — planned next stops include Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, followed by Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives. After that they’ll cross the Indian Ocean and head up the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, where they want to cruise a bit before heading back to the States to sell the Soggy Paws. “We learned that we are travelers rather than just sailors,” McCampbell says. “This is why we’re only halfway around after 13 years. There are so many great experiences, people and cultures along the way.”

As they wait in port, this spirit serves them well. They share travel tales — “Remember hiking the active volcano in Guatemala? And that freak storm in French Polynesia that almost ran us into the reef?” — while sipping homemade wine with fellow cruisers also moored by the pandemic. McCampbell stays hopeful, looking toward new explorations after the cruise, when she and Dave plan a grand tour of Europe by land. She knows she’ll never sit still. And she won’t stop sailing. “It gives you the incredible feeling of being able to move without any motors — that quiet sound with a beautiful wing shape to the sails and you just go,” McCampbell says, “and if you have enough patience and skill, you can go anywhere you want.”

Out there on the seas where open sky meets horizon, the options seem limitless, like the stars themselves.

Follow their adventures at svoggypaws.com or on Sherry’s blog svoggypaws.blogspot.com
Learn about long-distance cruising at the Seven Seas Cruising Association: ssc.org
Read Sherry’s favorite book on long-distance cruising: World Cruising Routes by Jimmy Cornell (cornellsailing.com)
Routine, Yet Extraordinary

UF students returned this fall to a wholly different university experience due to COVID-19

PHOTO ESSAY BY AARON DAYE

Simple traditions, such as moving into UF residence halls, Greek recruitment and freshmen welcome events, looked quite different this fall when UF leaders added copious amounts of safety precautions to prevent a resurgence of the coronavirus pandemic on campus. On the following pages, see examples of these modified traditions for students who opted for brick-and-mortar learning in Gainesville, rather than remote, all-online course offerings.

ABOVE: Freshman John White, followed by his mother, Becky White, and family friend, Herman Durias, moved into Reid Hall this fall during a pre-determined time window, in order to create space between his family and those of other hall residents.

TOP RIGHT: Advertising senior Julie Thomas, left, and microbiology junior Tim Buchanan trek through Turlington Plaza in September. Prior to the pandemic, this space was often packed with students, organization booths and activities.

ABOVE: UF staff added signs throughout campus that guide physical distancing efforts and remind people to wear their masks and practice pandemic precautions.
FAR LEFT: Freshman Gian Franco Madonia, left, transfer student Trevor Wayne, right, and freshman Graham Corbitt introduce themselves to each other while waiting for their first class outside Constans Theatre by the Reitz Union.

LEFT: A UF Hispanic-Latinx Affairs staffer at La Casita uses Zoom to host ADELANTE, a three-day networking and transition-to-college program for incoming Latinx students. This event typically takes place in person at La Casita.

ABOVE: Freshman Yusra Ahmed practices physical distancing while playing Simon Says during the Sweet Event first-year student welcome reception on the J. Wayne Reitz Union north lawn.

FAR LEFT: Delta Gamma sorority sisters virtually welcome new members during Bid Day 2020.

LEFT: Plexiglass separates freshman biology major Maryanne Bowns (right) from Krishna Lunch server Madhu Miele (left) near Library West.

LEFT: The Great Gator Welcome Film Fest at the Stephen C. O’Connell Center required students to sit with their own “QuaranTeam” and socially distance from other designated groups.
LEADER OF THE PACK

Troy Smith (BA ’93) is an 11-year volunteer with THE PLAYERS Championship and was recently named the 2021 tournament chairman. In this role, he will lead 2,000-plus volunteers who make this golf championship possible. The PGA Tour’s flagship event is scheduled for March 9-14, 2021, at THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach. When Smith is not volunteering, he is a construction law attorney, focusing on complex commercial litigation as a partner at Burr & Forman. During the pandemic as he worked from home, Smith and his wife, Jenni, also became impromptu teachers for their six children ages 12 and younger.

“The blessing of getting to spend more time with my family has far outweighed the challenges this pandemic has brought,” Smith said. “Our family spent most of the summer at the beach, playing golf and getting out on the Intracoastal.”

As far as his role with the famous golf tournament, Smith says he looks forward to rolling out new best practices “for a safe and successful” tournament. “I look forward to support from Gator Nation,” he said. “I will always cherish my time at UF. It’s great to be a Florida Gator!”

STEVE MEADOWS PHOTOGRAPHY
The Hart family from North Central Florida — who have an even dozen Gators in their ranks — say another UF national title is likely on its way. Their premonition is based on a parallel they say is too strong to be coincidence: Each time a family member is deployed overseas, the Gators win a title.

It started in 2003 when patriarch, now retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Robert “Bobby” Hart (BSJ ’76, MAMC ’95), was deployed to Kuwait and Iraq. His sister, Rebecca Hart Blaudow (BSTel ’91) of Neptune Beach, asked him to take along an Albert stuffed animal and send back letters to her third grade son, Jacob Blaudow (BA ’20). Bobby did, and during his tour the Gators defeated Ohio State to win the national football title on Jan. 8, 2007.

“Ours was the command unit, and we had a sub-unit from Columbus, Ohio,” said Bobby, who added that he watched the title match with a handful of Gators and about 30 Buckeye fans. When Ohio State scored the first touchdown, a higher ranking officer from Ohio came toward Bobby and shouted “Welcome to big boy football!” Of course the Buckeyes scored only once more in the game, losing 41-14, and the officer had to admit defeat to Bobby the next morning in their mess hall.

During Bobby’s next deployment to Baghdad and Iraq in 2006-07, he again took the Albert plushie and sent messages and photos back to his second grade students taught by his wife, Cheryl Hart (BAEd ’76). The result: two Gator national titles were secured in football and basketball.

Bobby’s son, Air Force Lt. Col. Dustin Hart (BSPR ’02), was the next to deploy to Afghanistan in 2008-09. He also took the Albert stuffed animal and sent letters to his nephew Alex Blaudow’s elementary class (Alex is now a UF aeronautical engineering freshman). The Gators came through again to win the BCS football title.

Considering the strength of their family’s influence, this spring Jonathan Hart (BSAdv ’05) asked when a family member could deploy again to spark another Gator title. Shortly after, they learned that Dustin was to report for duty in Qatar. He’s there now, with Albert, writing letters to his own four kids, as well as his nieces and nephews. The Harts say this means another title is surely not far away.

“When Harts deploy, Gators win”

“I saw the impact that teaching can make when you push students to think critically and to engage with difficult conversations. I love my research. I love working with communities. But every student that comes away … thinking about the world in a different way or having found their own place …, makes it all worth it.”

— MARY RODRIGUEZ (MS ’10, PHD ’15), ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AT OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, WHO RECEIVED THE EDUCATOR AWARD FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGES OF TEACHERS OF AGRICULTURE. RODRIGUEZ TEACHES A VARIETY OF COURSES FOR UNDERGRADUATES AND GRADUATE STUDENTS. SHE LIVES IN COLUMBUS, OHIO.
ULTIMATE TAX COACH
Brad Gould (BSAC ’98, MACC ’98, JD ’01) of Port Saint Lucie, a shareholder in the Dean Mead law firm, has been named chair of the American Bar Association Tax Section’s S corporations Committee — a two-year term. In addition to focusing on the federal treatment of S Corp businesses, this committee also proposes and comments on pending federal legislation, regulations and revenue rulings.

GARDEN OF GATORS
Ira Griffith (BSJ ’74) of Johns Creek, GA, said after seeing so many interesting license plates in this magazine, he thought fellow alumni might get a kick out of his Gator garden.

FROM MARKET TO MARKET
Michael Monahan (BSPR ’96) is president and CEO of Movex, an integrated marketing agency in Orlando. His 25 years of corporate communications and public relations experience has taken him to Tech Image in Chicago, Timken in Canton, Ohio, Walter Energy in Tampa, Birmingham, AL, and Vancouver, and IMC Phosphates in Mulberry. Movex is a subsidiary of Massey Services, the nation’s fifth largest pest prevention company.

GATOR FAMILY GAMES
Paul Goldman (BSEE ’67) of Rye, NH, said his younger brother, Leonard Goldman (BFA ’66, BDS ’76, MS ’74) of Vajparasoo painted this mural on the 20-by-20-foot game room wall in Ben Goldman’s (BSEE ’61), their older brother’s, house in Weirsdale. Paul noted that his brother included a rocket in the background of the painting as a nod to Cape Canaveral. The brothers say that the entire game room is Gator-themed. Their sister, the late Jacquelin Goldman (BA ’56), spent her entire 35-year career as a UF psychology professor and created graduate fellowships, scholarships, grants and travel stipends at UF to assist developmental psychology students. The Goldman family includes 14 Gators across four generations.

ON AIR IN 3, 2, 1
Ryan Rothstein (BABA ’96) is the new president and general manager of the WPTZ and WNNE Hearst TV stations that cover the Burlington, VT, and Plattsburgh, NY, markets. This promotion comes after 23 years of service at WPBF in West Palm Beach, where he held the Health and Wellness Festival, featuring Dr. Oz, and developed a data-focused sales initiative that was adopted by many Hearst stations. Rothstein said he got his start in the industry by interning at WPBF during his junior year at UF. When he’s not working, Rothstein is likely running or preparing for a marathon.

ALWAYS A CICERONE
Retired Marine fighter pilot Lt. Col. Richard Allain (BSES ’99), who recently co-founded a tech start-up, is says he’s worn his UF Cicerone shirt with pride since graduation, “but after hundreds of tours and now 20 years, it’s become a bit thread bare.”

He said the shirt has led him to meet quite a few other Gators over the years, including his TOPGUN senior instructor. They both later commanded fighter squadrons, which Allain says is no coincidence.

“I’ve always thought it was a cool way to show my Gator pride, and it continues to generate interest,” said Allain, who now lives in Cabin John, MD.

In honor of his service as a Cicerone and in the military, the UF Alumni Association recently sent Allain a new Cicerone staff shirt.

TRUE TECH-SPARKED EQUALITY
Meher Kasam (MS ’12) is a senior software engineer for Square in San Francisco and likely one of the most famous Gators you’ve never heard of.

A champion of accessibility and inclusion, AI expert, author and speaker, Kasam’s work at Microsoft Research yielded several projects that have empowered millions of people with accessibility needs worldwide, including those with visual, hearing, learning and motor impairments. His technologies include real-time interpreting, multi-voice text-to-speech and personalized audio and/or video shows.

The American Council of the Blind, Federal Communications Commission, annual Consumer Technology Association trade show and Fast Company magazine have all 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.”

As an author, Kasam advocates that tech companies and staff break 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, Meher mentors people from underrepresented groups who transition from non-STEM fields into the technology sector. In April, Meher was named to the UF Alumni Association’s 40 Gators Under 40 list, which honors outstanding young alumni whose achievements positively influence others and who are going greater in their communities and professions.
TEACHING GENERATIONS

Barbara Connolly (BSPT '70) published the fourth edition of her globally distributed textbook, “Therapeutic Exercise for Children with Developmental Disabilities.” She was University of Tennessee’s physical therapy department chair for 24 years and its College of Allied Health Professions dean at the time of her retirement in 2010. She now lives in Melbourne Beach and continues to teach professional development courses both nationally and internationally.

LIFE, LESSONS AND FORGIVENESS

Tina Egnoski (BA '83) published a historical fiction novel, “Burn Down This World,” about UF students who faced the anti-Vietnam War movement and social unrest on campus, and how it changed the course of their lives long after the 1960s were over. Egnoski, who drew upon her own experiences at UF, works in the Rhode Island School of Design’s Liberal Arts Division.

TRIBUTE TO A MAYAN SCHOLAR

Matthew Watson (MA '05, PhD '10) of South Hadley, MA, published Afterlives of Affect about the life and work of artist and Mayanist scholar Linda Schele (1942-1998). His book connects Schele with a discussion about anthropology, the nature of cultural inquiry and the social conditions of knowledge production.

LITTLE-KNOWN ICON IS REVEALED

Linda Hansen Caldwell (BSPE '76), a member of UF’s first volleyball team who went on to be a health educator and science teacher at John Gorrie Jr. High in Jacksonville, wrote a biography about Gorrie, a physician, inventor, scientist and public health educator. He vowed to cure malaria and yellow fever, and in pursuit of that goal discovered how temperature affected the likelihood of epidemics. Called “He Made Ice and Changed the World,” the book explores the life of this underrated historical figure. Caldwell lives in Dunnellon, where she is retired and enjoys attending every UF volleyball match possible. Incidentally, UF’s College of Medicine annually grants a John Gorrie Award to the senior who shows the “best all-around promise for becoming a physician of the highest type.”

FIRST NOVEL IS A WINNER

William Schreiber (BSJ '86) won the Rising Star Award from the Women’s Fiction Writers Association for his debut novel, Someone to Watch Over, a multigenerational Southern family saga. Schreiber, a former editor of FLORIDA GATOR (then known as University of Florida TODAY), is the owner of Schreiber Media LLC in Seattle.

MULTILAYERED MYSTERY

Deborah Matthies-D’Aurelio (BSADV ’89) spent 15 years working in advertising, starting her career at J. Walter Thompson in Los Angeles. She then freelanced while raising two children in Atlanta. Most recently, she published her first novel aimed at middle school ages called The Secret Notebook. The historical mystery combines fact with fiction and includes STEM tie-ins to encourage girls to be inventive and explore fields in engineering.
Since group events worldwide are suspended due to coronavirus concerns, Florida Gator magazine asked Gator Club members how they’re sharing their Gator pride in the meantime. The following are just a few of their replies. To find a Gator Club near you, visit UFalumni.ufl.edu/GatorClubs/Find

Atlanta Gator Club members Anais Lopez Brown (BA ‘08) and Carl Brown (BA ‘06) say they like to dress their daughter, Vivvi Grace, in Gator clothes. Anais is an attorney, and Carl is a director at an IT company. They live in Sandy Springs, GA.

Laura Coffee made this game day outfit for her pet guinea pig, Chauncey. Coffee says her boyfriend, Skyler Thornton (‘03-’05), who was a UF running back, taught Chauncey all about football. “He loves to get dressed and watch the games with us! We all cheer together and have a great time.” Coffee is a senior travel agent. She and Chauncey live in Lawrenceville, GA.

Derrick Kopeck (BSH ’04) made sure his “future Gators” triplets, Wyatt, Kyra and Antonella Kopeck, have all the Gator gear they need. The Music City Gator Club members live in Nashville, TN, where Derrick is an auto insurance claims supervisor.

Edith Metzger in Scottsdale, AZ, said she adopted this little girl, whom she named “Baby Gator,” after the pup and her eight brothers and sisters were found under a porch on Thanksgiving and taken to an animal shelter. Metzger helped nurse Baby Gator back to good health. Now five years later, Baby Gator still loves wearing her UF jersey and cheers for the boys and girls in orange and blue by barking whenever Metzger says “Go Gators!”

Pinellas Gator Club members conducted 10 car parades in June to celebrate each of the local UF-bound high school seniors who won $1,000 scholarships through the club’s Emerson Scholarship program. Club President Sarah Stephens said members are proud of these local students, who started their college journeys at UF this fall. Those pictured are (from left) Jim Hannigan, Rodney Fisher, Abigail Berlin (scholarship winner), Renee Dabbie, Stephanie Barthel, Sarah Stephens and Rachel Franzek.

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GATORS AROUND THE WORLD

Since most people are stuck sheltering at home, enjoy these recently submitted reader photos from past and present adventures.

Marines Capt. Brian Barnes (BA ’12) showed his Gator spirit during a deployment “somewhere in the Mediterranean.” His mother, Karen Green Barnes (BHS ’80, MHS ’82), proudly shared the photo with Gator Nation.

Herb McReynolds (BS ’74, MD ’76) of Tucson, AZ, and Ret Thomas (BA ’75, EDS ’78, MEd ’78) of Gainesville took this flag and their families through Lower Antelope Canyon, AZ.

A gaggle of these UF engineering graduates enjoyed an Alaska fishing trip together. From left are Trase Travers (BSCE ’91) of Tampa, Oscar Tazoe (MSCE ’00) of West Palm Beach, Clayton Syfrett (BSCE ’92) of Panama City and Jonathan Milton (BSCE ’90) of Stuart.

Allison (BSAcc ’95, MAcc ’95) and Doug Browning (BSAcc ’95, MAcc ’95) of Wellington gave a Gator chomp with their family at the Dead Sea in Israel.

John Jonas (JD ’75, LLM ’76) of Gainesville took his Gator flag to the Antarctic Peninsula in February.

Angie Foister Hingson (BSTel ’98) of Lake City said she loved representing the Gator Nation in Israel at the Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea and the Mount of Olives.

Get away with a day to play and rediscover Gainesville! Many museums have reopened with enhanced safety protocols, creating opportunities to explore more than 600 artifacts and paintings at the Harn Museum of Art, the Butterfly Rainforest at the Florida Museum of Natural History, and the Brain. The World Inside Your Head exhibit at the Cade Museum. Outdoor enthusiasts can view the rare giant Victoria lilies at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, or cool off in the area’s fresh water springs and more. Your next unforgettable adventure awaits in Gainesville and Alachua County.

Springs & Rivers

Kanapaha Botanical Gardens

Dance Alive National Ballet

Hippodrome Theatre

VisitGainesville.com

Text “WHATSGOOD” to 22828 to receive the WHAT’S GOOD WEEKLY EVENT GUIDE
FABULOUS FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE
Meredith Cochise Ross (BSJ ‘06, MAMC ‘09) died on June 13 from injuries received in a hit-and-run accident. For the past 10 years, she was a course director and professor of New Media Journalism and Public Relations graduate programs at Full Sail University in Winter Park. While she was an undergraduate and graduate student at UF, she contributed stories and other efforts to produce this alumni magazine and encouraged scores of high schoolers to pursue journalism by organizing and leading UF’s Summer and graduate student at UF, she was a course director and professor of New Media Journalism and Public Relations graduate programs at Full Sail University in Winter Park. During her research in 1976 single-handedly debunked many aspects of Sigmund Freud’s widely accepted theories about women and sexuality, and revealed that women didn’t need men to have orgasms. The Hite Report offered data from 3,500 women, sparked scathing rebuttals and sold millions of copies worldwide. During a 2006 interview, she said one of her greatest achievements was revealing the physiology behind women’s orgasms. In another interview, she said she felt proud to have “contributed significantly” to research methodology. “After all, she said, “Freud only interviewed three Viennese women.” Hite’s later books explored male sexuality, emotional abuse in purportedly “loving” relationships and common themes in the sex lives of British women.” Throughout her career, Hite’s reputation was often attacked and her feministic label demonized. She moved to Europe in 1969 and renounced her U.S. citizenship a few years later. She was 77.

TRAILBLAZING RESEARCHER
Shere Hite (BA ‘63, MA ’66) died Sept. 9. Her research in 1976 single-handedly debunked many aspects of Sigmund Freud’s widely accepted theories about women and sexuality, and revealed that women didn’t need men to have orgasms. The Hite Report offered data from 3,500 women, sparked scathing rebuttals and sold millions of copies worldwide. During a 2006 interview, she said one of her greatest achievements was revealing the physiology behind women’s orgasms. In another interview, she said she felt proud to have “contributed significantly” to research methodology. “After all, she said, “Freud only interviewed three Viennese women.” Hite’s later books explored male sexuality, emotional abuse in purportedly “loving” relationships and common themes in the sex lives of British women.” Throughout her career, Hite’s reputation was often attacked and her feministic label demonized. She moved to Europe in 1969 and renounced her U.S. citizenship a few years later. She was 77.

BEFORE INDIANA JONES, THERE WAS …
Edwin “Ed” Brownell (BSJ ’65) of Coral Gables, who died of natural causes on July 23 under UF Gator blanket lovingly made by his wife, Shanae, and young son. He was 48.

TRUE BLUE GATOR
Ben Hill Griffin III (BS ’62), died of cancer on July 25. The third-generation citrus grower and cattle rancher lived in Frostproof and grew up learning the family business from his father, Ben Hill Griffin Jr., the namesake of UF’s football stadium. Griffin’s business success led him to be inducted into both the Florida Agricultural and Florida Citrus halls of fame. A prolific philanthropist, just like his father, Griffin passionately funded numerous educational endeavors. For instance, his donation of 1,000 acres kicked off the construction of Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers. He also endowed scholarships at UF, Florida Southern College, Warner University. The Gator Boosters lifetime member and legendary director had attended home Gator football games since the mid-50s and had a UF stadium seat that belonged to his father and dated back to 1949. He was 78.

IN MEMORIUM
Meredith Cochise Ross (BSJ ’06, MAMC ’09) died on June 13 from injuries received in a hit-and-run accident. For the past 10 years, she was a course director and professor of New Media Journalism and Public Relations graduate programs at Full Sail University in Winter Park. While she was an undergraduate and graduate student at UF, she contributed stories and other efforts to produce this alumni magazine and encouraged scores of high schoolers to pursue journalism by organizing and leading UF’s Summer and graduate student at UF, she was a course director and professor of New Media Journalism and Public Relations graduate programs at Full Sail University in Winter Park. During the late ’60 when Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War protests were prevalent, students often turned to him for guidance and bail. He was a P.K. Yonge lifer (attending K-12) who played on its 6-man football team and its first 11-man football team, as well as other sports. A PKY Sports Hall of Fame member and Distinguished Alumnus, he was a fixture at PKY and UF events during his retirement, encouraging students of all ages. He served in other educational leadership roles at UF, Albany Junior College and the University of North Florida. He was a licensed private-practice psychologist for more than 20 years and an ordained pastor, leading congregations from age 16 until the week before his death. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Betty Arnette. He was 86.

SHOOTING STAR
ESPN reporter Edward Aschoff (BSJ ’08) died of undiagnosed non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma (which presented as pneumonia) on Dec. 24, his 34th birthday. He covered SEC sports before moving to Los Angeles in 2017 for a more expanded television reporting post. Over the past three seasons, he reported for ESPN.com, SportsCenter, SEC Network and ESPN Radio. Before that, he covered UF football, baseball and basketball for the Gainesville Sun newspaper. Among his numerous awards was a Football Writers Association of America first-place story on racism and African American college football players. In his memory, the association created a rising star award for sports journalists under the age of 34. In addition, UF created the Edward Aschoff Memorial Fund to support students pursuing sports journalism, and the UF Alumni Association named him to its 40 Gators Under 40 list, which honors outstanding young alumni.

LEGENDARY GATOR
UF football wide receiver Aubrey Hill (BSESS ’94, MSRS ’99) of Hollywood died Aug. 16 of cancer while he was preparing for his fourth season as receivers coach at Florida International University. During his UF career (1991-94), Hill caught 87 passes for 1,454 yards and 18 touchdowns during the program’s first three SEC Championship-winning seasons. He is also one of only a handful of players for whom Coach Steve Spurrier named a play ‘Aubrey Hill was … the first wide receiver that I ever used as a tight end,’ Spurrier said. “I still remember two of his greatest plays: a seam route to beat South Carolina in 1992 that helped us win the division and a pass he caught from Chris Doering that set up the game-winning touchdown versus Alabama in 1994. He will always be remembered as a truly wonderful teammate and Gator. He will be missed.” Hill is survived by his wife, Shanae, and young son. He was 48.
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. Put UF and our Gators on top by purchasing a UF license plate the next time you renew your tag. GatorUp.ufl.edu

Send photos with your name, town, degree year and occupation to: FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu

WHO’S UNDER THAT GATOR MASK?

Florida Gator football in person next season. Go Gators!

1. John Banister of Monrovia, NC, is a senior technology manager at Wells Fargo and a Charlotte Gator Club member.
2. Darcy Grabenstein (BSJ ’79) of Burlington, N.J. shows her Gator pride all the way up in the Garden State. She is a senior manager of content marketing strategy for TriScope.
3. Daniel Perry (BA ’70) of Jacksonville said he and his wife, Bonnie, love the Gators and the Beavals.
4. S. Mark Berman (BA ’54) sports these plates on his vehicles. He is the director of operations for Taylor Morrison Homes in Austin, TX.
5. Brian Natwick (BSSC ’01) is president of Crescent Communities in Charlotte, NC, where he sports this plate.
6. Ralph Vernon Redgrave (BA ‘65) is a retired salmonian near Groveland, WI of his registered cattle brand.
7. Robert “Bing” Crosby (BSFR ’72) of Clearwater shared these tags that he secured for his vehicles.
8. Michael “Chris” McLaughlin (BSEE ’85) got this plate after UF’s 2009 football national championship when he lived in Wayneville, OH. He and his wife moved to Florida last year.
9. Ricky Merola (BSFIN ’95) shows his Gator pride in Baroda, NY. He works for the Performance Health Institute in Pearl River, NY.
10. Jennifer “June” Miller (MS ’15, PharmD ’16) lives in Toquerville, UT. She is a consultant pharmacist for Omnicare in Utah and a clinical pharmacist for Valley Hospital Medical Center in Las Vegas.
11. Ed Mejias (BSEE ’93) and Joanne Harlin (BA ’94) had this tag when they lived in Honolulu They’re back home in Key West now where they own a charter sailing business, Aloha Sailing Key West.
12. Gary Collins (BA ’74) spends summers in Westfield, IN. and winters in The Villages. This tag has been on his car between his two homes and across the country during the past 25 years.
13. Eric Heidrick (BSEE ’76) retired after 26 years in the Air Force and then again after building U.S. Embassies. Now he and his Purple Heart recipient wife, Karen, live in Bostwick on the St. John’s river.
14. Sharon Barkells Heidrick (BSEE ’97) is a travel agency owner and agent in Lake Mary, who sports this tag on her car.
15. Tom Johnson (BSFR ’70) is a retired civil engineer and a member of the University of Florida’s alumni association chapter. He wears this personalized tag to show his Gator sport.
16. Roger DeVore (ICE ’60) of Columbus, Ohio, says, “It’s fun to be approached by other Gators when traveling.” He and his wife, Ann, are both UF Alumni Association charter member.
17. Elizabeth Bright’s (BS ’85, BA ’93) tag reflects her love for the Gators. She and her husband, Blaine (BA ’80, MS ’82), and their children, Sally (BS ’18) and UF freshman Paul, are from Bradenton.
18. Ted Bujak (PharmD ’80) shows this tag in North Las Vegas, NV where he retired after 45 years as a pharmacist.
19. Gary Farber (BSBC ’84) had this tag when he lived in California. He and his wife, Nicole, now live in Belgium and still support the Gaters when traveling. ”It’s fun to be approached by other Gators when traveling.” He and his wife, Ann, are both UF Alumni Association charter member.
20. Mike Kolasinski (BAE ’72, PhD ’80) said people thought his tag was special ordered, but “It was just the next one in the stack.” He lives in Melbourne, FL, where he is president of Eastern Florida State College’s Melbourne campus.
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24. Robert Rimmer (BS ’65, Mag ’71) is a UF IFAS agricultural agent emeritus (launched UF’s 1st sheep study) who lives in Cocoa. The word for a female sheep “ewe” is pronounced “U” or “you.”

SHOWING YOUR GATOR PRIDE ON THE ROAD?

Florida Gator pride while wearing your mask. So get your Gator pride on the road with UF personalized car tags. Send photos with your name, town, degree year and occupation to: FloridaGator@ufalumni.ufl.edu

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Membership 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.

MEET FELLOW GATOR:

**PHILLIP CHENG**

**BECOMING A GATOR DOESN’T ALWAYS START** when you receive your acceptance letter to UF. For me, it happened in the most unexpected of places — Connecticut.

My freshman year, UF’s Multicultural and Diversity Affairs sponsored students to attend the largest Asian American student conference on the East Coast. Arriving late to the opening keynote speech, 20 of us Gators layered in orange and blue sweatshirts, jackets and beanies marched into the auditorium to the surprise of the other conference attendees. In that moment, multiple parts of my identity — being a first-generation college student, Asian American and a Florida Gator — all coalesced into one space, and all I felt was pride for who I was and the institution I represented.

Similarly, becoming a UF Alumni Association life member doesn’t happen the moment you walk across the stage at graduation. For me, it happened when year after year I would return to UF to visit friends, professors and junior classmates. It happened when I had no inhibitions of yelling “Go Gators” at the sight of another Gator in different parts of the world. It happened when I realized The Swamp will always be my home and that I will always bleed orange and blue.

I believe it’s so important for Gators of all colors, shapes and sizes to be seen, to share their stories, and to be involved always for the greater good. The UF Alumni Association offers opportunities to do just that, so that’s why I became a life member.”

— Phillip Cheng (BSISE ’11, BA ’11) of Lakeland, now lives in San Francisco, where he works in the educational technology startup industry in Silicon Valley and is an Ethnic Studies lecturer at Laney College in Oakland. He is an active member and volunteer with UF’s Asian Alumni Association.
GATORS HIRING GATORS

Think your company has a lot of Gators in its ranks? Well, check out these industry leaders, whose recruiters go out of their way to hire UF graduates because of the training, internships and preparation received at UF.

WE HAVE SEEN PASSIONATE, WELL-ROUNDED PEOPLE COME OUT OF UF’S PROGRAMS.

Fisher Investments’

TAMPA, FL | A FEE-ONLY MONEY MANAGEMENT ADVISER

SMALL, BUT MIGHTY: A significant portion of management are Gators, leading a staff of 120. Those pictured here are: Johnny Hoblick (BSAg ’16), Robert Kizer (BSBA ’14), Kevin Dewansingh (BSAg ’19), Andre Farrell (BSAg ’16) and David Lawson (BS ’11). Not pictured is Libbie Clark (BS ’17).

WHY UF? President Ty Strode said he’d had “great success” with UF graduates. “We have seen passionate, well-rounded people come out of UF’s programs. I’ve always appreciated how well the professors at UF encourage students to get out and network with industry. This is a critical connection that is invaluable to both companies and students.”

Gators Galore: More than 50 Gators work across all Fisher Investment locations (Camas, WA; Plano, TX and Tampa, FL).

FISHER GATORS SAY: “From the start, I felt like home,” said Kristen Forrester (BADS ’13, MS ’14), U.S. private client group training and development team leader. “As a college grad seeking a way to better lives and pursue the unpursued, it was absolutely inspiring to find a place that encourages the same values I found at UF.”

SHOW THAT SPIRIT: “We have flags that hang from our computers, we wear our orange and blue on Fridays before games, and we always, always, always say, ‘Go Gators!’ to the students,” said Madison Tighe (BSBA ’20) of Naples, who started full-time in the Fort Myers office in October. “During my internship, I felt empowered by the number of Gators who supported me. Many of them took time out of their schedules just to chat with me about our UF connections, and some of the alums weren’t even in the same office.”

WHY UF? “I really enjoy hiring Gators because UF produces high-performing individuals who can learn quickly on the fly. They have great attitudes and a willingness to collaborate and innovate — all qualities that make them perfect fits,” said David Mussat (BSTel ’14), client service associate team leader. “Gators come in with a lot of fundamental skill sets already in place, which translates to a very high level of success.”

UF PRODUCES HIGH-PERFORMING INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN LEARN QUICKLY ON THE FLY...
— David Mussat, Fisher Investments

GARTNER GATORS SAY: “Being a part of the Gator Nation means everything to me, and finding a company that values that is just as important,” said Madison Tighe (BSBA ’20) of Naples, who started full-time in the Fort Myers office in October. “During my internship, I felt empowered by the number of Gators who supported me. Many of them took time out of their schedules just to chat with me about our UF connections, and some of the alums weren’t even in the same office.”

WHY UF? “UF consistently prepares students for real-world experience, producing some of the best and brightest. They have been some of the most successful associates at Gartner,” said Lisa LoCascio, senior director of Electrical Engineering departments. “UF has a number of great research labs, teams and competitions — like the Machine Intelligence Lab, Gator Motorsports, Autonomous Vehicles, High-Performance Computing Lab — where students have gained valuable hands-on experiences. Because of this, UF students are able to make important contributions right away.”

THE STANDARDS TO WHICH GATORS ARE HELD DURING THEIR TIME AT UF IS UNMATCHED, AND IT SHOWS!
— Lisa LoCascio, Gartner

PARTNERS: L3Harris recruits 75% of its new college grads from its partner schools, of which UF is one.

L3HARRIS GATORS SAY: “The Gator Nation is very well represented here, especially in engineering,” said Johnny Hardison (BSEE ’15). “As an electrical engineer, I get to innovate and put things together as well as take things apart. And as campus brand manager, I get to genuinely encourage, connect with students and support others, while hiring as many Gators as possible. Go Gators!”

BEST OF THE BEST: We assessed how UF grads do relative to other institutions and found that UF grads tend to be in the higher performance levels of the company,” said Bill Gattle (MSEME ’17), president of Space Systems departments.

GREAT FIT: “We love hiring UF engineering interns and graduates because many of them come with excellent outside-of-coursework experience,” said Nathan Nipper (MSE ’01), senior director of Electrical Engineering departments. “Undergraduate students are able to make important contributions right away.”

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GARTNER GATORS SAY: “The Gator Nation is very well represented here, especially in engineering,” said Johnny Hardison (BSEE ’15). “As an electrical engineer, I get to innovate and put things together as well as take things apart. And as campus brand manager, I get to genuinely encourage, connect with students and support others, while hiring as many Gators as possible. Go Gators!”

BEST OF THE BEST: We assessed how UF grads do relative to other institutions and found that UF grads tend to be in the higher performance levels of the company,” said Bill Gattle (MSEME ’17), president of Space Systems departments.

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What would you like to see this scholarship achieve?
A perpetual, long-term path for predominantly Black students to become lawyers at UF’s law school. Black people have excelled because of lawyers, but we still have so few. On the U.S. Supreme Court, the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg was for women what the late Thurgood Marshall was for Blacks. We need to build some more Thurgood Marshalls.

NUMBERS TO KNOW:
- <5% of Florida lawyers are Black
- 0 Florida’s Supreme Court justices are Black
- 4 Black justices have served on the Florida Supreme Court since it began in 1846
- 2 Black justices have served on the U.S. Supreme Court

What makes this scholarship particularly unique?
It was created, established and initially funded by Black UF alumni. We're the first generation to do this. When we went to UF, we were breaking barriers. Now, it's time for us to help the next generation. My dad was one of nine kids and the only sibling to complete college. He applied to UF but couldn't attend because of the admission policies. He was the motivation and direction to find the right path for her life. In fact, it “proved to be my greatest personal triumph,” she said.

Today, Jackson is a successful and well-known lobbyist and a shareholder with the Becker & Polikoff law firm. She’s spent the past 30 years honing her craft, forging relationships with lawmakers and state government staff, and influencing the laws that govern every Florida citizen. In short, she’s found great joy by being able to “make right the things that were wrong.”

A vivacious and enthusiastic Gator, Jackson recently inspired a host of UF law alumni, including Paul Perkins (JD ’91) and Greg Francis (BA ’91, JD ’94) of Orlando, to create a new scholarship for law students who've earned undergraduate degrees from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Jackson, Francis and Perkins brought the fund to its endowment minimum level of $100,000. Since then, other alumni have matched the fund to more than $1.2 million. Alumni said they would like the fund to support 10 students per year, which would require a principle of $2 million. They hope to reach this goal by 2022 and could use your help.

What do few people know about you?
I'm the widow of former UF football linebacker Fernando Jackson (BA ’88). No. 49, who died unexpectedly in December 1994. He was 34. It happened just 12 days after my father, James Cash, died. Fernando was a teacher and coach at North Miami High School. He encouraged me to get my law degree and even took up another job driving a frozen food truck while I was in school.

What’s the last thing you posted on social media?
That UF is No. 6! Hey, that's something to be proud of. I plastered that everywhere. We Gators have so much to be proud of in our alma mater. I blend orange and blue.

Why should others care about philanthropy?
The more I give, the more I receive. It will come back to you, too. I am reminded that with a clenched fist squeezed tight nothing can get out of it. However, it is also difficult to receive anything in a clenched fist. You can only receive blessings by opening up your heart and giving your best to others. Give until it becomes a sacrifice. This type of giving will help you appreciate what you have and grant you the humility to keep it.

Any other details about the scholarship?
Our committee hasn't decided on the selection criteria yet. We have also talked about having each of the 10 scholarships named for significant individuals. I would support one being named for Greg Francis, and another for Paul Perkins. Some people told me that I should put my name on one, but it's not in my nature to put my name on things. I've received my blessings. I have thought about perhaps naming one for my dad, James Cash. That way he will have gotten to be a part of UF after all.
WINNING THE GAME OF LIFE
UF STUDENT-ATHLETES AND COACHES GET REAL ABOUT RACISM AND ENCOURAGE GATOR NATION TO LISTEN, LEARN AND ACT.

BY DENVER PARLER (MSSM ’14)

This summer, while our nation was embroiled in protests and demonstrations following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, UF athletes, coaches and athletics staff were asking, “What can we do?” Lynda Tealer, the UF Athletic Association (UAA) executive associate athletics director for administration, led discussions that resulted in three actionable points: listen, learn and act …

LISTEN
We can listen to understand, even when it’s uncomfortable.

LEARN
We can learn about root causes of racism and racial injustice including history, policy and attitudes.

ACT
And we can put our learning into action.

Soon, Listen, Learn & Act became a Florida Gators initiative that gave a voice to student-athletes and coaches who have experienced racism firsthand. It also gave those who have never experienced racism a glimpse into ways Black and minority people in sports are regularly marginalized. And it empowered coaches and team leaders to put new policies in place that ensure every Gator feels valued.

Moderated by UAA Director of Communications Denver Parler (MSSM ’14), the YouTube series can be found on the Florida Gators channel. The series and the initiative go well beyond the previous webinar series, “A Conversation That Matters,” and is composed of more than 20 UAA employees, who are working on a number of different fronts:

 Voting education for student-athletes and staff (where, when, how)
 Evaluating organizational structures and working toward making them more representative
 Community activities and involvement
 Staff training and onboarding
 Staff education (panel discussions, discussion groups, email newsletters)

The first three episodes combined for more than 10,000 views on YouTube, and the UAA has received notes of appreciation both from faculty and community members. UAA welcomes comments posted below each video.

“ARE THEY PRODUCTIVE? YES. 100%. … WE’RE A LARGE PART OF WHAT THESE INSTITUTIONS ARE TRYING TO BUILD AROUND, SO WHY WOULD YOU NOT GIVE US A VOICE? WHY WOULD YOU NOT APPLY OUR VOICE? THE MORE MY GENERATION SPEAKS OUT AND TRIES TO INSTILL UNITY INTO THE MINDS OF COLLEGE ATHLETES AND THE GENERATIONS AFTER US, HOPEFULLY WE CAN REACH PEOPLE WHO ARE OLDER THAN US WHO MAYBE DON’T WANT TO LISTEN, BUT SHOULD LISTEN.”
— Darrinelle King, redshirt senior, volleyball

“IT WAS SO GOOD, SO AMAZING. I WAS SUPER SURPRISED. IT ALMOST MADE ME TEAR UP. IF NOT FOR THAT PLATFORM, I MAY NOT BE SPEAKING OUT AS MUCH AS I AM RIGHT NOW ABOUT IT ALL. IT OPENED DOORS FOR US TO SAY WHAT WE BELIEVE.”
— Scottie Lewis, sophomore, men’s basketball

“IT WAS SO GOOD, JUST HAVING THE SPACE WHERE YOU COULD BE YOUR WHOLE SELF AND NOT HAVE TO MASK YOUR FEELINGS. WHEN YOU CAN … SAY HOW IT IS, THERE CAN BE PROGRESS. EVERYBODY HAD GOOD THINGS TO SAY. IT WASN'T JUST, 'LISTEN TO BLACK PEOPLE.' ... IT'S BIGGER THAN BLACK AND WHITE. I CAN LEARN FROM WHITE JUST LIKE A WHITE PERSON CAN LEARN FROM ME. IT'S HUMANITY. IT'S ONE RACE: BLACK, WHITE, HISPANIC, ASIAN, WE'RE ALL ONE. IT'S BIGGER THAN SKIN COLOR.”
— Anthony Duruji, junior, men’s basketball

“I really appreciate the effort our athletic department made. There is so much work that needs to be done to make positive change ... and I am glad we identified the first steps. These discussions on the racism and inequality that exist are not easy.

However, I am encouraged that our athletes are passionately using their voices and people of all colors are listening.”
— Bryan Shelton, UF men’s tennis head coach and member of the SEC Council and Racial Equity and Justice

“Being a member of UF as a student-athlete and coach for many years, it personally means a lot to me that [UF] provided the opportunity for individuals to express their own thoughts, feelings and experiences. It allows for truthful, thoughtful and meaningful conversations.”
— Anthony Nesty (BA ’94), UF men’s swimming & diving head coach and member of the SEC Council and Racial Equity and Justice

DARRINELLE KING
SCOTTIE LEWIS

“LISTEN. LEARN. ACT.”
BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS IS A COURAGEOUS DECISION.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Top 100 Gator businesses to be announced in January 2021.
Check your Gator Nation Newsletter to learn more about this amazing group of business leaders and entrepreneurs.