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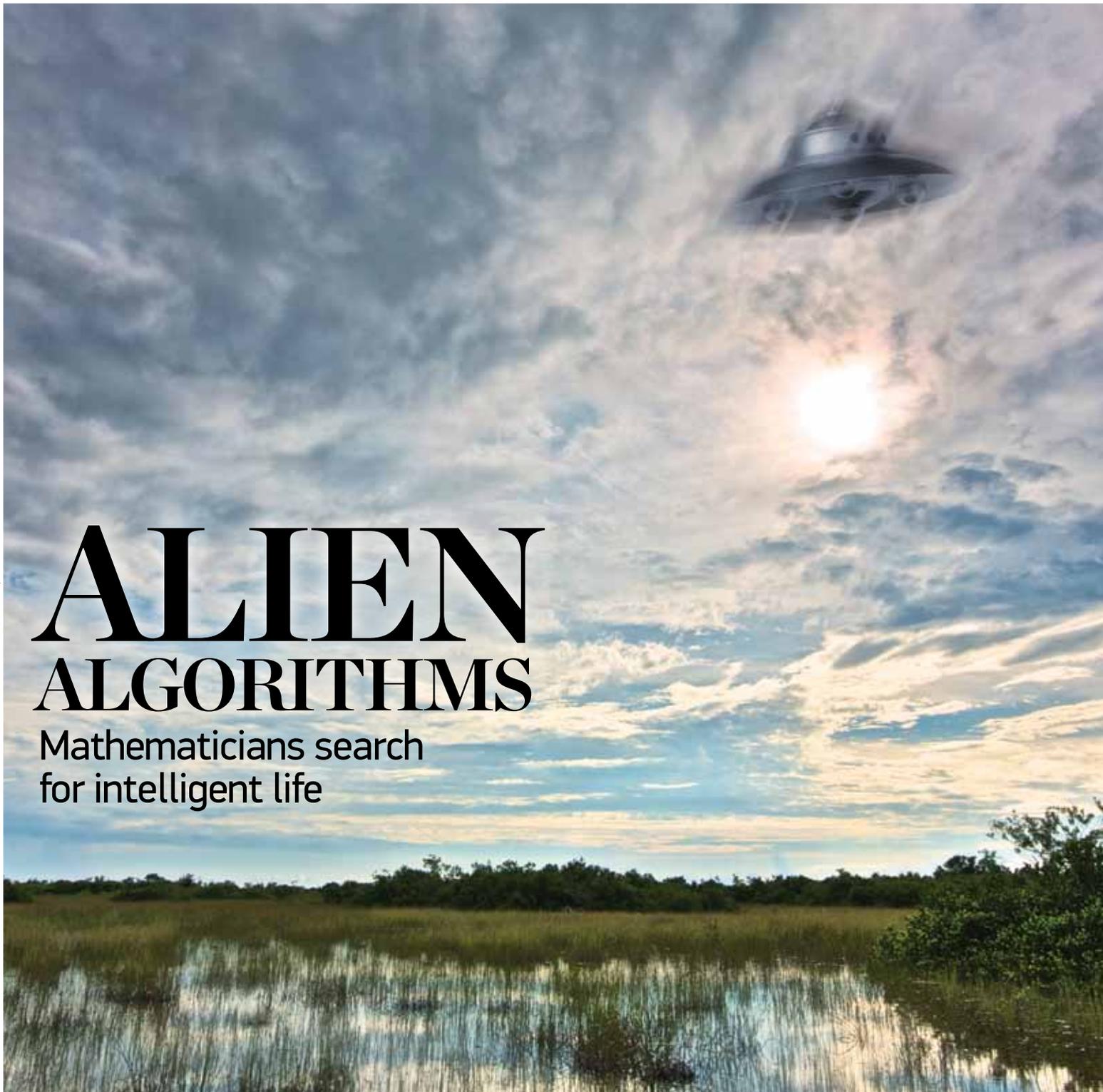
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Mathematicians search
for intelligent life





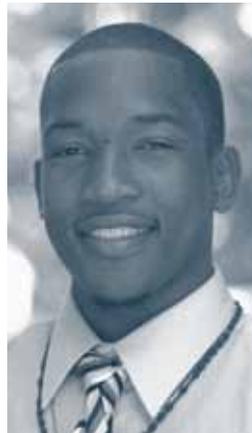
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The President says:
Learn what President Wilson G. Bradshaw has on his mind.



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The big story:
Read about the people and programs that make the university so dynamic.

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Get the latest news on FGCU's sports teams.

Q+A

► a conversation with President Wilson G. Bradshaw

“FGCU’s continued growth increasingly depends on private donors”

State budget cuts put the brakes on new programs, buildings.

Q: As state funding continues to decline, how does the role of private donors change?

A: FGCU has enjoyed great support from the private sector, but because it’s a public institution, there’s also a widely held belief that we receive adequate support from the state. While we do get state support, it’s been decreasing steadily over the past five years, with an especially dramatic cut this year. Now, less than 50 percent of our operating budget comes from state funding. While that’s more than universities in many states receive, FGCU’s continued growth and development increasingly depend on private donors providing major gifts. The private sector has funded a substantial number of scholarships and some wonderful buildings on campus. The need for such generosity increases as those seeking a college education rises and state funding diminishes.

Q: What’s ahead for FGCU in terms of growth?

A: We continue to see an upswing in enrollment, and new buildings are critical to making that growth possible. The drop in state funding has not been gradual; it’s been precipitous. The corollary is an increase in tuition each of the last five years, although that does not fully offset the budget cuts. Last year, tuition and fees for a full-time Florida resident totaled \$5,500. That is still among the lowest tuitions in the country for a state university, and it’s indicative of how we’ve managed to become more efficient.

Because of funding cuts, however, we’ve had to postpone the implementation



of some programs and this year face possible layoffs as well. Nonetheless, graduation rates are up. Retention rates are up. Enrollment rates are up. We have been making progress despite the cuts, but we’re dangerously close to seeing a negative impact on the quality of what we have built at FGCU. Once things go downward, they don’t come back quickly. There are quality issues we have to guard against, such as classes that are too large and not offering appropriate degree programs to prepare students for the workforce needed.

Q: How dire is the situation?

A: In 2011-12, we had a banner year for fund-raising, but we now face the most serious financial challenges in the history of the university. The community has been very supportive throughout the 15

years in which FGCU has existed, but people need to know that it’s time to step up, not back off.

Q: What are the university’s greatest needs?

A: A critical and continuing need is money for scholarships. We awarded almost 1,000 scholarships totaling \$1.4 million last year, but even more students need financial help this year and we must also be able to attract top students with merit-based scholarships.

Also high among our needs is a new wellness/fitness center. The center we currently have was built when FGCU had 3,500 students. It now serves 13,000, and also is the training center for our athletics programs.

Q: What can individuals do?

A: Those interested in knowing more should contact us. We’re happy to provide a tour and talk with them about our resources and needs. Every gift counts, whatever the amount. Anyone interested in learning how they can help should contact our Foundation office. ■

HOW TO HELP

For more information about FGCU and ways to get involved, contact the Foundation office at (239) 590-1067.



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Spreading the word

MY UNCLE FROM CHICAGO WASTED NO TIME WITH NICETIES WHEN HE CALLED a few weeks back.

“Did you see Chris Sale in Tampa?” the diehard White Sox fan crowed. “He was phenomenal. And he’s from FGCU!”

It was, literally, a wakeup call for me, signaling how times have changed since I started working here six years ago. At first, when I’d tell out-of-town family and friends the name of my new employer, I was met with a blank look or a “what’s that name again?”

That happens far less often these days and that’s likely due to the successes of our students, past and present, as well as a creative faculty.

As probably no one reading this magazine needs to be told, Chris Sale, FGCU’s former pitcher and current Sox star, racked up 15 strikeouts against the Tampa Bay Rays, establishing a new Tropicana Field single-game record. The up-and-coming lefty is the pride of White Sox fans and the FGCU community, particularly since he was named to this year’s Major League Baseball All-Star Team.

Clearly, Sale’s meteoric rise in the major leagues has helped put FGCU’s name out to a national audience. FGCU swimmers Danielle Beaubrun and Karen Vilorio will shine some international light on the university when they compete in the Olympics this summer.

While we aren’t likely to incubate many major league athletes, FGCU has been steadily making a name for itself in all sorts of arenas.

■ There’s the indefatigable Ricky Pires, who transported the FGCU brand

along with her Panther Posse out west as she helps conservationists in Jackson Hole, Wyo., create a Cougar Posse. Word about her environmental awareness initiative for elementary school children has even reached a group in Argentina looking to create a similar program around that nation’s jaguars.



■ FGCU math professor Thomas Hair made headlines in newspapers and magazines around the world with a mathematical approach to answering the question of whether other forms of intelligent life exist throughout the universe.

■ Our hockey club and paintball club claimed national championships this year, and our Division I athletics teams are playing bigger and better teams every year.

■ FGCU piano prodigy Priscila Navarro will expose a discriminating audience to the university when she performs at Carnegie Hall in March.

Throughout this issue of Pinnacle, the broadening reach of FGCU looms large.

What began 15 years ago as a small regional institution has quickly blossomed into an influential university that’s making its mark on the region and, increasingly, the world.

KAREN FELDMAN
Editor
kfeldman@fgcu.edu

UPFRONT

[IN THE NEWS]

University appoints new Advancement VP

Rosemary Thomas has joined Florida Gulf Coast University as vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the FGCU Foundation.

Thomas previously held the same position at Salisbury University in Maryland. At FGCU, she leads



Thomas

university fundraising, alumni relations and community relations, marketing initiatives.

“The opportunity to develop relationships on behalf of FGCU, and to shape alumni relations for current and future generations, is truly energizing,” she says.

Thomas received her doctorate in Educational Leadership Studies at West Virginia University, and is a graduate of Harvard University’s post-doctoral institute for Educational Management. She earned a Master of Public Administration from the University of South Carolina and a bachelor’s degree in political science from Clemson University.

FGCU’s sustainability efforts garner national acclaim

Second Nature and the American College & University Presidents’ Climate Commitment have named FGCU one of 10 U.S. academic institutions to receive the Climate Leadership Award, presented to Climate Commitment signatory schools that demonstrate unparalleled innovation and leadership in promoting a sustainable future.

“The Climate Leadership Award recognizes the work of the entire FGCU community as, together, we strive to be good role models and stewards of the environment,” says FGCU President Wilson G. Bradshaw. ■



[HOW TO...]

Cry on cue

YOU JUST NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU’LL NEED IT: WATERWORKS. BUT HOW DO ACTORS DO THAT ANYWAY? Tyler Layton, an FGCU assistant professor of theater, shares tips on getting teary eyed. Layton worked for 20 years as a professional television and stage actress. And yes, she possesses acute radar when desperate students try these tactics on her. Here, she tells Pinnacle her secrets.

1. Don’t do it the wrong way: Such as thinking of something sad. “For example, I was very close to my Uncle Alton – my mother’s brother, and he died four or five years ago. When I think of him, I cry because of the love I had for him. But if you’re on stage and in the moment, and you take yourself out of the moment the character is in and think of a personal experience, you are no longer acting, and you don’t know where your emotions will take you. It’s cheating and it’s dangerous – and you may forget your lines.”

2. Try the best way: “Put yourself in the position the character is at that moment. Ask yourself, ‘How would I feel if this were happening to me?’ Then the emotions will come forth. That’s the mark of a truly good actor. It keeps you fresh and alive, and that is what people are paying you to see.”

3. The practical approach: “This is a more physical technique, and you can try it at home. You fake the physicality of crying. Start by exhaling deeply and repeatedly. Tighten up the back of the throat, furrow the brow and exhale deeply. Again and again. If you do this, emotions will follow. The mind doesn’t know the body is manipulating itself. Do it over and over and over. Eventually the tears will come.”

4. Real life vs. acting: “I’ve used it to create an effect on my audience, and I don’t mean the paying kind. After all, Shakespeare said, ‘All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women



merely players.’ Whether you’re on stage or in life, you are acting a little bit. We all are.”

5. Avoid bad faux crying: “Here’s the trick: No one wants to cry, especially in front of someone. So if you see someone trying to cry, you know. Do I have faux-cry radar with my students? Hell yeah. What’s good to see on stage and in life is someone fighting back tears. They’re trying to swallow it down. When a student comes in doing that, you know they’re being honest.”

– Betsy Clayton

Stock photo

“ This project mirrors the latest in interpretive methods to enhance student experience and highlights FGCU’s native plantscape and the local environment.”

- JEFFREY SEPANSKI, SENIOR,
ETHNOBOTANY TOUR DEVELOPER

[CUTTING EDGE]

Scanning the horizon

QR codes enhance experience on new ethnobotany tour.

SMART PHONES HAVE EXPANDED THE UNIVERSE OF INFORMATION AT YOUR fingertips, from telling you where you are or where you’re going to summoning multimedia digital content to the screen with a swift scan of a code.

Those trademarked Quick Response (QR) codes now are plastered all over advertisements, product packaging, retail displays and restaurant menus. Developed in the mid-1990s to track vehicles in automobile manufacturing plants, they now appear just about anywhere they can be printed.

At FGCU, QR codes are being put to educational use. Anthropology major Jeffrey Sepanski, a senior from Naples, has developed the FGCU Campus Ethnobotany Tour with a pamphlet that maps native plant species and provides QR code links to video, audio and data about them.

For instance, did you know that resurrection ferns like those nestled in the oak trees at the head of the nature trail were used by the Seminole and Miccosukee Indians to treat insanity? That coontie plants like those used for decorative landscaping outside Academic Building 7 were a source of food and medicine for pre-Columbian and Seminole Indians?

These are among the many interesting tidbits highlighted in videos Sepanski produced and posted on YouTube to make the self-guided ethnobotany tour an interactive experience. He completed the project during a semester-long internship with the Florida Public Archaeology Network, which

has a regional office in Whitaker Hall.

Ethnobotany, the study of the relationship between people and plants, has uncovered an ancient history of humans using the flora at hand for food, medicine, clothing, tools, fuel and more.

The enhanced campus tour connects visitors to that rich history.

“It builds environmental awareness and an appreciation for the significance of the plants,” Sepanski says.

The tour brochure, available in campus kiosks and in the FPAN office (Whitaker 232), maps three campus regions and their diverse plant life. Next to photos of highlighted plants are QR codes to scan.

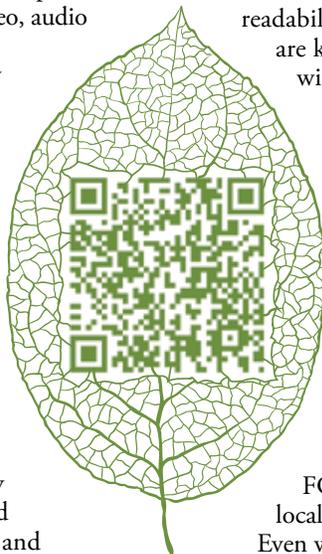
These two-dimensional barcodes can be encoded with much more information than standard UPC codes. Their immediate readability and larger storage capacity are key factors in their rapid, widespread adoption.

In applications such as FGCU’s ethnobotany tour, they help reduce potential visual clutter, too.

“Because more in-depth information is accessed digitally, we can keep the campus clear of excessive signage,” says FPAN Southwest Director Annette Snapp. “This project mirrors the latest in interpretive methods to enhance student experience and highlights FGCU’s native plantscape and the local environment.”

Even without a smartphone, the information compiled for the ethnobotany tour can be accessed online. Look for the videos on the YouTube channel FPANSouthWestRegion.

– Drew Sterwald



[A-VERSE]

KEVIN PIERCE is host of “FGCU Perspectives” on WVCU-TV and is host and producer of “The Florida Environment” on WVCU-FM and other Florida public radio stations. He lives in Fort Myers.



PAINTBALL PRIMER

NEWS ITEM —The FGCU Paintball Club won a national championship.

*Part combat zone,
Part lax and frolic;
Part Sly Stallone,
Part Jackson Pollock.*

PASSING JUDGMENT

NEWS ITEM — After two-thirds of students got a failing FCAT score, the Florida Board of Education voted to lower the requirement for a passing writing grade.

*The grade that would pass was
once four but now’s three,
In hopes scores would be helped
by the outcome;
I’m wishing a similar windfall decree
With expenses decreased
for my income.*

AT AN EXHIBITION

NEWS ITEM —Former FGCU baseball star Chris Sale set a field record for the Chicago White Sox with a 15-strikeout game.

*He was chosen as pro
on the strength of his throw
And by hitters he’d see
and he’d not see,
Via photos that came from
a little league game
Snapped by Momma and Paparazzi.
(The images serve as just desserts:
This pitcher is worth a thousand
words). ■*

[FACES]

Glenn Sabatka

Lacking sight but not vision, he keeps reading service on the air.

BUSINESSMAN VICTOR KIAM'S TRIAL OF A NORELCO ELECTRIC SHAVER IN THE 1980s PROVIDED a slogan for the company's ad campaign: "I liked it so much," he crowed, "I bought the company."

While he didn't buy the company, Glenn Sabatka essentially built one.

Sabatka started as a user of WGCU's Radio Reading Service for the blind and liked it so much, he became the service's coordinator, a position he's held for nearly 30 years.

"Fewer than 30 percent of blind people have a job," says the 65-year-old Sabatka. "I'm lucky."

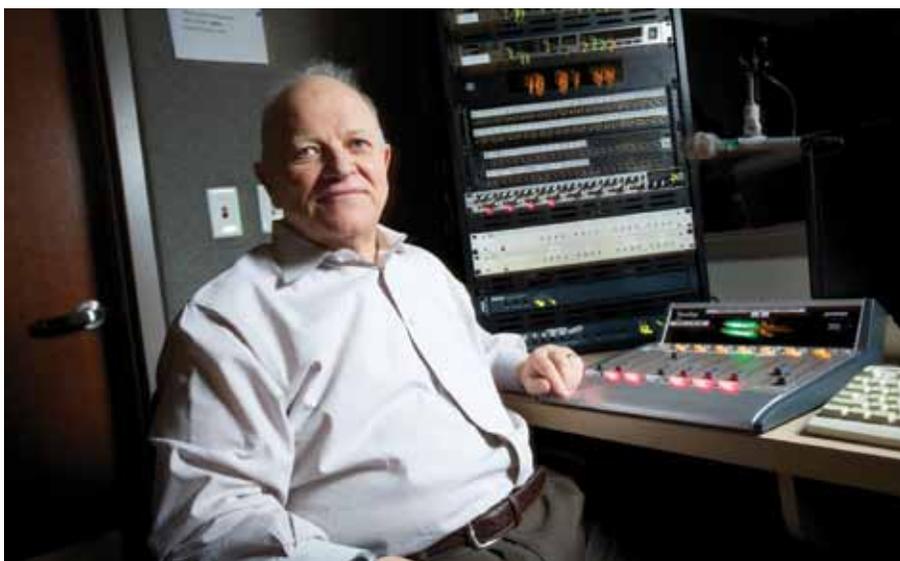
Lucky was not how he felt in 1978, when he lost his vision to viral encephalitis. He says what started as shaky hands and led to several months in a Chicago hospital was "close to hell."

Much as his sight led him to a prior job at a camera company in Chicago ("Not Instamatics; I was on the second floor with serious film cameras"), his new challenge led him to a then-fledgling group called the Visually Impaired Persons Center in North Fort Myers. It was there that Sabatka connected with public radio.

"Someone from the radio station asked if we wanted a Radio Reading Service," he recalls. "We said 'yes.'"

Existing public radio programs are natural resources for the visually impaired, but they lack some of the minutiae of local newspapers. Under Sabatka's leadership, the Radio Reading Service provides special radios on which visually impaired people can listen to volunteers read local newspapers – and not just news.

"We also read the drug store ads, the department store ads and the grocery store ads," he says. "They're some of our



Glenn Sabatka has run WGCU's Radio Reading Service for 30 years.

most-listened-to programs."

While listening to radio requires little in the way of vision, producing radio was, in Sabatka's early days, a highly visual endeavor. Even as radio production has become largely computer driven, the scripts are still on paper and the representation of audio on a screen is still the picture of a waveform.

But much as the radio service speaks to listeners, Sabatka has software programs that speak to him, reading aloud whatever words appear on his computer monitor. With these, he both coordinates the group of 80 volunteers who do the reading and edits much of the recorded programming.

As his nearly three decades in public radio come to a close in the next two years – "I have to retire sometime," he says – what will he get into next? His options come like punch lines from

the Borscht Belt:

Might he devote himself to playing blues harmonica? "I learned from Paul Butterfield; no lessons, but he showed me how to hold it."

Could he perform character voices for radio and TV commercials? "I was going to study with Mel Blanc (Bugs Bunny, et al), but he had a heart attack."

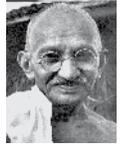
Will he become be a fundraiser? "That was my first job with Radio Reading Service; they told me I needed to raise money, and I did."

Or maybe he'll find something in which he starts out as a client. Chances are, he'd end up running the place, too.

If you're visually impaired or unable to hold a newspaper, contact the WGCU Radio Reading Service at (239) 590-2530.

– Kevin Pierce

“ Be the change you wish to see in the world.”
— GANDHI



[COLLECTIVE WE]

FGCU TOMS Club

Students bare their soles to benefit shoeless children.

MEGAN VENDETTE'S BRAND LOYALTY WOULD DELIGHT ANY APPAREL company's marketing gurus: six pairs of shoes, plus eyewear and two shirts – all with the same label.

But TOMS is no designer house of high-priced fashion focused on profit margins. For every pair of shoes it sells, the California company donates a pair to a child in need. When a conscientious consumer buys TOMS eyeglasses, proceeds provide medical treatment, prescription eyewear or

sight-saving surgery for a poor person in Nepal, Cambodia or Tibet.



Vendette

“Somewhere, six children have new pairs of shoes or someone was able to receive corrective eye surgery” because of her

purchases, says Vendette, president of the FGCU TOMS Club until she graduated with a marketing degree in April.

“I think TOMS has opened my eyes to conscious consumerism,” the Bradenton native says. “I've noticed many other companies that have similar business models and donate a percentage of their profits to someone in need.”

You only have to look around campus to see that TOMS are among the hottest fashion trends. Resembling espadrilles, they come in a variety of solid colors as well as graphic patterns, with different styles such as desert boots and wedges. For vegans, there are even shoes that contain no animal byproducts. Prices range from \$54 to \$79.

Students often personalize their TOMS



Above: TOMS Club members encourage students to go barefoot for One Day Without Shoes. Below: TOMS shoes range from \$54 to \$79.

because they are made of fabric. Vendette has a pair with “Give to love, love to give” painted on them.

Established in 2010, the FGCU club has about 15 active members but more than 200 Facebook followers. With support and occasional swag from the TOMS corporate Campus Clubs staff, they promote the “One for One” movement on campus with events such as April's One Day Without Shoes, during which they encourage people to go barefoot to raise awareness of the impact a pair of shoes can have on a child's life. They also hold fund-raising events for local charities such as Eden Autism Services.



TOMS – an abbreviation for Shoes for Tomorrow – was founded in 2006 by Blake Mycoskie, an American traveler who noticed many barefooted children in Argentina. This left them vulnerable to injuries and soil-transmitted diseases. Some were unable to attend school

because uniforms require shoes.

Back in the U.S., Mycoskie found a way to adapt the Argentinean alpargata shoe and pledged to donate a pair for each sold. Since then, children in 20 countries have received more than 1 million pairs of new shoes.

For retail outlets or to order shoes online, go to www.toms.com.

– Drew Sterwald

[HOT TOPIC]

Grandin captivates record crowd at autism conference

Early intervention key to nurturing development, speaker says.

WHEN TEMPLE GRANDIN STILL WASN'T TALKING AT AGE 3 AND CONTINUED to show behavioral problems, her mother enrolled her in private schools where staff could provide more attention and structure.

Diagnosed with autism, Grandin began to develop cognitively and socially and went on to earn multiple degrees on the way to becoming a renowned educator and best-selling author as well as an animal scientist and advocate for people with autism. Her life inspired an award-winning HBO movie.

"I can't emphasize enough the importance of early intervention," she said in a keynote address in April at the fifth annual national autism conference at FGCU. "The worst thing you can do is nothing."

Parents and teachers should work together early in an autistic child's life to nurture development and build skills that can open doors to employment in adulthood, she told a crowd of 2,200 at Alico Arena.

Introduced as "the most accomplished and well-known adult with autism in the world," Grandin, 64, helped draw a record number of families, teachers and health professionals to "Promising Pathways: The Road to Best Practice in Autism." Last year, about 500 people attended the conference on autism – a broad spectrum of neurobiological disorders that cause social awkwardness, difficulty communicating and other behavioral symptoms.

Grandin's presence was a big attraction, according to Marci Greene, dean of FGCU's College of Education.



"She only accepts about 20 percent of the invitations she gets," Greene says. "One of the reasons she decided to come is that it was free (to attendees). She wants as many people as possible to hear her message."

Grandin and fellow speaker Tristram Smith, a clinical psychologist who leads federally funded research into autism at the University of Rochester Medical Center, offered insight into how autistic children perceive the world and presented the latest information about behavioral intervention. The goals should be to encourage socialization and develop cognitive abilities, they said.

"We need to develop a kid's strengths," Grandin said. "They need to learn work skills. So many schools have taken out hands-on classes like cooking, woodworking, shop. These classes teach work skills. People always ask me why

I don't become a full-time autism advocate. I'm a better role model if I have a real job."

Dressed in her signature western blouse and kerchief, Grandin captivated the audience with life stories, humor and practical advice for helping autistic children cope with triggers such as sudden noises and fluorescent lights.

"Some of the solutions are so simple it would be stupid not to try it," she said to applause.

Temple Grandin's life inspired an HBO film.

"Fluorescent lights are one of the biggest problems in public schools."

Within the autism spectrum, there exists a range of sensory sensitivity and behavior problems as well as a variety of ways of thinking, according to Grandin, who opened the door to wider understanding with books such as "The Way I See It: A Personal Look At Autism And Asperger's."

She described herself as a photo-realistic visual thinker, which makes her well suited to the industrial design work she has done; the HBO film used animated special effects to visualize her thought process.

"The autistic brain is associative. It doesn't think linear," she said. "The HBO movie showed very well how I have movies in my head."

– Drew Sterwald

“ People always ask me why I don’t become a full-time autism advocate. I’m a better role model if I have a real job.”

– TEMPLE GRANDIN, EDUCATOR, AUTHOR, ANIMAL SCIENTIST AND AUTISM ADVOCATE

[WHERE ARE THEY NOW?]

Justin Miller

Alumnus goes to bat for kids with cancer.

WHEN JUSTIN MILLER ('07, BUSINESS) WAS A volunteer at The Children’s Hospital of Southwest Florida, he worked with a cancer-stricken young boy whose prognosis looked dim.

But two years later, at the Relay for Life in Fort Myers, he saw that same youngster – with a full head of hair and a super-charged storehouse of energy that allowed him to run around the track for two hours.

“It was the most unbelievable thing I’ve seen in my life,” says the 27-year-old Estero resident, who is a marketing representative for a home health care agency in Fort Myers.

Miller, a former pitcher on Florida Gulf Coast University’s baseball team who played two years in the minor leagues for the Detroit Tigers, knew then that he had to follow through on his dream of starting a non-profit organization that would offer baseball camps to kids affected by cancer.

“These kids, even though they’re battling a serious disease, for some reason they don’t care,” he says. “They’re just like, ‘You know what? I’m going to survive this.’ They’re welcoming the challenge. They have the courage to take this on at 8 and 9 years old. That was very inspirational to me. To adults, it’s a different mindset. But these kids want to take on the world. That drew me toward them – seeing all the courage they have.”

Miller started an organization called 60 Feet Away – a reference to the distance (minus 6 inches) from



Justin Miller, former FGCU pitcher

the pitcher’s rubber to home plate – but later, at the request of parents, changed it to Forever Sports, and started dreaming of holding camps in 10 sports.

His vision is to involve professional athletes in the instructional aspects of the three-day camps and hold them so that the kids can be involved in a pre-game or halftime introduction at the stadium or arena.

Now the goal is to raise the funds necessary to help Forever Sports prosper. Miller planned a fund-raiser in early June at The Training Box Gym in Estero.

“I really believe in it,” he says. “I believe in the mission. I believe in the values of the organization. I know we can help out a lot of families. We’re not just teaching sports. We’re connecting kids who are going through similar problems that don’t get to interact on a daily basis.”

– Rick Weber

[BY THE NUMBERS]

Check out the library

In the last five years, library visits have risen 122 percent, according to statistics compiled by the university. Circulation loans and renewals for the 2010-11 academic year totaled 46,583 – a 30 percent increase over five years. Best place to catch a few ZZZs between classes? The second and third floors on the east side near the windows, recommends University Librarian and Dean Kathleen F. Miller.

689,366

Library visits in 2010-11. The tally from a mechanical counter at the entrance is divided in half to account for people entering and leaving. Forty percent of students interviewed for a Library Ethnographic Study completed in June 2011 said they visit the library in order to conduct research.

244,601

Physical volumes in the library collections (excludes bound and unbound periodicals). The library has an additional 165,816 e-books, 6,444 videos and 4,631 sound recordings in circulation.



12,211

Reference questions asked of library staff in 2010-11.

Computers in the library available for public use, including 115 in the main laboratory. The library’s Web page posts real-time maps that show students where they can find an open work station. Individual patron log-ins: 12,442 (of 215,557 total log-ins).

3,797

Students who took information literacy sessions in 2010-11.

These include the “Search for the Skunk Ape” tutorial on how to conduct research. The mythical creature is considered the library’s mascot.



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2012

ALUMNI AWARDS

The Florida Gulf Coast University Alumni Association inducted five accomplished graduates into the Soaring Eagles Society last spring. Recipients are individuals who have dedicated time and resources to their communities and excelled in their professions within a decade of earning their degrees. The Soaring Eagles complement the Alumni of Distinction Society, which has been honoring graduates since 2004.

Stories by DREW STERWALD



JESSICA ESSARY DOESN'T MERELY WANT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION in her own classroom; she wants to improve the quality of education around the globe.

"Ideally, I would love to keep teaching about diversity and equity and broad topics like child development and curriculum development," she says. "There are so many opportunities for innovation. There's so much to learn from different teaching practices all around the world. I want to work at being a better global educator."

This Soaring Eagle is already on the way. Essary completed a three-month trip through poverty-plagued Tanzania this year for dissertation research involving gender inequity in classrooms—something she considers a critical issue.

"The second day I was in Tanzania a mother asked me to take her 2-year-old daughter back to the U.S. with me so she would have a chance to get a great education," Essary says. "It can be so

challenging to make a life there in terms of how you can develop potential."

Essary's own success has included awards and papers, as well as her election as 2010-12 president of the New York State chapter of the Association for Childhood Education International.

"She has more presentations and publications than most professors on their way to tenure," says James Hoot, a mentor and a professor of early childhood education at the State University of New York at Buffalo. "I have never encountered a more competent and committed young woman."

Essary, who hails from Springfield, Mo., believes one of the biggest challenges facing education today is cultivating national and community support for educators.

"Teachers are under a microscope, and a lot of teachers want to close their doors," she says. "We need to search for ways to build community collaboration in the classroom. Amazing things can happen with community support. We can make children global citizens." ■

JESSICA ESSARY '06

DEGREE:

B.A., Elementary Education;
Ed.M., General Education and
Ph.D., Elementary Education,
State University of New York
at Buffalo

AGE: 26

HOME: Buffalo, N.Y.

OCCUPATION:

Adjunct professor, SUNY-Buffalo;
curriculum consultant



LISI LAU '04

DEGREE:

B.A., Communications

AGE: 30

HOME: Brattleboro, Vt.

OCCUPATION:

Associate director
of the nonprofit
Global Community Engagement;
attending graduate school

AT LELY HIGH SCHOOL IN NAPLES, LISI LAU WAS PRESIDENT OF THE Future Business Leaders of America chapter, so when she enrolled at FGCU, it seemed natural to major in business. That changed when she started taking classes and got involved in Student Government and organizations such as Hispanic Students for Higher Education.

“When I got to school I realized I didn’t like that plan,” she says. “Once I got involved with everything, I loved recruiting students and speaking with groups of people. It was pivotal to who I am now. It was an awakening of my sense of self.”

An “alternative spring break” volunteering with impoverished children in the Dominican Republic evolved into the nonprofit organization she now works for, Global Community Engagement. As associate director, she recruits, trains and leads volunteer students and professionals to collaborate with the organization’s partner agencies in the Dominican Republic.

Her experience on the island inspired her to pursue a master’s degree in intercultural service, leadership and management at the School of International Training in Brattleboro, Vt.

“She will bring out the humanitarian in anyone she interacts with,” says Suzanne Decopain (’04, Liberal

Studies), who nominated Lau for the Soaring Eagles Society. “She will help anyone who is interested in making a change in the world.”

That spirit was nurtured by FGCU professors who inspired Lau to think critically about the world and her role in society, she says. She hopes to continue working in international service learning and community organizing.

“When students first go abroad, they connect with people on a human level,” says Lau, who is of Cuban and Chinese descent. “It exposes you to other ways of living, and you become more aware of the materialism and consumerism back home. You realize we are all yearning for more connection with people.” ■



CONSIDERING HER ACADEMIC SUCCESS AT FGCU, PERHAPS IT'S NOT surprising to see Jenna Martin soaring professionally three years later.

One of the first graduates of FGCU's U.A. Whitaker College of Engineering, Martin attended on a full four-year scholarship and was named 2009 Undergraduate Student of the Year.

Since earning her bachelor's degree, she has passed the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam, the first step toward becoming a licensed professional engineer, and earned a master's degree at the University of South Florida. Her graduate school internship turned into a full-time job conducting environmental site assessments, and she is helping chart the course of future FGCU students by serving on the Department of Environmental and Civil Engineering Advisory Board.

"My experience at FGCU shaped me both personally and professionally," Martin says. "FGCU's green commitment helped reinforce my choice to enter into the environmental engineering

field. Coming to FGCU, I was shy and reserved. FGCU not only prepared me academically, but helped me to develop confidence in my abilities and strengths. It helped me get where I am today."

Simeon Komisar, an associate professor of environmental engineering who nominated Martin for the Soaring Eagles Society, says she possesses a "nimble mind and caring heart."

"Colleagues of mine at USF ... now routinely call me up to ask if there are more Jenna Martins in the pipeline," he says.

While pursuing her graduate degree, the Sarasota native traveled to Bolivia, where she worked with other students, professionals and local community leaders to design a mitigation system for stormwater flooding in the small town of Tiquipaya.

"My long-term goal is to provide engineered solutions to help sustain our environment and our most important resource – clean drinking water," Martin says. "I would love to expand the use of my engineering skills to help developing countries solve their environmental problems as well as our own." ■

JENNA MARTIN '09

DEGREE:

B.S., Environmental Engineering;
M.E.V.E., Environmental
Engineering, University of
South Florida

AGE: 24

HOME: Tampa

OCCUPATION:

Project Engineer, HSA Engineers
& Scientists



KIMBERLY PATTERSON '01, '05

DEGREE:

B.A., Health Science;
M.A., Health Professions Education

AGE: 34

HOME: Hollywood, Fla.

OCCUPATION:

High school and virtual
psychology teacher

FLORIDA COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER OF THE YEAR IN HIGH School. Broward County

Public Schools Teacher of the Year in High School. American Psychological Association/Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools Teacher of the Year.

Kimberly Patterson has been racking up plenty of honors lately, the latest of which is her installation in the Soaring Eagles Society.

"I am extremely excited about it," she says. "I am elated to represent my school and the College of Health Professions."

Patterson, 34, teaches Advanced Placement Psychology at Cypress Bay High School in Weston as well

as online for North Carolina Virtual Public Schools. She has also served as an adjunct instructor at Palm Beach State College since 2005.

Patterson credits her professional success to the strong foundation of her education and the cooperative teaching ethic she experienced at FGCU. Although committed to academic rigor, she strongly believes in having fun in the classroom.

"Just being passionate – I got a lot of that out of professors I had," she says. "They were so passionate about what they were teaching. I felt invigorated to learn. People at FGCU work together so efficiently. There's a lot of teamwork. I try to bring that here, to work well with colleagues and students.

It's not just me in the classroom."

While at FGCU, the Fort Lauderdale native impressed Michelle Angeletti, associate professor in health sciences, as being creative as well as analytical.

"She is able to think through complex problems and independently develop original solutions," Angeletti says.

Seeing the need for enhanced psychology programs at the high school level, Patterson pushed for AP courses and developed programs such as the competitive South Florida Psychology Bowl and a psychology honor society, Psi Alpha Beta.

"Going above and beyond makes the difference," she says. "I wake up every day and love my career path and the amazing students I work with." ■



PLENTY OF PEOPLE SAY THEY WOULDN'T BE WHERE THEY ARE TODAY WITHOUT THEIR college education, but Braxton Rhone means it more than most.

"FGCU holds a special place in my heart," the Pompano Beach native says.

Because of "so-so grades" in high school, Rhone says, he initially was not accepted for admission at Florida Gulf Coast University. But he pleaded his case before an appeals committee, promising to work hard and prove himself worthy of an exception. Rhone kept his word and thrived at FGCU. He was elected Student Government treasurer and vice president and earned his business management degree in four years while posting a cumulative 3.46 grade point average.

Six years later, he works as a financial advisor for Merrill Lynch Wealth Management in Naples and in February was appointed by Gov. Rick Scott to the Edison State College Board of Trustees.

"It is definitely a success story and a tribute to FGCU and my mom," he says. "She always told me, 'Who told you you can't?' I worked as hard as I possibly could and as a result of this I am sitting here today a financial planner. What really prepared me for my career and to be in the world of leadership would probably have to be my time as a resident assistant. There are just unique and different personalities you deal with and conflicts you have to resolve. You're viewed as someone to give advice, give direction to individuals."

Jacqueline Conrecode, who taught Rhone in two accounting classes, describes him as the kind of person who can accomplish anything he sets his mind to do.

"Braxton demonstrates attributes that are inherent in successful managers and leaders," she says. "He has an entrepreneurial spirit, is motivated, enthusiastic, energetic, confident. He has the intellectual capacity to excel." ■

BRAXTON RHONE

'06

DEGREE:
B.S., Business Management

AGE: 27

HOME: Fort Myers

OCCUPATION:
Financial advisor



'NET ASSETS

Entrepreneur finds success
helping businesses maximize
online marketing.

GROWING A SMALL COMPANY IN A STAGNANT ECONOMY IS CHALLENGING ENOUGH. But that hasn't stopped Zach Katkin and his colleagues at Atilus, a Web development and Internet marketing firm he cofounded, from lending their time and talents to community organizations.

Island Coast AIDS Network, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the American Cancer Society are just a few of the nonprofits that Atilus has assisted with Web work.

Katkin ('07, Liberal Studies) is president and CEO of the small but growing Bonita Springs company. His success in the field and his dedication to community service so impressed the FGCU Alumni Association that it named him the 2012 Alumnus of Distinction.

By **DREW STERWALD**

Photo by **BRIAN TIETZ**



FGCU has been invaluable in terms of the connections I've made."

- ZACH KATKIN, 2012 ALUMNUS OF DISTINCTION

"Though only 27, he hasn't let age stop him from opening doors and making a name for himself," says Alumni Awards Committee Chair Angela Bell ('08, Communication). "He's helped a number of nonprofits expand their social media presence, he's contributed countless hours of website design and consulting services to the university and has been recognized nationally for being an expert in his field."

While he appreciates the praise, Katkin emphasizes that Atilus' success and work ethic is the result of group effort. He and his team are on the same page when it comes to personal character and business practices.

"Ultimately, I try to offer results and solutions for the community and our clients," Katkin says. "I feel that doing it right, while it may take longer, means you will be successful. I wouldn't achieve it any other way."

Roots in technology

His grandfather gave him his first computer when Katkin was 12. He couldn't stop taking the Hewlett-Packard apart and putting it back together.

"In high school, my closest friends and I all used our computers to out-do each other - who had the biggest video card, best case or most RAM," he recalls. "I think in comparison to today's youth I started late."

When the 2003 Estero High graduate enrolled at FGCU, he wasn't sure if he wanted to major in English, art or computer science.

"I always had a passion for English, always was able to draw," he says. "I'm right- and left-brained."

Although he has switched from writing poetry to blogging about the industry he works in, Katkin continues to sharpen his writing skills every day. He credits FGCU English instructor Jesse Millner with instilling a love of language.

"Zach was in my Intro to Nature Writing class six years ago, and I still remember his energetic, creative and intelligent responses to all the writing assignments, as well as

being a valuable contributor to in-class discussions," Millner says. "He wrote way more than he had to, and I enjoyed reading the extra work."

Getting into business

Through a technology class at FGCU, Katkin became friends with Harry Casimir ('05, Computer Information

Systems), with whom he co-founded Atilus in 2005 while still in school. Another alum, Matt Visaggio ('05, Communication; '10, Master's of Public Administration), serves as the company's marketing director.

"I have witnessed Zach become a sought-out expert in the Internet marketing and Web development field," Casimir says. "He is routinely asked to speak and comment on technology trends."

Atilus has five full-time employees but is still hiring more. Southwest Florida is no high-tech hub a la Silicon Valley, but local demand for Web design, search engine optimization and other services is strong enough to support the company's growth, according to Katkin.

Research shows that 95 percent of Internet searches are for local products and services, he says, so every business must see the need for a website, right?

"You would think so, but Google says only 35 percent of businesses in the U.S. have websites," Katkin says.

He has designed more than 600 sites, won advertising awards and is certified by Google AdWords to handle account management for the online ad service.

Obviously, he spends a lot of time online. Katkin believes in and sells the commercial value of social networking, but when it comes to his personal life he leaves that at work. When he needs to "unplug," he might leave his phone behind and walk a nature trail at Estero Bay Preserve.

"I am constantly online," he says. "I've learned over the past couple of years to not be always on my e-mail. For the most part, that ends when my workday or work week ends. I didn't get a cell phone until I was 19. I don't love being connected. I'm amazed by the power and I'm good at it, so that's the direction I've chosen for my career. From a personal perspective, I'll never really understand Twitter and Facebook and much prefer in-person conversations." ■

PEER REVIEWS

Comments from some of the people who nominated Zach Katkin for the Alumni of Distinction Society:

"During the recent economic recession, Zach's firm continued to offer free websites to nonprofit agencies despite significant financial challenges common to small businesses weathering an adverse economic climate."

— Peter Lechler, '07 Communication, small business specialist, Legal Shield, Naples

"In our industry, it's easy to take advantage of small businesses with little knowledge of how to leverage the Web for their marketing and branding needs. Zach not only educates clients in best practices but assists them in understanding the best practices that go along with successful Web presence."

— Amber Cebull, president, Eloquent Marketing, Fort Myers

"Zach showed his dedication to FGCU through his interest in developing our website so that more students might be interested in becoming members. He also was able to take conceptual ideas that we had and turn them into online solutions."

— Barbara Lindstrom, WGCU Public Media executive producer of television and new media

Where no math has gone before

FGCU prof calculates
probability of
alien civilizations.

By JAY MacDONALD

A LONG TIME AGO, IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY, INTELLIGENT LIFE MAY have emerged from the cosmic soup.

So why haven't aliens paid us a visit by now? After all, we do have cable. Not to mention the Kardashians.

Despite our terrestrial allure, Thomas Hair, a Florida Gulf Coast University assistant math professor, has a simple explanation: They're just not that into us.

What could prompt a math professor to boldly go where no math professor had gone before? Elementary, Mr. Spock: He discovered a mathematical step in the search for intelligent life in the universe that others had somehow overlooked.

Hair's space adventure began in the summer of 2010 when, faced with the prospect of six weeks of restless relaxation, he decided to write a paper that combined his innate mathematical curiosity with his boyhood fascination for space aliens and close encounters of the third kind.

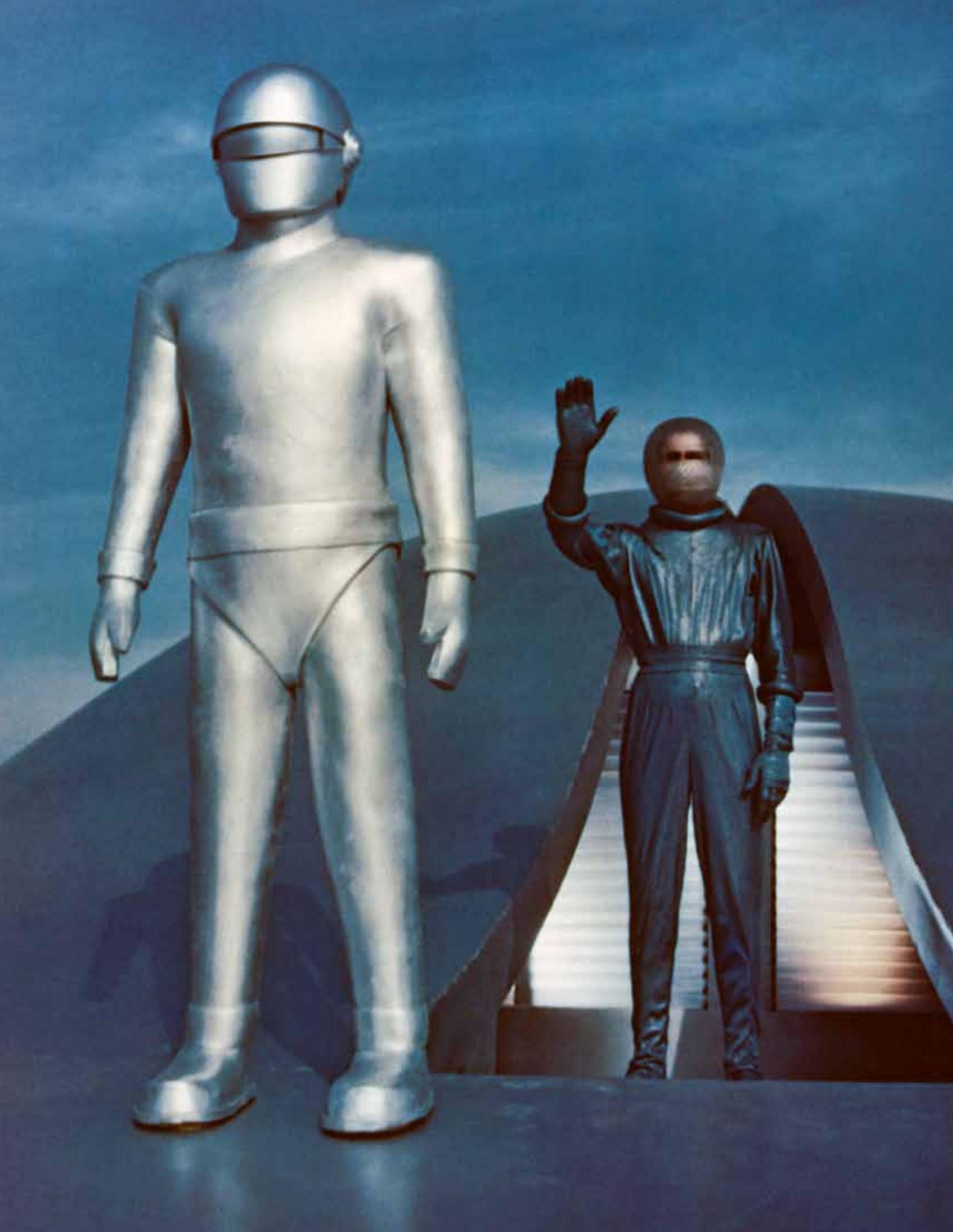
"If the universe is 13.5 billion years old, has anybody ever thought about how long ago the first intelligent civilization could have evolved?" he wondered. It turned out that no one had; at least no one with an advanced math degree.

"According to astronomers, the first planets like ours formed over 9 billion years ago," says Hair. "We've been around 4.5 billion years. That means that the conditions necessary to support intelligent life in the universe could have already been present for 5 billion years."

Inspired, Hair ran computer simulations based on the age of the universe, the rate of star formation and varying numbers of civilizations, from 10 to 10,000, that could either have evolved or still be evolving in the Milky Way galaxy over billions of years.

The resulting paper, "Temporal Dispersion of the Emergence of Intelligence: An Inter-Arrival Time Analysis," opened up a universe of possibilities. Hair's findings were sufficiently groundbreaking to prompt an invitation to present his paper at the NASA Astrobiology Conference in April.

His work has also prompted publications from around the world – including Discovery News, The Economist and India.com – to report on his conclusions.



“We’ve only been human beings for 100,000 years at most and we’ve only had a civilization where we wrote things down for the last 4,000 to 6,000 years,” Hair says. “Just contemplating a civilization that is 1 million years old is mindboggling, but if we talk about a civilization that is 1,000 times that, a billion years old, that would completely change the way we even think about existence.”

Yes, space monsters of a sort are likely to be involved.

Hair says several scenarios are possible. We may be the first civilization to evolve in the universe with millions of years’ head start on the rest; we may be the only intelligent life in the universe; or more likely in Hair’s opinion, we’ve been bypassed thus far by intergalactic travelers, either intentionally or unintentionally.

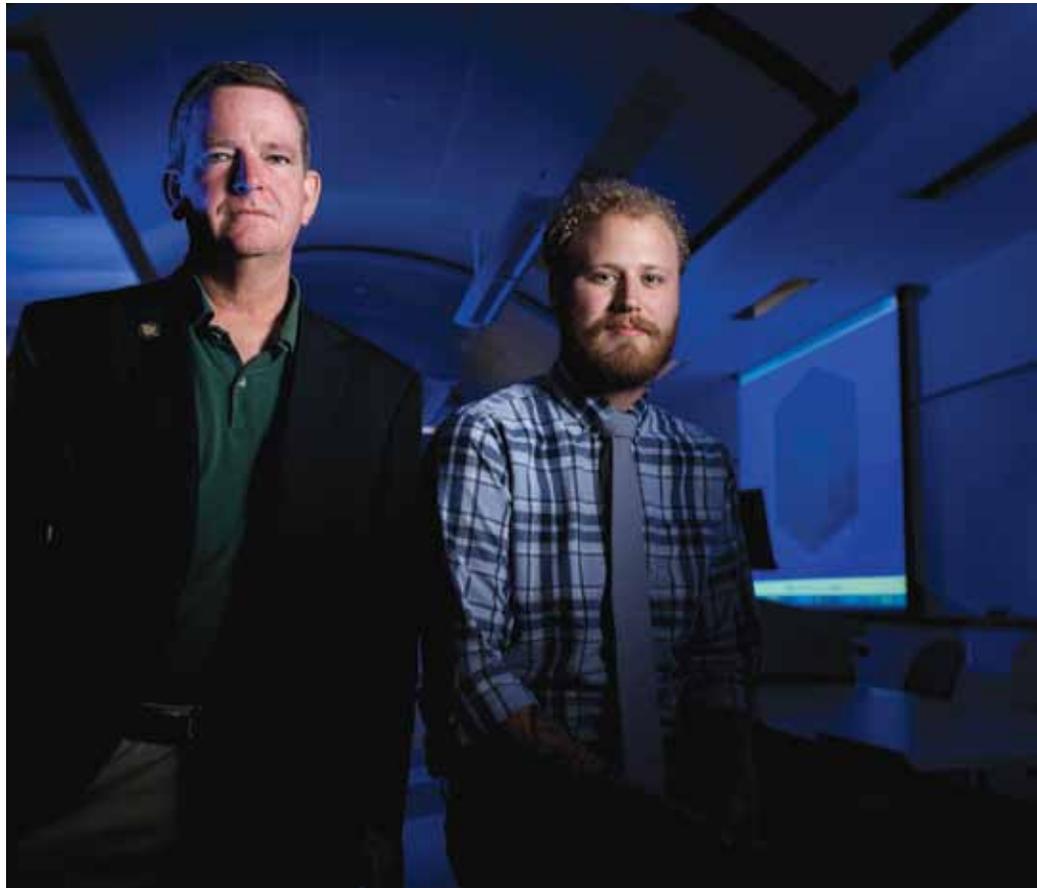
Timing could certainly be a factor. Even if there were 10,000 civilizations out there – what Hair calls his “crowded galaxy” model – the first civilization could have had the galaxy to itself for more than 120 million years. If members of that civilization happened to stop by Earth, there’s a good chance we weren’t at home.

“They could have been here when there was nothing but algae and stromatolites and sea worms, and if they came here at that time, they wouldn’t have felt guilty about taking it over,” he says.

Another explanation for what astrobiologist Paul Davies has termed “the eerie silence” is that civilizations capable of interplanetary travel may abide by a cultural or legal agreement to respect the evolution of lesser-developed civilizations like ours until we’ve earned our intergalactic wings.

“The first civilizations could have spread their doctrine that says just leave everybody alone and let them do their thing and we’ll get to them when they start spreading out,” Hair says.

To assist him in his mathematical search for intelligent life, Hair enlisted



Andrew Hedman, a particularly promising math student from Fort Myers, to serve as Chewbacca to his Han Solo. Together, they devised a second set of computer simulations that formed the basis for a second paper, “Spatial Dispersion of Interstellar Civilizations: A Site Percolation Model in Three Dimensions.”

If the first paper looked at the likely timeframe for tea with our extraterrestrial neighbors, the second attempts to approximate how intelligent life would reach out into space. To do this, Hair and Hedman designed a three-dimensional grid composed of 27 3-by-3 cubes, placed the “seed” planet at the center and ran “zillions” of simulations.

“What we came up with is, this civilization would spread out like a beach ball and expand into space, going to every star system on the way out,” Hair says. “If we assume a travel speed of 1

Thomas Hair, assistant professor of math, and Andrew Hedman, an FGCU senior, used math to seek new insights into the search for intelligent extraterrestrial life.

percent of the speed of light and five light years between each star system, you’re talking about 500 years, 700 years and about 850 years between the various stars on that cube. And since it’s expensive and time-consuming, you’d probably head for the closest one.”

Time to talk about time: Intergalactic travel consumes a lot of it. How is a physical body supposed to withstand a 500-year flight, one way? Hair says that’s unlikely. Here’s where the monsters come in.

“Not only will they not look like us in general, but I don’t believe they’re biological anymore,” Hair says. “Any intelligence we run across will be

extremely advanced and will probably have migrated to a much harder substrate. Biology, because of its nature, only lasts a very finite amount of time, but if you can download your essence into a machine so to speak, a computer brain, you can live virtually indefinitely. So I tend to think that any intelligence we run across will be non-biological. What that suggests is that the kind of stuff we see in Hollywood movies has been anthropomorphized for our entertainment.”

In other words, instead of “Aliens” and “Predators,” we might one day commune with ancients who look more like an iPad than ET? Hair says it makes sense from a human perspective.

“The strongest motivating factor that we know of in the universe is the human will to survive another day,” he says. “You can see it right now as we progress as a civilization; people take medicines and put implants like pacemakers in their bodies to prolong their life. Where does that logical conclusion lead us? When the ability comes to start replacing en masse different pieces of your body with something that will essentially last for a very long time, you finally get to a point where, ‘Gee, my brain is rotting and I sure would like to keep thinking about the things I’m thinking about.’ What do we do with that? That could be 10,000 years from now but it eventually will come to pass that people will want to store their essence another way, and once that happens, it becomes very, very easy to travel between stars.”

Which could explain why ancient aliens just might not be that into us.

“If you’re non-biological and information-based and made out of silicon and graphite, you don’t need to come to Earth to steal our water like we saw in ‘Avatar,’” Hair says. “You don’t want a warm, wet, oxidizing environment like Earth’s; you’d prefer the dry, cold outer reaches of star systems. The moon is a better place if you’re machine-based.”

Hair credits his enterprising sidekick with helping isolate the algorithm and

Aliens not likely to visit Earth

(Especially in our lifetime)



E.T.



Darth Vader



Mr. Spock



Number Six
(Battlestar Galactica)



Alf

steer the computer programming to unveil new insights into the search for intelligent life in the stars. “Andrew was the perfect guy to do this with,” he says. “He has a fire in his belly for this stuff.”

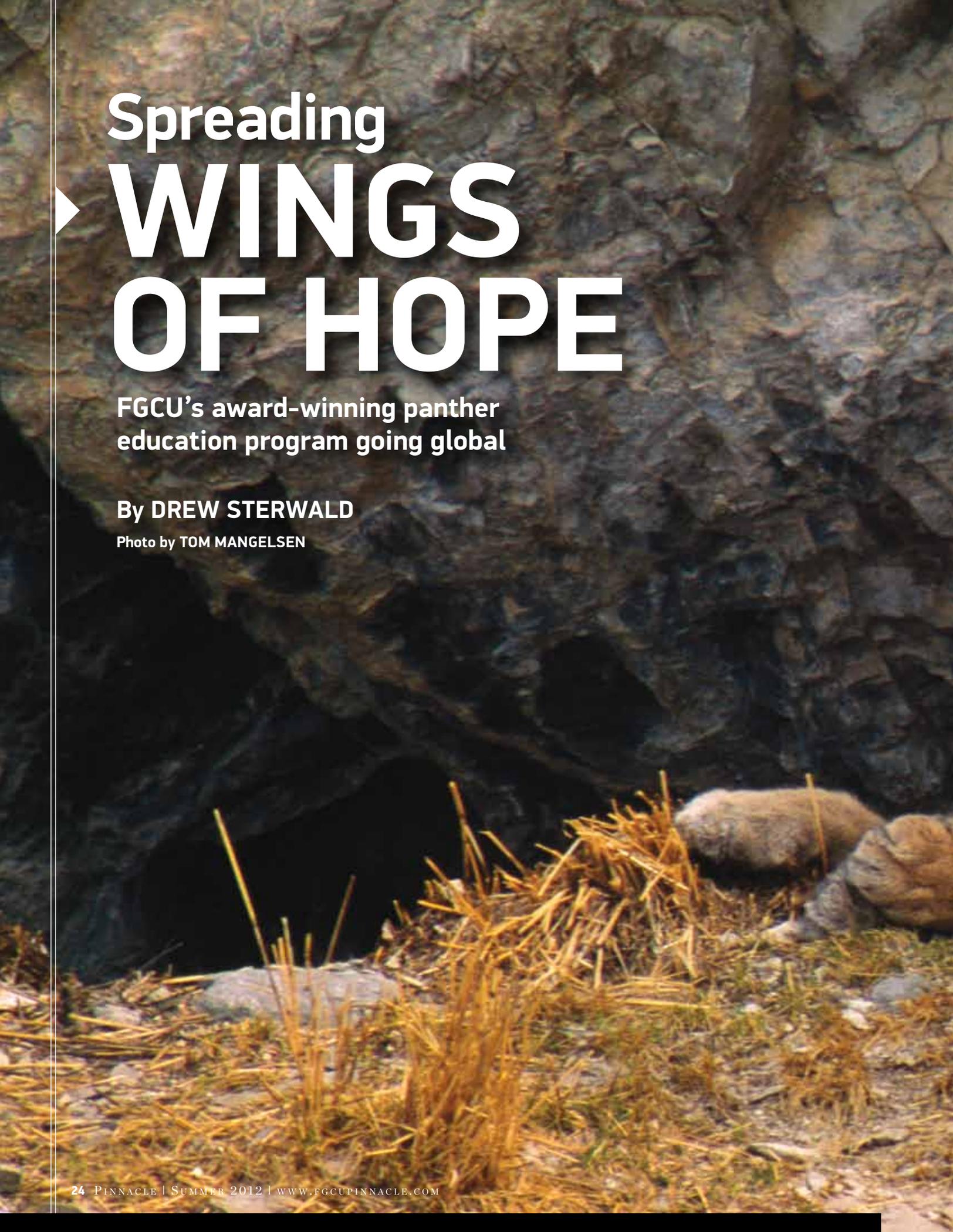
Hedman, now an FGCU senior, says his mathematical star trek has opened a brave new frontier. His presentation of the spatial dispersion paper in January was the hit of the annual joint meeting of the Mathematical Association of America and the American Mathematical Society in Boston.

“It has definitely opened me up to new possibilities,” Hedman says. “The model itself, the specific algorithm we use and mathematical tool of this model is very applicable in other fields of study and has gotten me much more interested in other types of important math. I hope this does inspire more academic study – not just in little green men, antigravity and laser cannon ways, but in a way that helps us learn about ourselves in the cosmos. Math doesn’t get to do that very often.”

Hair concedes that while he wants to believe in extraterrestrials, “there’s very little doubt in my mind that they’ve never been here.” Still, he’s already working on another out-of-this-world paper on whether cell phones and other technologies are quieting our radio chatter to other planets, and holds out hope that Earth won’t always be alone, or what he terms “Planet Mayberry.”

“You can never disprove a negative; you can never come to a point where we can say we’re alone in the visible universe, but we could certainly come to a point where we conclude that life is very, very rare. And if it is, that is extraordinary, too; that just makes us that much more special,” he says. “But my bet leans toward the fact that the galaxy has got dozens upon dozens, maybe even hundreds or thousands of civilizations that have evolved, some of which are still around.” ■

JAY MACDONALD *is a writer who lives in Clearwater.*



Spreading

▶ WINGS OF HOPE

FGCU's award-winning panther
education program going global

By **DREW STERWALD**

Photo by **TOM MANGELSEN**





JACKSON HOLE, Wyo. – Ricky Pires plods through two feet of crusted, powdery snow on the edge of Bridger-Teton National Forest. Flurries fly on the frigid wind as she and her team trudge in the snowshoe wake of a biologist.

They're searching for cougar tracks in the vast whiteness of the Wyoming winterscape – a far cry from Pires' natural habitats: the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge in Big Cypress Swamp, the CREW Marsh Trails and the Panther Posse room in FGCU's Reed Hall, where she and her volunteers educate

schoolchildren about conservation and Florida's endangered cat.

But "Ms. Ricky," as the youngsters call her, is on a mission to take her message beyond Southwest Florida. A nonprofit group that advocates cougar protection worked with Pires to adapt her program for Wyoming's native cat. This fall, she heads to Georgia to train volunteers there for a posse program scheduled to launch in 2013. With another prospect in Argentina, she's opening the door to wider awareness of the need for wildlife conservation – as well as gaining priceless international exposure for the university.

Last spring, FGCU's award-winning 12-year-old Panther Posse program spawned its first offspring:

Top, Marilyn Cuthill, a biologist with the Teton Cougar Project, leads a team of FGCU educators and others on a snowshoe hike looking for cougar tracks near Jackson Hole, Wyo.

Right, Cuthill and Peggy Egan, a volunteer with FGCU's Panther Posse program, look for signs of cougars in a cave that could serve as a den.

a Cougar Posse in Jackson Hole, Wyo. Elementary schools around the small valley town tucked in between the Grand Teton and Gros Ventre mountain ranges sent their first classes through the free program in March.

The youngsters learned how to identify the tracks of cougars and other wildlife. They ducked into a camouflage tent to

discover how cougar kittens are tracked and studied. They danced a conga line to “The Pink Panther Theme” between learning stations.

“It didn’t take much to get me hooked on this,” says Bari Bucholz, a science teacher at Journeys School, a private K-12 institution in Jackson. “It ties into concepts we are teaching, integrates a lot of different subjects. And it’s the kind of learning where they don’t realize they’re



learning because it’s fun.

“It’s kind of a stewardship thing – it ties them to this place.”

Making that connection to the natural world is what everyone involved hopes will inspire children to respect wildlife and practice conservation. If not, the cougar could face the same fate as its endangered cousin, the Florida panther. Licensed hunters can still kill mountain lions for sport in Wyoming and 12 other states, and cougars are often captured and moved without regard for their needs because of public safety fears.

“It will work,” Pires assures organizers in Wyoming. “It’s just going to take a lot of time. If we start now, you won’t have an endangered species.”

Cougar cousins

In March, Pires (’00, Environmental Studies) set aside her signature sleeveless tops and shorts and headed west with



Lindsey McVey, her assistant at the time, and Peggy Egan, a Panther Posse volunteer. Egan works as secretary-treasurer for the College of Life Foundation in Estero, which funded the trip.

The invitation to Wyoming came after representatives of The Cougar Fund based in Jackson Hole saw Pires’ Panther Posse presentation at a conference in May 2011 in Bozeman, Mont. The 10-year-old nonprofit lobbies to protect what it calls “America’s greatest cat” by educating people about the value of this majestic but mysterious predator in the environment, by funding and promoting scientific research and by monitoring state policies to ensure the cats’ survival.

After hearing about Pires’ science-based, hands-on curriculum, The Cougar Fund leaders were sold on the dynamic speaker and her program.

“What Ricky is doing is something



we've been dreaming about since we started," says Tom Mangelsen, The Cougar Fund co-founder and a renowned wildlife photographer based in Jackson Hole. "It was a no-brainer. This person has these programs with lesson plans. Let's talk to her. It was symbiotic."

Wyoming's cougar and Florida's panther present striking similarities. The panther (*Puma concolor coryi*), is one of 20 subspecies of cougar (*Puma concolor*) that share similar natural history and physical characteristics.

Cougars have the largest geographical range of any native terrestrial mammal in the Western Hemisphere – from Canada, across the western United States, into Central and South America. They once roamed most of the 48 contiguous United States but were eliminated from the eastern half of the country through hunting and habitat loss. Although occasional sightings are on the rise in the Midwest and East, Florida is the only eastern state with an established viable population.

The Cougar Fund folks are working to make sure the wild cats don't lose any more ground.

"Although we will continue to fight game agencies as needed, we feel that we may best effect change by educating the next generation," says Managing Director Lisa Rullman. "The Panther Posse is fantastic. I tell people it's like vacation bible school – only about cougars. After it's established here, we plan to work with Ricky to continue its spread."

What's at stake

Hunting is one threat the panther hasn't faced since protection was established in Florida in 1958. The rarely seen predator was declared endangered in 1967, and it's estimated that about 120 adult panthers remain today in South Florida, where highway motorists and territorial rivals are the leading causes of mortality.

In Wyoming, cougar hunting is a lucrative industry, with guides collecting

\$4,000-\$6,000 an outing and the state Game & Fish Department counting on license fees as revenue. Designated hunting areas have annual harvest limits and hunters can bag only one mountain lion per calendar year, but the tawny cats have few other protections.

"People shoot cougars not knowing if they have kittens. If the mother is shot, the kittens have no clue how to feed themselves," says The Cougar Fund's Mangelsen, who grew up duck hunting and insists he's no "tree-hugger." "This is really screwed up."

Complicating matters: A dearth of information about the elusive puma. How many cougars roam Wyoming? How many offspring are born each year? How does competition with other large carnivores, such as grizzly bears and wolves, affect the cats' range and diet?

These are some of the questions being researched by biologists of the Teton Cougar Project based north of Jackson Hole in Kelly, Wyo. A partnership of international wild-cat conservation group Panthera and Craighead Beringia South, a wildlife research institute in Wyoming, the project has documented 12 to 14 resident adult cougars in a 1,400-square-mile study area between Jackson and Grand Teton National Park to the north. Some have been radio-collared to track movement.

"It's so hard to catch up with them," says project coordinator Marilyn Cuthill.

In working with FGCU to adapt the Panther Posse for cougars, Cuthill was able to identify the major differences between the mountain cat and its subtropical cousin:

► **Habitat:** While the Florida panther roams hardwood swamps, upland pine and oak hammock forests, the cougar's habitat is rugged, forested, mountainous terrain with close proximity to water.

► **Prey:** Panthers hunt white-tailed deer, wild hogs, raccoons, armadillos and other small mammals; mountain lions subsist mostly on elk and deer.

► **Threats:** The panther's worst

“**The Panther Posse is fantastic. I tell people it’s like vacation bible school – only about cougars. After it’s established here, we plan to work with Ricky to continue its spread.**”

—
Lisa Rullman,
managing director,
The Cougar Fund



Lindsey McVey, center, then Ricky Pires' assistant, trains Cougar Posse volunteers in the program's curriculum at Tom Mangelsen's home near Jackson Hole.



enemies are man – due to expanding development and motor-vehicle collisions – and other panthers. Cougars also face competition from bears and wolves for territory and prey in addition to the threat of hunters.

“The similarities are uncanny,” Cuthill says. “Their physical characteristics and natural histories are very parallel.”

Passing the torch

In the living room of Mangelsen's home outside Jackson, the Panther Posse team trains a handful of Cougar Posse volunteers. They repeat the drills that Lee and Collier county schoolchildren do when they visit FGCU's posse room.

What color are the eyes of a cougar kitten? Blue.

How many teeth does an adult cougar have? Thirty.

What is the average length of a male cougar? Six to eight feet.

Michelle Sheldon, 28, a graduate student from Montana and AmeriCorps intern at the private Teton Science Schools in Jackson, stands up and repeats the water conservation section that FGCU's McVey has just gone through. Her eyes widen with enthusiasm, and her hands gesticulate broadly. An aspiring science and outdoors educator, she says she's eager to teach kids about cougars through the posse program.



“It’s exciting to be involved with,” she says. “It’s very streamlined and completely accessible.”

Sheldon and other volunteers put fourth- and fifth-graders through their paces in a Cougar Posse room at Broken Arrow Ranch 16 miles north of Jackson. An 80-acre property nestled among rolling slopes that reach toward 10,000 feet and are dotted with sagebrush and aspen groves, the ranch opens its cabins to at-risk urban teenagers from Washington, D.C., through its nonprofit City Kids Wilderness Project. It has made space available for free for the Cougar Posse.

“City Kids and all the supporters behind the program believe that hands-on education is the most meaningful,” says ranch owner and City Kids founder Randy Luskey. “The Cougar Fund is doing important work in a time when most American kids spend too little time outdoors in the natural environment. We believe that the wilderness is a powerful teaching tool.”

Taking it global

Without partners such as Broken Arrow Ranch and the financial support of members, educational efforts such as The Cougar Fund’s would be

“The program was exciting and energetic, and we both walked away with a new respect for panthers, their habitats, and how what we do affects their ability to survive.”

—
Yvonne Luckett,
a Fort Myers mother
who accompanied her
daughter, Caelin,
to the Florida Panther
Posse program

Left, biologist Marilyn Cuthill shows Wyoming children how scientists use radio collars and telemetry to track cougars.

Above, participants in the first Cougar Posse hold up paddles with cougar tracks in response to questions.

Below right, A mother cougar and her three cubs rest in a den on the National Elk Refuge in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

difficult to launch. Wings of Hope, the environmental education program that Pires oversees and which runs the Panther Posse, helped out with instructional materials as well as content guidance.

But the FGCU program faces funding hurdles of its own.

Each Panther Posse session costs about \$600 for bus transportation, supplies and other expenses, and Pires runs about 100 free programs educating 8,000 participants every school year. Panther journals that students take notes in cost about \$2,500 a year, and infrared cameras and related supplies for panther monitoring amount to \$1,000. Pires hopes to find sponsors for such materials and other expenditures.

Like the Energizer Bunny, she keeps pushing ahead, optimistic even in the

face of losing \$40,000 in South Florida Water Management District funding due to state budget cuts. The university's 2010 Alumna of Distinction puts in extra hours beating the bushes to find money wherever she can, often covering incidental costs out of her own pocket.

"My husband and I have put a lot of money into this because it means something to me," Pires says. "I've had some new donors. But buses have gone up (in cost)."

Like many other supporters, Charles Dauray, chairman and CEO of the College of Life Foundation in Estero, recognizes the importance of environmental education programs

like FGCU's. In April, the foundation pledged \$50,000 over the next 10 years to support Wings of Hope – the latest of more than \$135,000 in gifts and pledges to the university since 2000.

"Ricky's program is really essential," Dauray says. "The Panther Posse offers a platform to teach kids to respect nature and man's place in it."

That message reaches beyond the children who go through the posse, who are encouraged to share their newfound knowledge with family and friends.

Yvonne Luckett of Fort Myers chaperoned when daughter Caelin O'Brien, a fourth-grader at Tropic Isles Elementary School, attended the posse in March.

"The program was exciting and energetic, and we both walked away with a new respect for panthers, their habitats, and how what we do affects their ability to survive," Luckett says. "Caelin is excited to teach our family members about how they can help save the Florida panther and sustain our environment, too." ■

HOW TO HELP

To support Wings of Hope's Panther Posse program send tax-deductible donations to: FGCU Wings of Hope, c/o Ricky Pires, 10501 FGCU Blvd. S., Reed Hall 247, Fort Myers, FL 33965.



Photos offer rare glimpse of cougars

Acclaimed natural history photographer Tom Mangelsen, whose cougar images are featured in this spread, has had his work published in National Geographic, Audubon, Smithsonian and Life, among other magazines. His galleries, Mangelsen - Images of Nature, are located in six states.

In 2000, he published "Spirit of the Rockies: The Mountain Lions of



Mangelsen

Jackson Hole," a collection of photographs shot during the unprecedented appearance of a family of mountain lions on the National Elk

Refuge in Jackson in winter 1999. His images offer a rare glimpse into the natural life of the elusive predator.

"It was such a great opportunity to see a cougar family as wild as you could get," Mangelsen says. "They were there for 42 days. Within two weeks, there were 500 people coming and going, hoping to get a view."

That experience – and the knowledge that mountain lions have few protections in Wyoming and other western states – inspired him to co-found The Cougar Fund in 2001, to promote scientific research and the survival of the species.

The nonprofit organization now has more than 2,000 members in 48 states.

"People are impassioned about it," says co-founder Cara Blessley Lowe, a writer and photographer based in Jackson Hole and Los Angeles. "We started homing in on the scientific side. Science cuts through ethical and emotional arguments."

For more information, go to www.cougarfund.org.

SENSE OF PLACE

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UNLESS YOU'RE A PARENT OF A TODDLER OR A STUDENT STUDYING CHILD development, chances are you've never been inside FGCU's Family Resource Center – the building south of Lutgert Hall with the playground and sunflower garden.

Affiliated with the College of Education, the center offers stimulating early care and education to 55 children from 6 weeks to 5 years old – the offspring of students, faculty, staff and the community.

The Department of Children & Families licensed the program in 1998 as one of 10 Educational Research Centers for Child Development in Florida's state university system. In addition to providing daycare, it serves FGCU students as a site for practica, service-learning and research.

Featured here is the 2-year-olds' room, in which three full-time teachers care for a dozen children. Although tots of different ages do mingle at the center, separate classrooms provide individualized activities appropriate for different developmental levels.

1 TO THE LETTER: Jan Piscitelli, director of the Family Resource Center, engages Kaylee Phillips and Neil Reycraft in playing with alphabet magnets that introduce them to letters and their sounds as well as the properties of magnets.

2 PLAYING HOUSE: The “dramatic play” area – which includes a dry sink, toy refrigerator and cash register – allows children to begin role playing that teaches them about



real-world activities such as housekeeping.

3 FACE OFF: Collages of faces help children learn how different emotions are expressed. They are posted at eye level for children.

4 MIRROR, MIRROR: A two-way mirror allows parents and FGCU education students to observe children's behavior from an adjacent room. On occasion, research is conducted at the center.

5 MAKING SENSE: The sensory table contains tubs that can be filled with things that children can touch to learn concepts such as sticky, slippery, wet and heavy. Learning and retention improve as more of the senses are engaged, research shows.

6 PERSONAL SPACE: Each child has a cubbyhole for stowing jackets, artwork to take home and toys to snuggle with



during naptime. Piscitelli says 2-year-olds are remarkably respectful of one another's cubbies.

7 TOUCH TANK: A tank holds hermit crabs that children like to take out and handle. They even give them baths and take them out for walks on the playground, which teaches them about responsibility.

8 SOOOOO BIG: Kelly Henry reads an oversized book to Ainsleigh Babcock,

left, and Emily Burt. It's never too soon for toddlers to learn the function and pleasure of books, printed words and pictures and storytelling.

9 CLIMB ABOARD: A climber play set helps teach eye-hand coordination and provides an oasis for private time or small-group play. Family photos are displayed on the wall behind it so children can "see" their parents during the day.

10 SWEET DREAMS: A stack of cots for naptime, which occurs daily after lunch. Staff turns out the lights and turns on soft music for a two-hour siesta.

11 PINT-SIZE PICASSOS: Wearing smocks, Ben Staal, Joaquin Frehe and Mateo Pinzon paint under the supervision of Luisa Taylor. The activity helps children understand colors, lines and shapes while enhancing motor activity. ■

THE ARTS

▶ "Expressing the inexpressible"

[ART]

A Museum Mile marathon

Students enrich knowledge, find inspiration in sponsored trip to New York City.

DEEP INTO DRAWING WORKSHOP AND 20TH CENTURY ART HISTORY classes last spring, Victoria Pimental felt as if she had fallen into an artistic slump.

The junior from Lehigh Acres ached for inspiration and for a chance to broaden her experience of art beyond the textbook and the classroom. At 20, she'd never visited a major museum and couldn't afford to take time or money away from school to travel.

Thanks to the generosity of an FGCU benefactor, however, Pimental was able to spend a week gallery hopping through the most storied cultural institutions of New York City – the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and others. She and seven other art majors were chosen to take part in the all-expenses-paid trip to enrich their artistic and historical perspectives and to inspire their work.

Standing in front of original masterpieces they'd only seen in books was a revelation.

"It was sensory overload in the best of ways," Pimental says of the New York City marathon. "The experience really influenced the way I think about my future and rekindled some old desires for myself that I let slip away. I really wanted to just start creating as soon as I got home."

And she did. The students were required to produce artwork inspired by their week in Gotham. Their drawings, paintings, photographs, sculptures and journals were



A trip to New York gave art students first-hand exposure to treasures of the art world.

featured in an ArtLab exhibit soon after they returned.

"Their work is changing in ways that wouldn't necessarily have changed without this opportunity," says Anica Sturdivant, interim art gallery director. "These students have been inspired."

Seeing how deeply they were affected by their spring break trip proved gratifying for Raymond Vitelli of Naples, who

donated \$20,000 to fund the excursion.

"To be able to provide a valuable life experience for these young people is so rewarding," Vitelli says. "Seeing their artwork – that was a treat for me."

Kelly Campbell, a junior from Bonita Springs, cut out clay replicas of the spiraling Guggenheim and other landmarks, fired them in a kiln and attached them to a rusty steel saw blade that she nailed like a curled



Top: FGCU student Kelly Campbell's sculpture contains ceramic renderings of New York landmarks. An ArtLab exhibit, below, showcased student work inspired by the trip.

ribbon to a half-burned 8-foot tree trunk. Sitting atop the rustic column: a ceramic female figure peering over the edge, representing the artist observing the city.

"I spent a lot of time looking up at buildings as well as down from the top of them," Campbell explains. "The amount of places and things that I was exposed to really added to my ability to interpret works of many artists and see what artists on the front line are creating and saying."

She hopes someday to help provide a similar opportunity for another student.

"It's a lesson about giving and sharing with others that has surpassed the material aspects of the trip."

— Drew Sterwald



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[SAND VOLLEYBALL]

Dig this: Emerging sport hits FGCU

THE STARS WERE ALIGNED FOR FGCU TO MAKE WOMEN'S SAND VOLLEYBALL ITS 15th varsity sport.

Director of Athletics Ken Kavanagh knew FGCU could field a team for a minimal financial commitment.

He knew it was an emerging sport, bolstered by its acceptance in 1996 as an official Olympic sport – albeit with the designation of “beach volleyball.”

He knew he already had an expert on his staff – indoor volleyball coach Dave Nichols, a 1976 UCLA grad who cut his teeth on the beach with legends such as Ron Von Hagen, Greg Lee and Wilt Chamberlain and played on the original Professional Beach Tour from 1978 to 1982.

And, well, it's kind of a natural fit for a university located 15 miles from the pristine, white-powder sand that makes Southwest Florida's beaches among the most renowned in the country.

“It's perfect – absolutely perfect,” Nichols says. “We're palm trees and sunshine and sand. It's one more great selling point for the university. I think it's an awesome fit.”

The Eagles went 6-5 in their first year of play. The team fell to eventual champion North Florida in the inaugural Atlantic Sun Conference sand volleyball championship in April. FGCU's tandem of redshirt junior Brooke Kohler and junior Brittany Muse claimed one of five individual pair championships during the tournament.

FGCU started entertaining the idea

for a team in 2010, about six months before it became an official NCAA sport.

With no scholarships, Nichols put together a team drawing entirely from the indoor roster forming five two-women teams. The Eagles didn't make any national headlines – they finished third in the A-Sun Championship – but they were a part of the first conference championships in NCAA history.

“We only really had a couple of players with any experience,” Nichols says, “so I was very pleased with how they picked it up – their effort and attitude in making this happen.”

One of them was senior Holly Youngquist, whose sister, former FGCU indoor star Brooke Sweat ('09, Resort and Hospitality Management), is one of the world's top 10 players and is being groomed for the 2016 Olympics.

“We were out training at my house pretty much every day,” Youngquist

says. “I was out there training with her, helping her practice. Being able to watch my sister and train with her has been incredible.”

Youngquist says sand volleyball requires an entirely different mindset. The court is eight square meters (instead of nine), and has to be covered by two players (instead of six). Indoor volleyball is a power game featuring players who each specialize in a particular skill. The sand game requires them to do everything.

There is no timetable for the addition of scholarships, but Nichols believes his team can be “quite good” without them and will be competitive when the first NCAA Championships are held after 40 schools have adopted sand volleyball as a varsity sport. They will be more than halfway there next spring.

“We may not be where we want to be the first few years, but it's a good thing,” he says. “Because it's emerging and a lot of programs are in the same boat. I'm comfortable with it.”

– Rick Weber



Gigi Meyer dives for the dig as FGCU defeats Stetson, 3-2.

“Winning the Atlantic Sun championship on our first try was really a special moment. Being a part of the NCAA Tournament for the first time was a great experience.”

- FGCU COACH KARL SMESKO



[BASKETBALL]

Women gain “great experience” from first NCAA tourney

Men’s team training hard for next season.

WITH THEIR TEAM UP 10 POINTS WITH FIVE MINUTES REMAINING, the small contingent of Southwest Florida fans near courtside bounced up and down with joy.

The FGCU women’s basketball team was on the verge of making history inside the Tallahassee arena in March, and the fans could almost touch it.

But it wasn’t to be. St. Bonaventure rallied for a 72-65 overtime win, ending FGCU’s hopes of winning the school’s first NCAA Division I postseason game. The Eagles’ first-round loss ended another eye-opening season for the program. FGCU went 29-3, collecting an Atlantic Sun Conference championship to reach the NCAA Tournament in its first season of Division I postseason eligibility.

“Winning the Atlantic Sun championship on our first try was really a special moment,” FGCU coach Karl Smesko says. “Being a part of the NCAA Tournament for the first time was a great experience. Although we didn’t finish the game very strong, I think we showed we have a top-25 caliber team.”

Senior guard Nicoya Jackson, one of five seniors who spearheaded the team, calls the St. Bonaventure loss “heartbreaking.”

Smesko wanted the postseason victory for his seniors, who worked tirelessly the last four years to make FGCU women’s basketball a nationally respected program.

“Everything that could go wrong did go wrong in the last five minutes,” Smesko says. “We had the ball with one



The FGCU women’s basketball team celebrates reaching the NCAA Division I tournament. Below, Bernard Thompson was a unanimous choice to the A-Sun All-Freshmen team.

last shot to win in regulation but we didn’t execute as well as I wanted.”

Next season, Smesko plans on playing the same up-tempo, 3-point shooting style. But he wants his team to be stronger. He’s asked players to hit the gym. Against St. Bonaventure, FGCU struggled moving through St. Bonaventure’s physical style on offense.

Smesko also plans on beefing up his team’s schedule to better prepare his club for the postseason. Next year,

the Eagles will travel to Richmond and Virginia Tech and play host to 2011 NCAA qualifier Central Florida.

The FGCU men, who went 15-7, will also have a tougher schedule. The men, whose home opener will be Nov. 13 against Miami, came within 20 minutes of reaching the NCAA Tournament this year.

After two stunning upsets over South Carolina-Upstate and Mercer, the Eagles fell to top-seeded Belmont 83-69 in the Atlantic Sun Conference championship. The Eagles led Belmont by as much as 13 points in the first half.

“It gave our program great experience,” FGCU coach Andy Enfield says.

Enfield believes his team can carry the tournament momentum to next year.

“But it’s important for all of our players to spend the necessary time in the gym and weight room,” Enfield says.

“We have to make significant improvements in their offensive games and we need to come together as a team to improve our team defense.”

- Chris Duncan



[SOFTBALL]

With a precocious hurler on the mound registering strikeout after strikeout, FGCU softball returned to national prominence this year.

Eligible for the NCAA Division I postseason for the first time in program history, the Eagles captured a second regular season title. FGCU, which ended the regular season 34-22, earned the



Morgan

No. 1 seed in the A-Sun Conference championship, where it defeated fifth-seeded Florida, 2-1. It was the University of South Florida that snapped the Eagles' winning streak, ending their

hopes to advance and finishing the 2012 season 39-24.

Freshman ace pitcher Shelby Morgan played a large role in helping FGCU post its most wins since the Eagles went 47-9 in 2008-09. FGCU coach Dave Deiros chose Morgan to pitch most of the Eagles' big games and credited her development for the club's success.

Morgan, who also was an all-freshman selection, was named FGCU's first-ever A-Sun Pitcher of the Year. Her 1.37 ERA ranked 20th in the nation. She also held opponents to a conference-best .171 batting average in A-Sun games.

Sophomore catcher Chelsea Zgrabik and sophomore outfielder Jessica Barnes also earned all-conference first team selections. Zgrabik led the A-Sun in home runs (8), RBI (24), average (.439), hits (25), slugging percentage (.965), doubles (6) and total bases (55). Barnes, who also plays on the Eagles volleyball team, led the team with 24 stolen bases in the regular season.

[BASEBALL]

The Eagles, with 17 freshmen and 10 sophomores on the 35-man

baseball roster, made a strong showing as they entered the postseason, but fell to Kennesaw State in the Atlantic Sun Conference Tournament. They posted a 26-31 overall record this season, finishing fourth in the A-Sun Conference with four players named to the A-Sun All-Tournament team – Brandon Bednar, Sean Dwyer, Jason Forjet and Ryan Gebhart. FGCU played the eighth toughest non-conference schedule in the country, facing teams such as No. 1 Florida, No. 2 Florida State and No. 6 Miami.

“We threw them to the wolves,” FGCU coach Dave Tollett says. “Maybe the schedule was a little too tough, but hopefully it will serve a purpose and you will see a better team the next two years.”

Tollett said his young players picked up a lot of experience that should pay dividends in the future. He wants to see his young team improve its offense in the offseason. The team posted a .231 overall batting average this year.

In June, Forjet, a right-handed pitcher was drafted by the San Francisco Giant in the 31st round of the MLB draft.

[SWIMMING AND DIVING]

Led by a dominant freshman swimmer, FGCU's swimming and diving team captured its fourth consecutive Coastal Collegiate Swimming Association championship. The Eagles won the meet by more than 300 points.

For the first time in program history, FGCU was represented at the 2012 NCAA Division I swimming championship. Freshman Emma Svensson, who

earned the CCSA's Most Outstanding Female Freshman Performer of the Meet, broke two school records at the national championship meet, setting a school record with a time of 49.44 seconds for 35th place in the 100 free preliminaries. Svensson also set a new CCSA record and a school record by finishing in 34th place in the 100 back preliminaries. Svensson was named a Mid-Major All-American, according to collegeswimming.com.

“Emma deserves all the continued recognition she gets,” FGCU coach Neal Studd says. “Even after all her success, she was quickly back to work this spring trying to improve in the pool and in the weight room. She has turned into a great role model for our program.”

FGCU's diving team had strong performances all season. The diving team was integral in helping FGCU finish the season with an 11-2 dual-meet record. Junior Maegan Butler, sophomore Alex Valder and freshman Cayla Collins qualified for the NCAA Division I diving championship. Out of 41 competitors in the 3-meter dive at the national championship, Collins finished 38th, Butler took 39th and Valder 41st. They will return next season, when they will be joined by a stellar nine-member recruiting class.

[TENNIS]

The FGCU men's and women's tennis teams qualified for the playoffs in their first season of Division I eligibility.

The men, who went 7-10 overall, lost to No. 3 seed Stetson 4-0 in the first round of the A-Sun championships. The women, who went 10-11 overall,

Freshman Tianyu Bao



“ We threw them to the wolves. Maybe the schedule was a little too tough, but hopefully it will serve a purpose and you will see a better team the next two years.”

- FGCU BASEBALL COACH DAVE TOLLETT



lost to No. 2 seed East Tennessee State University 4-1 in the A-Sun semifinals.

For the men, it was a season of breakthroughs. They bounced back from last year's 3-18 overall record to make the A-Sun playoffs. The team's seven wins was its best finish since the Eagles won 10 matches in 2008, the first year in Division I.

Freshman Tianyu Bao became the first Eagle to be honored as A-Sun Freshman of the Year, and joined freshman Michael Beiler as the program's first All-Freshmen selections. The FGCU women also had an all-conference performer in freshman Sarah Means, who was named to the A-Sun All-Conference second team and also selected to the All-Freshman team.

[GOLF]

Eligible for the NCAA Division I postseason for the first time, FGCU's men's and women's golf teams turned in strong seasons.

The men finished fourth at the A-Sun Conference championships. Junior Kyle English earned All-Conference honors by taking fifth place in the tournament. Senior Brandon Pena tied for 15th overall in the tournament en route to becoming the first Eagle to qualify for the 2012 NCAA Division I Men's Golf Tournament.

Pena, one of 45 student-athletes in the nation who earned the invitation, was named a No. 6 seed in the Athens, Ga. Competition, which took place in mid-May. He finished the three-round tournament with a 74-73-71 (E)/218, good for a tie for 12th among the 50 competitors who weren't on a team.

Two freshmen, meanwhile, spearheaded the women's club. The Eagles took seven out of nine schools at the A-Sun Championships. Freshmen Chelsea Guoynes and Georgia Price finished 14th and 23rd overall, respectively.

- Chris Duncan

[HOCKEY]



FGCU's hockey club celebrates a big win at home.

Hockey club skates to national title

FGCU'S 10-YEAR-OLD HOCKEY CLUB THIS SPRING DELIVERED WHAT no other university sports team yet has: a national championship.

Defeating Michigan's Grand Valley State, 4-2, in the finals capped a romp through the American Collegiate Hockey Association tournament and a stellar 37-2-1 season for the club. Winning the national title at Germain Arena made the accomplishment all the sweeter.

"To be able to do this on our home ice is really an honor," said forward Mike Lendino ('12, MBA), team captain and tournament MVP. "This being my last year, there's no better way to go out. These guys will be thinking about this years from now."

A six-year veteran of the team, the Randolph, N.J., native said he and his teammates compete for the love

of the game. They don't have the advantages of NCAA status or athletics scholarships; club members conduct their own fundraising to pay for travel and equipment, and coaches and other staff volunteer their time.

The club has come a long way since it first hit the ice in 2002 and racked up a dismal debut season in ACHA Division III. Quickly rebounding, the team qualified for the national tournament just a year later and moved up to Division II in 2006-07.

This past season, FGCU ranked No. 1 in the Southeast region and stumbled only twice after a streak of 27 wins.

"Beating Kennesaw State (in February) definitely got us back on track and sent a message to the rest of the league," said head coach Bob Brinkworth. "We beat a very, very good team in the finals."

- Drew Sterwald

PHILANTHROPY

"The results ... are always beyond calculation"

A legacy for learning

Elaine Nicpon Marieb's \$5 million gift ensures future of health sciences.

BIOLOGIST, NURSE, TEACHER, TEXTBOOK WRITER, PHILANTHROPIST.

Elaine Nicpon Marieb has worn many hats in her lifetime, but they've been cut from the same basic cloth, with education as the common thread.

"My education has underlain my success," says the author of 13 anatomy and physiology texts used by thousands of universities across the country – including Florida Gulf Coast University.

"I could tell you the date I went from being an ordinary person with ordinary desires to being an extraordinary person," she says. "I reached a level where I was so hungry for knowledge that there was no stopping me. That's what education did for me and I think can do for anybody."

And that's the underlying reason she decided to pledge \$5 million to FGCU. Her donation established two endowments that support scholarships for nontraditional students pursuing health-profession degrees and continued growth in academic programs, research and community outreach in health professions. To recognize her extraordinary gift, FGCU's new health professions building was christened Dr. Elaine Nicpon Marieb Hall earlier this year.

"Dr. Marieb's generous investment in FGCU's health professions programs has helped us offer our students and faculty a superb, state-of-the-art facility in which to teach, learn and conduct research," says President Wilson G. Bradshaw.

The \$28-million center features labs



that simulate an operating room, an intensive-care unit, a labor and delivery room and various general medical suites where students can practice physical exams and procedures on adult, adolescent and infant simulators. The building also houses a NASA-developed anti-gravity treadmill in the human performance lab and an in-ground rehabilitation pool with an integrated treadmill in the aquatic rehabilitation lab.

"They did a wonderful job on the simulation rooms," says Marieb. "You're very fortunate. There are not too many places that have a science facility like that."

A professor emeritus of Holyoke Community College in Massachusetts, Marieb retired from teaching after a distinguished career spanning four decades. A Sarasota resident, she serves on the board of directors of the city's Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and enjoys traveling, playing doubles tennis and supporting the arts.

that simulate an operating room, an intensive-care unit, a labor and delivery room and various general medical suites where students can practice physical exams and procedures on adult, adolescent and infant simulators. The building also houses a NASA-developed anti-gravity treadmill in the human performance lab and an in-ground rehabilitation pool with an integrated treadmill in the aquatic rehabilitation lab.

Dr. Elaine Nicpon Marieb Hall opened for classes in January.

Pinnacle talked to her about her teaching career, her approach to writing and her passion for giving.

How did you get into textbook writing?

I call myself the accidental author. I never, ever expected to end up doing that. When I was a teenager, I wanted to be a chemist. My father wanted me to be a teacher. I thought I'd never teach – and ended up spending most of my life teaching. When I started college, chemistry was just not that interesting to me. I was a married woman and thought it would be nice to have the summer off with the children. That's how I got into teaching.

I just kind of fell into writing textbooks. When publishers are looking at a book to do they send a copy to people that they trust and know will do good job looking at it for readability and accuracy. I did a lot

“ I reached a level where I was so hungry for knowledge that there was no stopping me. That’s what education did for me and I think can do for anybody.”

- ELAINE NICPON MARIEB



of that while teaching. I needed the money. Then I was working on writing a lab manual – there was nothing out there that really fulfilled my requirements for a lab manual. A publishing company asked to see it, and I sent them half a dozen sections and the next thing I knew I was offered a contract.

One thing I want to say to young people is don’t ever turn your nose up at an offer. You never know what it’s going to lead to.

What inspired your popular “Anatomy & Physiology Coloring Workbook”?

You know the movie “Fantastic Voyage”? (The 1966 sci-fi film in which a miniaturized submarine crew enters a comatose man’s body to destroy a life-threatening blood clot.) I thought that was a great idea. You laughed, but you’d be amazed at the brain muscle action that’s involved when you have to identify and color organs and parts of organs in the body. Just that process of thinking about it and the hand goes out and uses a colored pencil ... It’s amazing what that does.

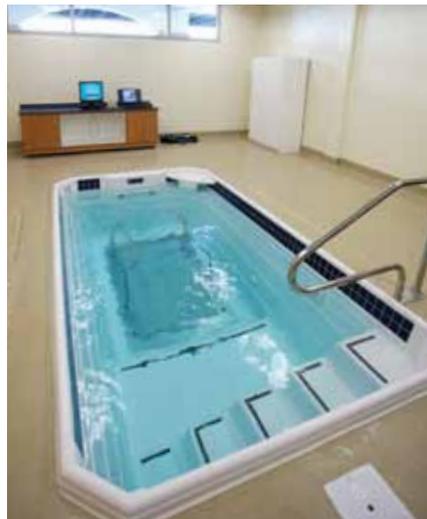
Has the approach to teaching anatomy and physiology changed much over the years?

It has changed. New media has a lot to do with that. I think a lot of effort is being made to try to present material in a somewhat easier way. Now you buy a textbook and get a password to an area on the Web where students can test themselves and accelerate their learning. I don’t think books will ever disappear – I hope not. Some people learn well reading something. Others do well when they

see animation. Others do better when they just listen to a lecture. So there’s no one way of learning.

Are you still working on additional books or editions?

I’m still revising editions. They turn around every three years. At any point in time I’m working on three to four different books. It’s very hard to stay up to date today, especially in physiology. The human body hasn’t changed, but physiology, that’s another story. They’re always coming up with new cures, new ideas for how to treat this, that or the other thing.



Marieb Hall houses an aquatic rehab lab, patient simulators and other state-of-the art training facilities.

Ours is not the first building at an American university with your name on it. What’s behind your commitment to philanthropy?

Most of my efforts have to do with education. When I went back to college – well, let’s just say I was used to reading nothing more demanding than Ladies’ Home Journal. I found myself having to deal with the language of chemistry and the language of anatomy and physiology. It was a big challenge.

You’ve particularly focused on helping women who are returning to college after a break or attending college for the first time later in life. Did you face challenges in your own academic career?

My husband became disabled and couldn’t work. Many times I thought I would have to drop out. Somehow I made it. You do what you can. I was an older student. I didn’t have much in the way of help. I fully believe almost anybody can be successful and have a life that makes them happy. Mine has made me very happy. That’s why I’m giving back.

How did you decide to build a connection with Florida Gulf Coast University?

When I saw what the school has done in such a short period of time – it’s quite amazing. This building has such wonderful resources. I haven’t seen anything like this. It’s the best.

– Drew Sterwald



PHILANTHROPY

(continued from previous page)

Changing lives

Gala helps fund vital scholarships

AS SCHOLARSHIP – AND THE EDUCATION IT PROVIDES – DOESN'T SIMPLY BENEFIT the recipient. Its impact radiates out to students' families and many others whose lives they touch.

Funding those scholarships was the goal of the President's Celebration 2012, which this spring raised \$706,000 through ticket sales, donations, live and silent auctions.

More than 400 people turned out for the signature event, which took place March 26 at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples.

"With scholarships, the best and the brightest are attracted to FGCU and our region," said President Wilson G. Bradshaw. "With scholarships, deserving students with limited financial means can earn university degrees. Florida Gulf Coast University students become your employees and our future leaders."

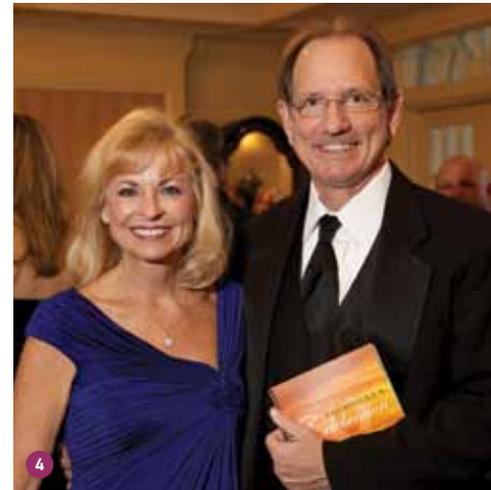
This year, the university welcomed Sarah Jane and John R. Alexander and Janet Guttman Cohen to its Order of the Majestic Eagle, the FGCU Foundation's highest honor. They were recognized for their generous support of the university.

Those attending the gala heard first-hand accounts from students who have benefited directly from donor support, which this past year provided \$1.4 million in scholarships to close to 1,000 students.

Freshman Michael George Danis plans to become a nurse anesthetist. He was awarded the Pop and Marj Kelly Scholarship.

Until he received that scholarship, "I didn't think I could even dream of college," he said. "Being a scholarship recipient has many benefits beyond financial relief."

While he still works part-time during the school year and full-time during the summer, "the financial assistance this scholarship provides allows me to work a little less and, in turn, become a better-



Photos by Brian Tietz

“With the assistance of this scholarship, I now know I will be able to achieve my dream of becoming a nurse who will help many others after graduation.”

- STEPHANIE CIFUENTES, '12,
FGCU SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



rounded individual.” Besides studying to maintain his 3.5 grade point average, he has contributed to the university’s service learning newsletter, held a position with Student Government and traveled to Haiti to assist with medical relief.

“With the assistance of this scholarship, I now know I will be able to achieve my dream of becoming a nurse who will help many others after graduation,” he said.

Stephanie Cifuentes, '12, told of her family’s flight from Colombia when she was 12 and her subsequent struggle to learn English and do well in school. She graduated with honors from high school and went on to attend FGCU while holding down two jobs.

Scholarships made possible by Kathie Beeken and Jim and Lynn Knupp enabled her to complete her education and go on to accept a job with BB&T.

“To you who are scholarship sponsors, please know that you are changing and supporting students’ lives,” she said, “and we all sincerely thank you.” ■

1. Sarah Jane and John R. Alexander
2. Liz and Dennis Dansch
3. Lizbeth Benacquisto, J.D. Alexander and Garrett Richter
4. Robbie and Geoff Roepstorff
5. Jo Anna Bradshaw, Megan Denny and FGCU President Wilson G. Bradshaw
6. Andrea and Ken Smith, Elena Perez and Ivan Howard
7. Janet Guttman Cohen and Pat Barton
8. Stephanie Cifuentes
9. Joyce, James, Marjorie, Thomas and Jane Fitzgerald
10. Carrie Gammons, Angela Gates, Joe Gammons and Todd Gates
11. Rick and Lori Borman
12. Paul Woods, Paula Bautista, Laurie Holquist and Donnie Crandell
13. Peter Sulick

PHILANTHROPY

(continued from previous page)

Das fund to help students in health professions

A FORT MYERS COUPLE WHO HAVE LONG SUPPORTED FGCU HAVE ADDED TO THEIR legacy of giving by donating \$10,000 for scholarships.

The Dr. and Mrs. Amal K. Das Endowed Scholarship Fund will give preference to undergraduates or graduate students in the College of Health Professions.



Amal and Betty Das

Higher education is an important cause for the couple. They established

“We’re very interested in the health field,” says Betty Das. “We’re interested in helping students who may be struggling.”

scholarships in Indiana before moving to Southwest Florida. Since 1999, they have supported a variety of FGCU programs, including green building initiatives and First Generation Matching Grant Scholarships. They also have donated artwork, including a Picasso lithograph.

This latest gift will help tomorrow’s health professionals with money for tuition and fees. ■



Members of the African Network of Southwest Florida

African Network supports endowed scholarship

THE AFRICAN NETWORK OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA INC., HAS ESTABLISHED AN endowed scholarship to benefit students of African descent.

Called the African Network of Southwest Florida Scholarship Endowment, it will award scholarships to degree-seeking students who have demonstrated excellent academic performance prior to college and who can describe how their degree path will benefit the people of Africa.

FGCU’s International Services division played a role in developing a

relationship with the African Network.

“Members felt welcomed at FGCU, and establishing a scholarship here is a way of expanding their relationship with the university, advancing their community presence and supporting future generations of Africans,” says Elaine Hozdik, director of International Services.

The African Network of Southwest Florida Inc. promotes Africa’s rich heritage and diverse culture. Network President Eze Wokocha encourages community donations to the fund. ■

Nejmans pledge bequest for liberal arts students

HAVING EARNED BACHELOR’S AND MASTER’S DEGREES THROUGH THE G.I. BILL, U.S. Army veteran John Nejman appreciates the value of higher education as well as the benefit of having assistance with its cost.

That’s why he and his wife have made a bequest that will create the John and Heidi



John and Heidi Nejman

Nejman Endowed Scholarship Fund at FGCU.

“I realize how fortunate I was, and I’m more than happy to repay the debt by establishing

scholarships for students,” John Nejman says.

Longtime Fort Myers residents, they have earmarked their fund for students majoring in one of the liberal arts.

“We want to help students who maybe haven’t made up their minds yet about what field they want to make their livelihood in, and liberal arts is a good way to do that,” Nejman says. “These days, liberal arts isn’t getting a fair shake. I’ve always believed liberal arts have provided students with well-roundedness.” ■

Northern Trust endows scholarship for student leaders

RECOGNIZING THAT LEADERS MUST BE cultivated in much the same way scholars are,

Northern Trust has pledged \$100,000 to Florida Gulf Coast University to be used, in part, for scholarships for student leaders.

The gift, which will create the Northern Trust Scholarship Endowed Fund, includes a \$25,000 endowed scholarship for student leaders.

“Through this scholarship, Northern Trust is proud to assist in the development of student leaders at FGCU, who will reflect a positive image in the community and beyond,” says John Fumigalli, Northern Trust president and CEO for the West Florida Region and chairperson of the FGCU Foundation Board.

Students eligible for the scholarships are juniors and seniors who are undergraduate leaders and are members of the university’s Lead Team, a service-oriented board devoted to enhancing the potential of student organizations by providing resources, consultations and training workshops that help build strong leadership.

“We are grateful for the support Northern Trust has bestowed upon our programs and students,” says Rosemary Thomas, FGCU vice president for Advancement. “Its commitment to investing in the future of our exceptional student leaders is steadfast, and we are honored Northern Trust has entrusted the FGCU Foundation with this gift that will continue to develop



From left to right: Lloyd N. Liggett, Senior Vice President; Judy Bricker, Senior Vice President-Marketing; Fay C. Gronski, Vice President; and John D. Fumagalli, President, West Florida Region, Northern Trust.

excellence in tomorrow’s leaders.”

Freshman Jordan Nation, who comes from Sunrise has benefited from FGCU’s leadership program.

“My experience with leadership programs at FGCU has been outstanding,” Nation says. “I participated in many programs hosted by Leadership Development. Each program uses a difference approach to help students develop leadership skills, motivating and inspiring participants to do great things for the FGCU community.”

Northern Trust is a leading provider of investment management, asset and fund administration, banking solutions and fiduciary services to corporations, institutions and affluent individuals worldwide. It has offices throughout Florida, including Fort Myers, Bonita Springs and Naples. ■

Alumni couple establish scholarship in honor of biologist

TWO LIFETIME MEMBERS OF THE FGCU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HAVE created an endowed scholarship fund to benefit upper-level students majoring in biology-related studies.

Andy Kunkle ('02, Computer Information Systems) and Angela (Hodge) Kunkle ('04, Communication) have pledged \$10,000 to establish the Kunkle Family Scholarship Endowed Fund in honor of Andy’s late father, Jay Kunkle, who was a biologist.

“He was an advocate for the environment whose values impacted our view of the world,” says Andy Kunkle. “It is our hope that this scholarship will help its recipient develop the same passion.”

Their motivation, says Angela Kunkle, is that it will serve “as a way to give back to the university that helped mold us.”

Andy Kunkle is employed as information technology manager at Algenol, the local company working



Andy and Angela Kunkle

to produce ethanol from algae. A former FGCU staff member, Angela Kunkle is assistant director of Student Life at Edison State College.

Their fund will support students who have demonstrated academic excellence while majoring in biology, secondary biology education, marine science or environmental studies. ■

CLASS NOTES

▶ This world is but canvas to our imaginations



▶ '05

Katrina French

AmeriCorps worker honored at White House.

AS KATRINA FRENCH ('05, ENGLISH) WAS BEING LED THROUGH THE PRISTINE halls of the White House, she kept hoping she would round the corner and bump into President Obama. She would have settled for seeing him playing Frisbee on the lawn with Bo, the First Family's Portuguese water dog.

That wasn't to be, but she did have a one-hour meeting with Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, who presented her with a Champions of Change award on that transcendent day in July 2011.

"It was very, very neat," she says. "I was thinking, 'I never in a million years thought I'd be in this hallway or meeting with these people.' It certainly wasn't in my head going through college that I'd ever end up in fairly high-level meetings in the White House. But that's the way life takes you."

French, 33, was honored for her role as an AmeriCorps VISTA worker who was involved in Gulf Coast restoration after the BP oil spill, managing volunteers, then putting together a

Clean Economy Council that represents non-profit organizations as well as local and state government agencies trying to bring in jobs that are sustainable.

Helping disaster-stricken people became her passion in 2008, after burning out in the veterinary industry and becoming a team leader with AmeriCorps' National Civilian Community Corps.

"It doesn't matter what your income level is or what kind of fancy car you have – if a tornado comes through, you don't have a house or a business, and your kids don't have a school," she says. "The real concern for me is that people on the lower economic spectrum have less of a chance of recovering well because they have less insurance or don't have any insurance, and don't have a safety net. Often those people get left behind. If you can help that community prepare and help them mitigate the effects of disaster, you're really helping the sustainability of that community. I just find that incredibly rewarding."

– Rick Weber

[WEDDINGS, ENGAGEMENTS AND BIRTHS]

'07

Jesse Bouchard, (Marketing), and Victoria Coppard have announced their engagement. They will marry next April. Bouchard is the operations manager for Northwestern Mutual Financial Network-The Glenn Black Group in Fort Myers.



Erin Cicinelli Bogie, (Master's, Curriculum and Instruction), and **Dino Bogie**, '06 (Computer Information Systems), have announced the birth of their twin boys, Zaid Anthony and Landon Anthony, on Nov. 21 at Sarasota Memorial Hospital. Zaid weighed 4 pounds, 10 ounces and was 17.5 inches long. Landon weighed 5 pounds, 10 ounces and was 18 inches long. The Bogies live in Bradenton.



K. Jacob Hutchings, (Finance), and **Lindsay (Fritz) Hutchings**, (Marketing), had a daughter, Delaney Grace Hutchings, on Oct. 23. Jacob

Hutchings is an associate appraiser at Maxwell & Hendry Valuation Services Inc. They live in Fort Myers.

'10

Ashley Jane Kemler, (Special Education), and Nicholas Ciliberti have announced their engagement. They plan to marry July 20, 2013. Kemler is a teacher at St. Lucie West Centennial High School.



SEND US YOUR NEWS

Email to alumnirelations@fgcu.edu or mail to: Florida Gulf Coast University, Attention: Alumni Relations, 10501 FGCU Blvd. S., Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565

[NEWSMAKERS]

'99

Jeremy King, (Finance), passed the Certified Financial Planner exam in January. He is a financial adviser at the Fort Myers office and is a partner in the Berry & King Wealth Management Group at UBS.

David White, (Master's, Public Administration), has been named the academic chair for the master of science in criminal justice program at Kaplan University. He retired from the Collier County Sheriff's Office after 22 years of service.

'01

Kevin Gaffney, (Accounting), is celebrating the 10-year anniversary of his business, KPG Accounting Services Inc.



Silvia Ramos, (Liberal Studies), has been named the new equal employment opportunity and affirmative action officer at Winston-Salem University. She will also be responsible for interpreting and analyzing policies and procedures related to equal employment regulations, will assess and respond to the needs for training programs and develop plans to promote equity, diversity and cultural competency.

'03

Robert Burdett, (Master's, Secondary Education), has joined the Miromar Realty sales team at Miromar Lakes Beach & Golf Club in Estero. He is also a national award-winning photographer.

'04

Alexa Matyas, (Master's, Counseling), is the new social services manager for PACE Center for Girls of Lee County. She is responsible for overseeing the social services team, including daily case management, family and crisis counseling and psycho-educational groups.

'05

Christopher Squittieri, (Finance), has joined Willow Street Advisors LLC as portfolio manager. He previously was employed with U.S. Trust as portfolio manager, where he managed more than \$280 million for private wealth management clients.

'06

Sarah Conant, (Legal Studies), is a paralegal and legal coordinator for Land Solutions Inc. She is responsible for all legal documentation, including managing the firm's legal affairs and assisting clients in review and document continuity and presentation.



Kevin Koелеmeyer, (Management), and **Kagen Cooksley**, '07 (Resort and Hospitality Management), opened Regency Insurance Group in Fort Myers. Regency offers auto, home, personal umbrella, renters, disability, health, flood, life, motorcycle, recreational vehicle and personal watercraft insurance.

Braxton Rhone, (Management), was appointed by Gov. Rick Scott to the District Board of Trustees at Edison State College. Rhone is a financial advisor at Merrill Lynch.

'07

Sonja Sieling-Boumenot, (Master's, Business Administration), is a Realtor and director of recruitment with Weichert Realtors Suburban Properties in Mystic, Conn.

'09

Nikita O'Connor, (Management), is a residence life coordinator and an assistant coordinator of wellness at West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Louise Skelly, (Resort and Hospitality Management), is the production assistant for the television show "The Real Housewives of Orange County." She lives in Los Angeles.

Marissa Van Cleef, (Criminal Forensic Studies), has graduated from One Station Unit Training at Fort Leonard Wood, which included basic military training and advanced individual training.

Stefen Wynn, (Legal Studies), is pursuing a master's of public administration at Indiana University South Bend. He is also the chairman of the Young Republicans for St. Joseph County.

'10

Shane Drake, (Master's, Accounting and Taxation), is employed with Wilshire, Whitley, Richardson and English in Fort Myers. He recently received The American Institute of CPAs 2010 Elijah Watt Sells Award. It is presented to candidates who obtained the 10 highest cumulative scores on all four sections of the computerized Uniform CPA Examination.

John Rodriguez, (Finance), has been appointed financial representative by Northwestern Mutual in Fort Myers. He will be associated with Northwestern Mutual Financial Network-The Glenn Black Group.

'11

Natalie Corcino, (Communication), is the digital merchandise assistant at the Home Shopping Network in St. Petersburg.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

9/15 SATURDAY

Dollars for FGCU Scholars

Have a ball bowling for a good cause at the sixth annual fundraiser benefiting the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. Register a team of five or sign up as an individual for an evening of glow bowling, fun, food and Eagle giveaways. Members are invited to a behind-the-scenes tour of Beacon Bowl. Companies interested in sponsoring a lane may call (239) 590-1087. 6 p.m., Beacon Bowl, 5400 Tamiami Trail, Naples.

— For more events, go to www.fgcu.edu/alumni

P.S.

▶ The obstacle is the path

Fantasy in bloom



PARTING SHOT is a forum for essays, photos and art that present a unique, personal perspective. Submit material for consideration to Pinnacle Editor Karen Feldman at kfeldman@fgcu.edu or call (239) 590-7093.

THOM REDFORD, AN FGCU SENIOR MAJORING IN social work, took this photo of an orchid in his kitchen. “The insides of orchids fascinate me,” he says. “This one looks to me like a winged creature of some sort descending, bearing treasure from above.” He used a Nikon D5100 and a Sigma 105-millimeter 1:2.8 macro lens at F32 for 20 seconds (under the kitchen’s fluorescent lights). ■

Strike up
some fun
for student scholarships

RSVP: www.fgcu.edu/alumni



Saturday,
Sept. 15

6 p.m.
Beacon Bowl
Naples



Artistic License



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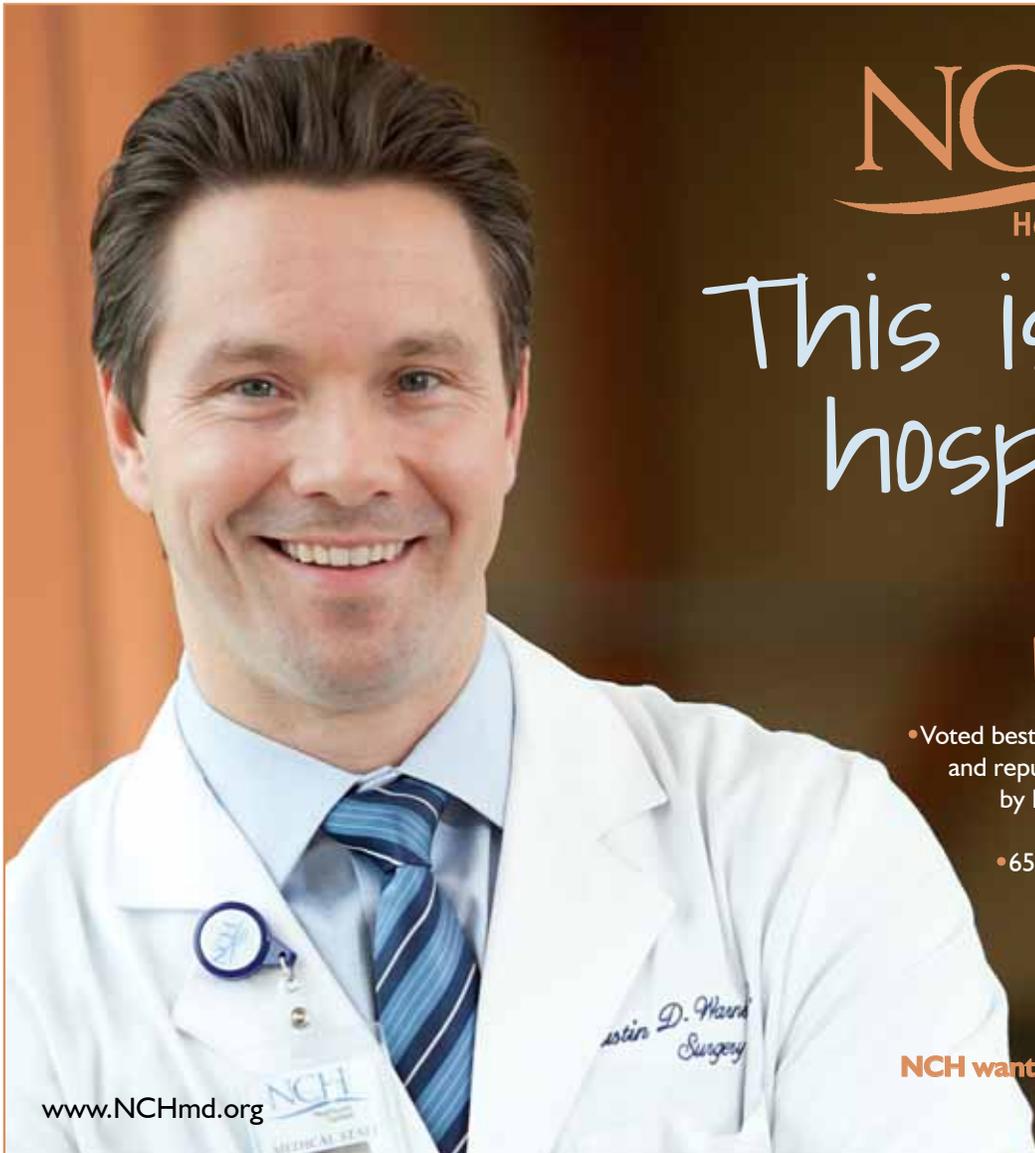
Proceeds (\$25) benefit university scholarships

For more information visit the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles at www.hsmv.state.fl.us/



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