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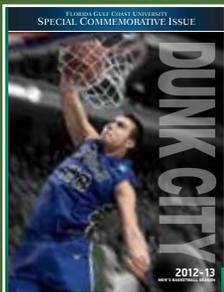
▶ FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

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### INSIDE:

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March Madness  
commemorative section

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## THE FUTURE: BOLD & BRILLIANT

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2014  
THE RITZ-CARLTON, NAPLES



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PHOTO BY BRIAN TIETZ

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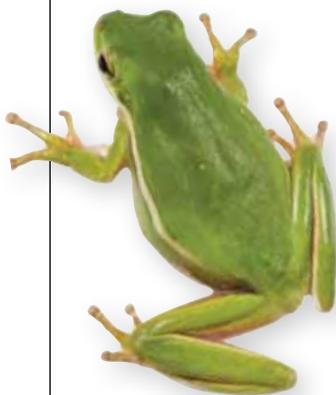
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### Correction:

Thea Windsor, an FGCU student and U.S. Army veteran who was featured in the spring Pinnacle article, "Students Who Served," enlisted in 2004 and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2006. The article misstated the timeline of her service in relation to the war, which began in 2001.

# SOCIAL CIRCLE

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## “It was a good year for higher education”

FGCU receives added funds to enhance student success, holds tuition at 2012-13 level.

**Q: The university fared well this year in the state’s budget process. Can you give us the big picture?**

**A:** It was a good year for higher education. The legislature and governor obviously felt education was a priority after multiple years of cuts. Last year, the state cut \$3 million from our budget. This year, that money was restored and we received a \$6.5-million appropriation to invest in programs that enhance student success. We had asked for \$13 million. Next year, we hope to go back for the remainder for specific programs that address the state’s workforce needs.

**Q: What will the additional money be used for?**

**A:** We plan to hire more counselors and advisers to assist students in making wise decisions about their educational and career goals. We are also implementing innovative programs in the freshman residence halls, including having faculty in residence, academic support and classrooms located in the residence halls for an enhanced learning environment.

We’ve piloted a program we plan to expand that identifies students with academic challenges and assists them in improving study habits and learning strategies. We have found these programs make students more successful.

We’re also starting the Faculty Academy, which will allow those who have taught for two years or less to get together twice a week with more experienced faculty members, explore current trends in teaching and learn how to be more effective teachers. It could



“We are keeping tuition flat. We’re one of two Florida universities doing that this year. We made a conscious decision to do that.”

become a model for other schools. I applaud Provost Ron Toll and his staff for coming up with this program. We believe it will also contribute to the success of our students.

**Q: What about the Innovation Hub?**

**A:** The legislature funded it, but the governor vetoed it. We were disappointed with his veto when we had received almost \$5 million last year to plan and design it. I’ve spoken with him and he’s urged me to meet with his senior staff so that I can understand what he was thinking and how to show him the value. From our perspective, the IHub is all about what the governor says are his priorities: jobs, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education and economic development. We were disappointed, but we are not discouraged.

**Q: How has this year’s legislative session affected tuition rates?**

**A:** We are keeping tuition flat. We’re one of two Florida universities doing that this year. We made a conscious decision to do that. From the start of budget planning, we assumed there would be no increase in the budget. The governor vetoed the 3 percent tuition increase approved by the legislature. We thought he might do that so we didn’t have to change anything when it happened.

**Q: Last, but not least, what impact do you think the men’s basketball team’s success this year will have on the university?**

**Q&A: PRESIDENT WILSON G. BRADSHAW**

*(continued from previous page)*

**A:** We obviously knew we were making history going into the tournament, but when we won against Georgetown, as Muhammad Ali might say, 'We shocked the world!' We had so many fans in Philadelphia after we beat Georgetown and then San Diego. We owned that city. We couldn't walk anywhere with our FGCU gear on without people coming up to talk about the team. It was also great to come home between the Philly and Dallas games and celebrate with the community.

The players were such fine ambassadors. They conducted



themselves in such a high-class way. To have the entire country rooting for us was very exciting.

I think it brought the region together. I believe Dunk City is all of Southwest Florida and that feeling will continue to grow. Coach Joe Dooley is being embraced by the players and the community. He's recruiting some great talent to add to our already talented team.

It also solved the problem of how television sports programs write our name. They used to have a problem with it. No more. Now we're FGCU. ■

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# Game changing is what we do

**W**HILE THE TERM “GAME CHANGER” MAY WELL BE overused to the point of cliché, there are times when it fits. Perfectly. It was the phrase that resonated in my head as members of the FGCU men’s basketball team basked in the national limelight yet again – this time at the ESPY Awards, where they took home the 2013 Best Upset Award for their defeat of Georgetown in the NCAA Tournament. It was as thrilling as the final seconds of that game in Philadelphia when FGCU became a bracket-shattering phenomenon that seized the imaginations and hearts of fans from coast to coast.

That team on that night was indeed a game changer, taking FGCU from a tongue-twisting abbreviation for a school few outside of Florida had heard of to a household name across the nation. The ESPY, awarded at a star-studded ceremony in Los Angeles on July 17, proved that: Weeks of Internet voting determined the winner and FGCU vanquished the likes of football giant Texas A&M, Louisville’s women’s basketball team and boxer Juan Marquez.

Surely the basketball team has enjoyed the most public example of game changing as it relates to FGCU, but its members are far from the only ones who are out there changing the world. At a university with more than 13,500 students, almost 1,150 faculty and staff, and 15,000 alumni, game changers abound, even if they don’t garner the same feverish media coverage as the basketball team.

Head over to Ave Maria and load up on organic produce at Collier County Farms, the brainchild of Lara Collier, (’11,

Environmental Studies), who aims to change the way we farm and eat.

Joe Simmons, who holds the Backe Chair in Renewable Energy, envisions creating a solar community in Southwest Florida and has begun building one by engaging teens, equipping several area high schools with solar-powered go-kart kits, which the students built then raced this spring.

Attorney and legal studies instructor David Steckler and student interns are helping victims of domestic violence and families in crisis escape from cycles of pain, fear and suffering.

Donors such as David I.J. Wang and his wife, Cecile Liston Wang, are directing their giving to help students become the first in their families to attend college. Cornelius “Pat” Cacho donated so that minority teens could spend a life-changing week in the nation’s capital through the College Reach-Out Program.

And Karen Watson, once a single mother herself, is devoting her life to teaching teen-aged mothers how to be the best parents and people they can be.

Sure, when the basketball season revs up again this fall, Dunk City fever will once again rage. But when it comes to game changing, there’s no season or shortage of players at FGCU.



*Karen Feldman*  
KAREN FELDMAN  
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kfeldman@fgcu.edu

# UPFRONT

## [ WHERE ARE THEY NOW? ]

### Lara Collier, '11

Alumna returns to her ancestral roots with organic farm.

**A** WALK THROUGH FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY'S FOOD FOREST HELPED Lara Collier choose her career path.

Although she'd been considering majoring in marine sciences, she chose environmental studies after seeing the promise of the university's student-nurtured garden. She graduated in 2011.

"The Food Forest inspired me to get my hands in the dirt more and help in educating the local community on the importance of supporting local farms, and ... increasing their knowledge of the origins of their food," she says.

Last year, Collier joined forces with lifelong farmer Elvin Engle. They established Collier Family Farms in the town of Ave Maria, where murmuring breezes and customers foraging for chemical-free produce flow through her open-air pole barn.

"It's been a big learning curve – how to drive the tractor, fix the tractor, social media," says Collier, 24. "The plants don't take a day off, so we don't take a day off, but I love every second of it."

Following graduation, Collier learned a lot on a three-month backpacking trek through Ireland. Exchanging farm labor for boarding at organic farms, she gained firsthand insight into permaculture, composting, soil amendment and hydroponics. "If you treat the soil well," says Collier, "the plants will make it on their own."

Since Collier Family Farms' January opening, the pair has been raising six acres of seasonal offerings, including



Lara Collier and Elvin Engle established Collier Family Farms in Ave Maria.

eggplant, squash, cucumbers, kale, collard greens, lettuce, parsley, strawberries and watermelons.

As a Community-Supported Agriculture farm, the operation offers annual subscribers a box of seasonal produce and citrus (supplied by area groves) delivered weekly in Collier County.

Collier and Engle hope to expand their crops to the 45 surrounding acres and start a school field-trip program, as well as workshops on organic gardening and cooking with a top Naples chef.

Also in the works: raising grass-finished beef. The family's nearby sod farm is growing experimental, high-protein grass.

In some respects, she's following in the footsteps of her great-grandfather, county namesake Barron Gift Collier Sr. He was an adventurous entrepreneur who, in 1922, bought a Marsh seedless grapefruit grove in the wilds of Deep Lake (now part of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Forest).

"It's neat how everything has changed and evolved, but now we're going full-circle back to people having respect for the land," says Collier.

– Cathy Chestnut

“The Food Forest inspired me to get my hands in the dirt more and help in educating the local community on the importance of supporting local farms, and ... increasing their knowledge of the origins of their food.”

- LARA COLLIER. '11 ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

## [ COMMUNITY ]

### Sun + fun

Go-kart races spark solar-powered learning.

**O**N A TEXTBOOK-PERFECT SPRING DAY, SIX GO-KARTS RACED AROUND THE university's South Village, driven by budding teen-aged engineers and powered by the sun.

Teams from five area high schools and one from FGCU spent weeks building the go-karts from kits, customizing their vehicles in hopes of outpacing their competitors in what FGCU Professor Joe Simmons expects to become an annual event.

The karts are capable of reaching 30 mph. Naples High proved the speediest of the racers this year, but winning wasn't really the point. All of the teams enjoyed the project, which most constructed after school.

FGCU's Renewable Energy Institute purchased the go-karts with money raised by donor contributions. The kits cost \$3,200 apiece and the high schools each keep the models they build to use in future years. The program aims to stimulate students' interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Naples High School junior Jon Baker puts his team's solar go-kart through its paces.

“It's a STEM-based effort that teaches kids about solar energy and how to use it and they get some fun out of it,” says Simmons, who holds the Backe Chair for Renewable Energy.

Yet another effect of the races, which Simmons plans to take to additional schools, is to “try to build a solar community in Southwest Florida,” he says. “FGCU could be the nucleus.”

Clyde Grant, pre-engineering teacher at South Fort Myers High School, involved his Engineering 2 class in the

project, which he believes has numerous benefits.

“Anytime we can do something to engage the students in alternative energy and engineering, we do it,” he says. “We make the kids do the research and bring it all together. There were 10 students involved. It's cool to see them all put the program together. That's real life. If you're working for a company, you'll do this.”

Jon Baker, a junior at Naples High School last spring, was an enthusiastic participant in his school's team.

“It was awesome,” he says. “I've never been part of something like this before. I understand how the whole thing works.”

Cynthia DeShields, mother of Baker's

classmate Eric DeShields, was at the races to cheer on the team.

“It's so great to see kids doing positive activities, all different types of kids all getting along and working together as a true team,” she says. “Eric loves doing this and his teacher, Robert Bentley, puts in a lot of hours of his own time helping them. I could never get him to do anything for two or three hours at a time, yet he worked on this project every day. It's really positive.”

— Karen Feldman



## [ COLLECTIVE WE ]

### Getting their kicks

Cheerleaders in high spirits after game-changing season.

**W**HILE THE FGCU MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM WON NATIONAL acclaim for its high-flying hoop-la last season, another team of hard-working athletes was reaching new heights, too.

As the Eagles alley-ooped their way to post-season play and, ultimately, a history-making entry in the NCAA's Sweet 16, the FGCU cheerleaders were right there, turning handsprings and back flips and revving up a growing fan base to cheer on the team from Dunk City.

Cheerleading isn't an official sport, but you can't prove it by the athleticism displayed by members of the squad, who train just like the players. Cheerleaders practice two hours or more two or three times a week. That means tumbling, twirling, cheering and climbing one on the next to form human pyramids, with a limber member at the peak pointing one leg at the ceiling while balancing on the other upon the hands of her teammates. On occasion, Azul, the befeathered Eagles mascot, tops the pyramids, too.

The cheerleaders cheer at home volleyball, men's and women's basketball games and some soccer, baseball and softball games.

For Meghan Finley ('13, Chemistry), cheerleading was her entry into college life.

"Freshman year I didn't feel like I fit in," she says. "Once I joined the team I felt like I was a part of the school. It's funny to see how far we've come. We hardly had any people at games before. I couldn't believe how many sold-out games we had this past year, even before



FGCU cheerleaders rev up the crowd in Philadelphia.

people knew how good they were."

The cheerleaders saw some big turnarounds themselves over the past year. The program took a tumble last fall when its new head coach resigned. But a familiar face returned to help the team get back on its collective feet.

Joyce Prive ('05 Marketing, '07 MBA) was one of the co-captains of the fledgling squad that cheered for FGCU's first basketball game in 2002. After graduating and taking a job with the university, she served as head coach for several years, reluctantly leaving to devote more time to her job and growing family.

When the team needed her in January, however, she gamely stepped back in and took the squad to the Atlantic Sun Conference tournament in Macon, Ga., followed by the dizzying round of March

Madness appearances in the cavernous arenas in Philadelphia and Dallas, where thousands of fans turned out and millions more tuned in via television.

"I never thought it would get that far," says Caleb Houston, a senior majoring in criminal justice who cheered in high school and joined the FGCU squad last year. "It's hard balancing cheerleading, school and work. You practice day after day. Keeping up with school while we traveled was a job in itself."

But the hard work and long hours were worth it, he says.

"I think about walking into those arenas and think 'wow, I cheered on this floor!' To have that experience was amazing. I love cheerleading. If I hadn't been a cheerleader, I would never have been there to see that happen."

— Karen Feldman

[ HOT TOPIC ]

## Field study at lemur reserve no spring fling

Students combine primatology and anthropology.

**S**TEREOTYPICALLY, SPRING BREAKERS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN analyzing the ingredients of Long Island iced tea or studying the mating behavior of co-eds than in rising with the sun and spending countless hours outdoors documenting how primates groom, socialize and forage.

But anthropology major Erin Broemel was not your typical college student.

“This is my ultimate spring break,” said Broemel, one of a half-dozen FGCU students who spent their March break conducting a field study at the Myakka City Lemur Reserve in Manatee County. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for observational contact. Florida has a lot of primate facilities, but a lot of facilities don’t allow contact.”

Operated by the nonprofit Lemur Conservation Foundation, the remote, 100-acre forest reserve uses Association of Zoos and Aquariums protocols to manage and study a captive breeding community in a semi-wild setting. What students and scientists learn there about the endangered primates could help prevent lemurs from going extinct in their native Madagascar.

“The numbers are not getting better in the wild,” according to Pattie Walsh, the foundation’s director of research and operations. “The illegal logging of rosewood and ebony is taking away their habitat. There’s poaching.”

The reserve opened in 2000 with 11 lemurs and has grown to 40, with eight species that mostly came from zoos around the country. Although some



Lee Cortez, an environmental studies major from Wauchula, keeps a close watch on ring-tailed lemurs during a field study.

Left, a red ruffed lemur

varieties are cute as a button, lemurs are not lucrative marquee attractions.

Under the supervision of Associate Professor Alison Elgart of the Marine and Ecological Sciences Department, students in FGCU’s “Research Methods in Primatology” course tracked lemurs through one of the fenced forests at the reserve. They conducted “scan sampling” every 15 seconds to note whether the

lemurs they followed were moving, resting, eating or grooming. Students learned how to identify individual critters and social behavior and interpret it anthropologically.

Broemel stood under a broad oak tree watching a trio of red ruffed lemurs perched in the upper branches. The Punta Gorda resident planned to enter graduate school in primatology this fall at Florida Atlantic University.

“After a while, you notice little differences between them,” she said. “We have seen dominance hierarchy within the species and within the forest. The red ruffs are the dominant ones in the forest. They’re the first to

get food. The others make way for them. Most primates have a pecking order.”

This was FGCU’s first scientific foray at the reserve, but members of the Wildlife Club have planted trees and done other volunteer work at the site. Although the reserve is not open to the public, the foundation reaches out to the community through conservation education programs.

— Drew Sterwald

**FOR MORE INFO**

Visit [www.lemurreserve.org](http://www.lemurreserve.org)

[ HOW TO... ]

## Look good on the dance floor

**W**HEN MARC AND LISE LAVIOLETTE TAKE TO THE DANCE FLOOR AND START TO MOVE, OTHER COUPLES step out of the way to watch and admire their elegant synchronicity. It's no accident that they look good: They have been tangoing, fox trotting, cha-cha-ing and rumbaing together for 40 years, taking lessons, teaching others and practicing whenever they can.

"You can't just take lessons," says Marc Laviolette, FGCU's director of admissions. "You'll forget the steps. You have to do a lot of practicing."

Fear of dancing – or, more precisely, dancing badly and looking foolish – is widespread. Laviolette offers these pointers to help novices gain confidence and overcome chorophobia – fear of dancing:

"The initial steps are basic. You can start by practicing them without music. Don't feel embarrassed. No one is laughing at you. Transition to stepping in time to the music. Try to understand the music. You don't want to look like you're counting. (If you do count, don't move your lips.)"

"Posture is important. When dancing close, hold the lady with your arms up and chin up. Always look ahead with the woman slightly on your side looking over your shoulder while you look over hers. The right arm (pointed out about 90 degrees from the body) forms a frame and her arm rests on it. The man moves forward while the woman moves backward. You need to pay attention so you don't run into each other.

"Don't stand still. Move around the dance floor. It doesn't matter if it's swing or the cha-cha. You can spot right away if a couple knows how to dance by seeing them move around. The traveling – that's what makes people look at you. Take small steps at first, but gradually enlarge them.

"The man needs to take charge and telegraph where he's going to lead. If I dance with a non-dancer, I don't mind if she steps on my toes. When I dance with Lise, I'll sometimes tell her what step I'm going to do next.

"The floor is your best friend. You have to be solid on the floor. Take sure steps, be firm on the floor.

"The hardest part is that you need to be free with your body. That's not something you can teach, but knowing the steps and having some confidence will help you feel less inhibited."

– Karen Feldman



Marc and Lise Laviolette at Roadhouse Cafe in Fort Myers

“When there’s an alien attack, the aliens are us. It’s a metaphor. H.G. Wells is talking about colonialism when showing Martians attacking us. In that type of story the aliens will point out ‘What you’ve done to other species, we are just doing that to you.’”

– ERIC OTTO, FGCU ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

## [ BOOKS ]

# Martian messages

Professor’s book illuminates what aliens are trying to tell us.

SOMETIMES, TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION. AND THEN THERE ARE TIMES when fiction reveals strange truths about life.

That Eric Otto became a college professor falls under the first category; his new book, “Green Speculations: Science Fiction and Transformative Environmentalism” (Ohio State University Press), the second.

Growing up in St. Petersburg and then Naples, Otto didn’t read much. He earned an associate’s degree at Edison Community College (now Edison State College), learned to play the guitar and began teaching others. He realized he could make money teaching while going to school. He also learned about the brand new local university, FGCU.

Under the guidance of FGCU professors such as Joe Wisdom, Maria Roca, Jim Wohlpart and Rebecca Totaro, he grew to love reading and discovered he was good at thinking and writing.

One class he took covered Florida writers, including Marjorie Kinan Rawlings and her classic work, “Cross Creek.” The chapter on the food she created had him wolfing down cornbread and other Southern specialties for weeks. Something else he digested: “It made me realize that literature and words can have an impact on people.”

He delved further into environmental literature, graduating in 2000, then going on to earn master’s and doctoral degrees in English at the University of Florida. In 2007, he joined the FGCU faculty, teaching environmental humanities.

“Green Speculations” is an expanded version of his doctoral dissertation,



Associate Professor Eric Otto’s book looks at environmentalism through a science fiction lens.

which examines science fiction’s take on environmentalism.

Although the conventional message of science fiction is how to save the world with technology, “that’s not the way environmentalists think about it,” he says. “They are usually suspect of technology. There’s a subset of books that say we’re damaging the world and we need to think more about certain practices we engage in.”

The medium also can serve as a mirror and a means of connecting to nature.

“When there’s an alien attack, the aliens are us,” he says. “It’s a metaphor. H.G. Wells is talking about colonialism when showing Martians attacking us. In that type of story the aliens will point out ‘What you’ve done to

other species, we are just doing that to you.”

If the water system malfunctions and there’s no drinking water “we suddenly realize we are part of nature, whereas having a faucet, a functioning grocery store and banking system gives us the feeling we aren’t really animals.”

Brad Busbee, FGCU associate professor of English and chair of the FGCU Department of Language and Literature, believes Otto’s made a great case, observing in his review of the book: “The notable insight of ‘Green Speculations’ is how science fiction, with its imaginative worlds and possible futures, makes visible the costs and damages of our current economic systems that are simply ignored, overlooked or erased by particular ideologies. Eric C. Otto’s study greatly expands the purview of ecocriticism and makes an impressive case for the relevance of science fiction in environmental discussions.”

– Karen Feldman

## [ IN THE NEWS ]

### Paintball Club scores second national title

FGCU may be best known as "Dunk City," but it's also making a name for itself as "Splat City."

For the second year in a row, the Paintball Club won the National Collegiate Paintball Association championship. A decisive, paint-splattered 11-5 win over California State University-Long Beach earned FGCU the Class A title in April. Last year, the team triumphed in the lower-level Class AA division, which involves a different style of play and shorter matches.

Winning a second consecutive national title was "surreal," according to club President John Bell, a senior from Palm Coast majoring in criminal justice and forensics. FGCU beat teams from West Point and Northeastern University among others, and the championship match was broadcast nationally on CBS.

"FGCU has become this powerhouse of a paintball club since its beginning in 2007," Bell said. "We have come a long way and certainly made a name for the school in the sport of paintball. We are looking to continue to dominate in the upcoming seasons."

The National Collegiate Paintball Association is home to 225 teams, with nearly 6,000 players.

FGCU's co-ed club has a dozen active members, all of whom are expected to return to compete in the 2013-14 season, Bell said.

Follow the team on Twitter: @FGCUpaintball. ■

## Exhibit highlights growing archive of space-industry history

**F**GCU'S GROWING COLLECTIONS OF SPACE INDUSTRY ARTIFACTS WILL BE SHOWCASED IN AN exhibition curated by students and faculty of the museum studies program.

The cornerstone of the archive is a trio of objects acquired last year from NASA in a highly competitive push to obtain and preserve a slice of Space Coast history: 57 8-inch-square silica tiles used in testing heat protection for the upper fuselage of space shuttles; early shuttle computer hardware that looks primitive by today's standards; and a fabric pocket container that would be used by shuttle crews. The items are valued at more than \$140,000, according to NASA.

Their value to the university lies in the educational and research opportunities they present to the fledgling museum studies program, says anthropology instructor Noemi Creagan, as well as their connection to a significant facet of Florida history. She worked with Florida Public Archaeology Network Director Annette Snapp for months to convince the space agency that FGCU should receive shuttle artifacts. NASA has been distributing surplus items to institutions around the country since ending the shuttle program in 2011.

"It's an important part of Florida's cultural heritage," Creagan said. "This is a good time to create an exhibit like this since the shuttle program is now history."

Two other recently received collections will add historical context in the exhibit.

The family of the late Kenneth Senstad, a

longtime NASA public information officer, donated hundreds of dramatic behind-the-scenes photographs that were distributed to media from the dawn of space exploration in the late 1950s to the modern-day shuttle program. He worked at several NASA locations, including Kennedy Space Center and national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

"He was the voice of Mission Control in the

early '60s – he used to do countdowns," said Karen Reed of Naples, one of Senstad's three children. "We thought that sharing the collection with the university would be a good way to preserve history and have his memory live on."

The culture of the time also is reflected in a collection donated



NASA donated shuttle tiles and a pocket container to FGCU.



by the family of Edward Olling, an engineer and NASA project manager from 1960 to 1970. It runs the gamut from first-day-issue NASA postage stamps to autographed photos of astronauts such as Neil Armstrong to press kits from Pepperidge Farms and Stouffer's related to what astronauts ate.

– Drew Sterwald

### FYI

**WHAT:** Exhibition showcasing FGCU space industry collections.

**WHEN:** Opens Aug. 29; runs through March.

**WHERE:** FGCU Library, first floor.

## Engineering students take care of business ... and vice versa

IT'S A STORY OF INNOVATION AND INGENUITY: IDENTIFY A NEED, BRAINSTORM, TEST CONCEPTS, build a prototype, sell the idea and begin production and distribution.

But this story gets better.

The product has game-changing potential. It gives disabled people independence in therapeutic exercise. It's cost-saving for advocates dependent on donations to help those people.

There's more.

The bright minds that birthed this invention win the Florida Venture Forum Statewide Business Plan Competition in Orlando – outthinking, outplanning, outperforming and just plain outworking bigger, longer-established peers.

And the best part?

This story evolved at FGCU, where along the path between Holmes and Lutgert halls, collaboration between the U.A. Whitaker College of Engineering and Lutgert College of Business formed a unique team of two forward-thinking professors and enterprising students.

“That’s what makes this special,” said a still-excited Sandra Kauanui, chair of the management department and director of the Institute for Entrepreneurship. “It opens business students to the engineering world, and engineering students to the business side. They learn to work as a unit.”

Kauanui partnered with Lisa Zidek, associate professor of bioengineering, to create an environment in which students could meet a challenge posed by an expressed need of Goodwill Industries. Their solution: the AquaRamp, a track-mounted chair that lifts disabled people in and out of pools with a crank system that’s safer, easier to operate and cheaper than current models.

After the AquaRamp plan advanced through campus competition, it got financial support from Bud Stoddard, Naples businessman, self-described “coach” for FGCU business students and a Tamiami Angel Fund director. The project didn’t meet criteria for Angel Fund backing to send the team to Orlando, but Stoddard pulled out his own wallet and persuaded several peers to do likewise, raising the \$3,000 necessary.

“Not only is it a great business model, but the product helps people who need it,” Stoddard said.

In May, Kauanui and Stoddard accompanied the six-student team to

Orlando, where, like proud parents, they watched FGCU team presenter Robby Donnelly “knock it out of the park,” as Stoddard put it, going up against teams stacked with graduate students from Florida, Florida State, Miami, South Florida, Central Florida and Rollins.

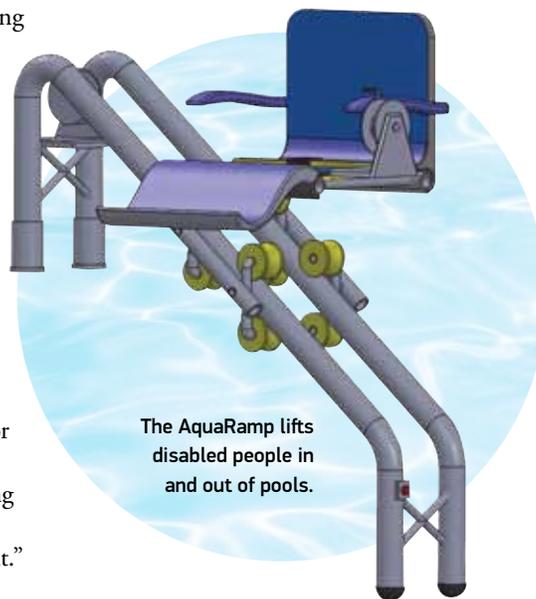
Now, the students want to take their patent-pending AquaRamp into the marketplace. They’ve set up a company, Dynamic Reach, and are looking for a local manufacturer to produce their Americans With Disabilities Act-compliant invention, which they plan to sell for \$3,000 – after they “donate the very first one to Goodwill,” according to senior bioengineering major Scott Kelly, the company’s senior design officer. Similar devices on the market cost up to \$10,000.

Most significant is that where current pool ramps require up to three people to operate, “Anyone with functional use of their arms can operate our ramp,” Kelly said. “It gives them more independence.”

The win-win deal also opens the students themselves to independence by expanding their classroom project into a real business. “The contest wasn’t an end, but a means,” said senior civil engineering major John Baker, Dynamic Reach’s CEO.

The higher-education part of this story is ending, but the real-world chapter is only beginning.

– Keith Gibson



The AquaRamp lifts disabled people in and out of pools.

### RAMPING IT UP

The FGCU team that won the prestigious Florida Venture Forum Statewide Business Plan Competition in Orlando: **John Baker, Tyler D’Albora, Robby Donnelly, Sandra Guerra, Logan Hand** and **Scott Kelly**. Also involved in AquaRamp development are **Eric Raudebaugh** and **Malley Burmaster**.

Learn more about Dynamic Reach and the AquaRamp at [www.dynamic-reach.com](http://www.dynamic-reach.com).



Another day at the office for Katie McFarland

## [ ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS ]

### Immersed in research

Doctoral candidate dives into mysteries of invasive green mussels.

**K**ATIE MCFARLAND ADJUSTS HER MASK, POSITIONS HER REGULATOR JUST SO, then rolls backward off the starboard gunwale into the murky green water beneath the New Pass Bridge in Estero Bay. McFarland is a doctoral candidate in marine science, and FGCU's first student to enter a newly designed, collaborative program between FGCU and the University of Brest in Brittany, France. The program allows students to earn their doctorate from the University of Brest, while conducting all

of their research at FGCU.

Aswani Voley, interim dean of Arts & Sciences, professor of marine science, and architect of the program, believes the collaboration offers an opportunity for a truly international research experience for participants.

"The collaboration with Institut Universitaire Europeen de la Mer at University of Brest provides tremendous opportunities for faculty and students," says Voley. "They have access to instrumentation and field sites that are unique and different from those in the U. S., and the chance to

develop funding from the European Union as well as agencies in the U.S."

Today, McFarland is examining green mussels in the shallow waters of Estero Bay. Green mussels are native to the Indo Pacific, but began showing up in the Caribbean in the early '90s. In 1999, they were found in Tampa Bay. They are an invasive species in the Gulf and its estuaries, and part of an ongoing research project she has been running for two years.

Invasive species like the green mussel tend to thrive in their non-native ecosystems – usually at the expense of

“The collaboration with Institut Universitaire Europeen de la Mer at University of Brest provides tremendous opportunities for faculty and students.”

- ASWANI VOLETY, INTERIM DEAN OF ARTS & SCIENCES,  
PROFESSOR OF MARINE SCIENCE

native animals. McFarland says that she has seen areas where native oysters were covered with green mussels, which tend to grow in very dense clumps. On examination, they found the oysters beneath the mussels were all dead.

“Our ultimate goal in the research I’m working on is to predict where the invasive mussels may thrive,” says McFarland. “Once we can do this, then we can begin mitigation efforts.”

Of course, making accurate predictions requires understanding complex ecological and biological processes, and is the focus of McFarland’s dissertation research, which she is working on with Professor Fred Jean, her adviser at the University of Brest.

While McFarland has been conducting

her research in Southwest Florida, working closely with Volety, she makes periodic trips to the University of Brest. “When I travel to Brest, I have the opportunity to not only work with my advisory committee, but I also have access to research equipment that we don’t have at FGCU,” she says. Similarly, University of Brest students who come to FGCU have access to equipment that might not be available to them at home.

McFarland’s dissertation focuses on Dynamic Energy Budget Theory, which in itself is extremely complex. When describing the theory, McFarland laughs and says that accounting provides a pretty good analogy. “We’re building a mathematical model to determine how the nutrition the mussels take in is allocated throughout their bodies,” she says. “Some of the nutrients feed somatic (of the body) growth, some somatic maintenance, while others support maturing and later reproduction.”

Once she has calculated and budgeted the percentage of nutrients used by different bodily functions, McFarland can begin to manipulate environmental parameters to better understand ideal conditions for the mussels to thrive. “We can decrease food, increase food, or change water temperatures – any number of things that will help us understand ideal living conditions for the green mussel,” she says. “Once we’ve done that, we can pair this information with GIS (Geographic Information Systems) mapping that includes factors like salinity and temperature of the water.”

McFarland says she hopes to teach and conduct research at a university once she’s completed her doctoral work. But with a year and a half left in her Ph.D. program, McFarland is primarily focused on her current work.

“I’m so engaged with this research,” she says, and hoping to achieve results that can make a real difference in efforts to manage the invasive green mussel.

– Ken Schexnayder

## [ BY THE NUMBERS ]

### Going the distance

Distance learning has been a key mission of Florida Gulf Coast University since its inception, as a means to provide broader access to higher education in Southwest Florida and beyond. Broadly defined, it’s an educational process in which the student and instructor are not in the same place; learning is achieved through the Internet, CD, two-way interactive video sessions and communication through email, live chat and telephone. At FGCU, participation in online classes is more than twice the national average. Here are some other interesting numbers:

**80** Percentage of coursework the state requires to be conducted online in order for a course to be defined as “online”; as much as 20 percent can be delivered face to face in a traditional classroom. “Hybrid” courses are defined as 50 percent to 79 percent delivered online.

**70** | **720**

Percentage of all FGCU students who took at least one online class in 2010-11. Statewide, 40 percent of college and state university students took a class online, while the national average is just 31 percent.

Number of FGCU students who took all of their classes online in 2010 – that was 6 percent of enrollment. The majority are part-time students between 25 and 50 years old who live in Florida. Each of the five colleges offers courses online, and all but the Whitaker College of Engineering offer at least one degree program online.

**\$720,000**

Amount spent annually by FGCU on delivery of online courses.

## FACTS OF LIFE

**HOMETOWN:** Elyria, Ohio

**AGE:** 27

**UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR:** Biology, The Ohio State University

**LANGUAGES:** Working on French

**ACTIVITIES:** SCUBA diver, soccer player

**LAST BOOK READ:** “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” by Douglas Adams

**LAST MOVIE SEEN:** “Anchorman” (“Getting ready for the sequel!”)

**MOST EXCITING EXPERIENCE:** Encounter with a 700-pound leatherback sea turtle on a dive trip in the Gulf

**MOST EXCITING DIVE:** Diving the USS Mohawk, a WWII-era Coast Guard ship

**DO YOU EAT GREEN MUSSELS?:** “They are edible, but we are not sure what kind of contaminants they may accumulate in their tissues from the water.”

**FAVORITE SEAFOOD:** “Fresh-caught fish; even better if it is fresh-caught hogfish.”

**DOG PERSON OR CAT PERSON:** Dog

**WHY DOGS:** “I grew up with dogs and currently have a big Lab mutt named Samson.”

**FAVORITE WORK ENVIRONMENT:** Underwater

## [ FACES ]

### Meet FGCU's new vice presidents

Trio's broad expertise benefits the university community.

**P**RESIDENT WILSON G. BRADSHAW NAMED THREE NEW VICE PRESIDENTS IN 2013. Susan Evans has served in key roles at FGCU since its earliest days. Vee Leonard has spent eight years keeping a sharp eye on the university's legal affairs. Chris Simoneau signed on in June intent on advancing the university's mission and expanding its resources. What they all bring to the table is broad expertise in their fields and the desire to employ it in making FGCU the best it can be. Here is a look at the appointees and what they do:

#### Susan Evans Vice President and Chief of Staff



Should Susan Evans ever decide to retire, the university will first have to devise a way to download all the institutional knowledge she has stored in her brain.

The result would be encyclopedic.

Now a vice president and chief of staff, Evans has worked for FGCU for 20 years, starting even before it had a name, a campus or a single student. She was among the founding team of five employees and has served in a wide range of positions, including government relations director, lobbyist and Senior Woman Administrator on loan to FGCU Athletics. She has served under three presidents and three interim presidents (which means all the presidents there have

been), and has always been the university's spokesperson.

"Susan Evans has served this institution with great distinction for 20 years," says Bradshaw. "Her promotion is both an appropriate acknowledgement of that service, which has included her roles as university spokesperson and chief of staff, and now her new expanded responsibilities in the area of media relations."

Originally from Perry, Ga., Evans has lived in Southwest Florida for 38 years. Her position as executive director of the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce placed her in the forefront of the lobbying effort for the state's 10th university, to be located in Southwest Florida. She attended all the Board of Regents' meetings that dealt with site selection and met with each of the six finalists for the position of founding university president.

After he was selected for that post, Roy McTarnaghan called her and asked if she would like to work with him to develop the university.

"Although it was not something I had planned, it was too great of an opportunity to miss," she says.

In her current position, she directs special projects, writes presidential and university communications and supports the president's initiatives. She serves as the FGCU Board of Trustees' corporate secretary, handling board meetings, agendas and communications. She remains the university spokesperson, oversees media relations and is a member of the President's Cabinet, advising him on a broad range of university issues.

Evans earned her bachelor's degree from Stetson University and a Master of Public Administration at FGCU.

"Celebrating my 20th anniversary at FGCU in 2013 is very, very special to me," she says. "I have so many wonderful memories, including the tremendous opportunity to work for all six of FGCU's presidents and interim presidents; managing passage of the state legislation that named us Florida Gulf Coast University; and designing the official FGCU license plate for the state of Florida."

They may not be included on her official job description, but university historian and keeper of the flame are two responsibilities Evans has taken on as labors of love and at which she also excels.

#### Vee Leonard Vice President and General Counsel



"Endurance." The word is framed and hangs where Vee Leonard can easily see it from her desk. It aptly sums up what it takes to carry out her

job as FGCU's vice president and general counsel, the chief legal adviser to the president and the university, overseer of Human Resources and member of the President's Cabinet.

"I see my role as protector," she says. "I try to make sure we are compliant, that we do things the way they are supposed to be done. The president allows me to speak my mind and genuinely listens. He doesn't always take my advice, but he's the president and the buck stops with him."

Bradshaw values her knowledge.

“As general counsel, Vee Leonard has provided insightful legal advice to the university,” he says. “She now also has the added responsibility for our Division of Human Resources. As we have grown, our legal and human resource issues have become more complex and we are fortunate to have her expertise.”

Leonard came to FGCU as assistant general counsel in June 2005, after working as an attorney for the city of Orlando. In 2008, she was promoted to chief counsel and, in early 2013, she became a vice president.

She admits to some jitters when she first assumed the top job.

“People expect you to tell them what to do and they do it,” she says. “If there’s a hiccup or misstep, that’s on me. That was scary, but it’s gotten easier.

“There have been times when the stress was such that I felt I’d had enough, days when the work has been so great that I didn’t want to be the chief legal officer anymore. But that’s not who I am. I stay late. I work weekends. I take work with me on vacation. It’s just the way I am.”

Over time, she’s learned to handle the stress, taking lessons from those more experienced than she, such as her colleague and friend, Susan Evans.

Endurance may well be the quality that allowed her to return to school in her 30s. The Orlando native earned her bachelor’s degree in legal studies from the University of Central Florida and her law degree from the University of Florida.

She’d planned to become a paralegal but a professor pushed her to apply to law school. That encouragement made all the difference, and she’s done the same for her five children. One daughter has graduated from FGCU and another will do so this spring.

“Education has changed their lives,” she says. She believes it changes the lives of everyone who gains access.

To ensure that FGCU continues to provide that opportunity, she guards it fiercely. She confides that someone once

called her a Mama Bear for her protective stance in regard to FGCU.

“I’m not the only one who cares. There are a lot of Mama and Papa Bears out there who all have the university’s best interests at heart,” she says. “I see the university as an entity that cannot protect itself. It needs somebody to look after its best interests. We have to ensure that it will grow well, that it will get better with age.”

## **Chris Simoneau** Vice President for University Advancement and Executive Director of the FGCU Foundation



Shortly after earning his bachelor’s degree in finance at Villanova University, Chris Simoneau headed to Wall Street, where he took a job as an account executive.

He quickly figured out it wasn’t a good fit. “I was bored stiff,” he says.

So when his brother-in-law, a researcher at Princeton University, told him the Princeton Materials Institute was looking for a business manager, he gladly took the job that served as his entry into higher education.

From there he headed to Columbia University to become the second employee of the Columbia Earth Institute, a now renowned multi-disciplinary center addressing matters of the environment, public health, poverty and other vital social concerns. While there, he earned his MBA at Columbia Business School and went on to become the director of contract services for student services.

He moved back to the private sector for a brief time with a startup company then worked as a management consultant before returning to academia, first as associate vice president for strategic planning at Case Western Reserve University, then as senior director of University Advancement

at Tufts University, where he spent seven years. His last role there was as the campaign manager for a fundraising effort that brought in more than \$1.2 billion.

Simoneau became FGCU’s vice president for Advancement and executive director of the FGCU Foundation in June, overseeing Development, Community Relations and Marketing, and Alumni Relations, as well as serving on the President’s Cabinet.

“I like to make a difference,” he says. “I loved the idea that the university was 16 years old,” adding that although FGCU’s fundraising initiatives will be somewhat smaller than he’s accustomed to “it’s not the size that determines the impact.

“As a public institution that focuses on accessibility and excellence, it’s a new learning opportunity for me.”

Bradshaw says, “Chris Simoneau has distinguished himself as an accomplished advancement professional and has been very well received by the university community and the community at large. I am excited to have him on our team.”

Simoneau looks forward to expanding what’s already been accomplished.

“Friends of the university have done a tremendous job in building and growing this university and I want to continue that momentum,” he says. That will include strengthening alumni relations and community relations.

In his spare time, he typically devours three newspapers a day, squeezing in a novel when time allows, and is an avid athlete who enjoys golf, basketball, softball, football and tennis. But it’s not all about news and sports. He also claims to make “the world’s best chocolate chip cookies.”

Right now, Simoneau is busy helping his wife and three children – ages 8, 11 and 13 – make the transition from Massachusetts to Southwest Florida.

“We’re settling in,” he says. “I’m pleased the Foundation board is so supportive. I have a great staff. I’ve had a warm welcome.”

– Karen Feldman

# SENSE OF PLACE

OPERATING ROOM,  
MARIEB HALL

## Technology provides shot of realism

Simulation rooms prepare nurse anesthesia students to excel in OR.

**D**R. ELAINE NICPON MARIEB HALL, WHICH OPENED IN 2012, IS CERTIFIED FOR environmentally conscious design and construction.

It features the latest in technology to prepare students in the College of Health Professions and Social Work to excel in nursing, physical therapy, exercise science, occupational therapy, community health, clinical laboratory sciences and athletic training.

Among the \$28-million facility's instructional labs is a replicated operating room on the third floor, where students in the nurse anesthesia program learn and master procedures such as intubation and anesthesia management on obstetric, pediatric, adult and geriatric patients. Of course, human beings are in no danger; students practice on state-of-the-art manikins that simulate human anatomy and physiological signs such as a pulse, bleeding, breathing, coughing and blinking.

"High-fidelity simulation multiplies the patient scenarios available for student instruction and assessment," said Anne Nolan, director of the FGCU School of Nursing. "Lifelike simulations like those conducted in the operating room help prepare students to practice advanced techniques in the field before they enter the professional world."

The 28-month advanced nursing practice curriculum, leading to a master of science in nursing with a major in



nurse anesthesia, achieved a 10-year reaccreditation in October 2012 with no progress report required. Few programs achieve this honor. The first-time pass rate for FGCU graduates on the 2012 National Certification Examination for Nurse Anesthetists was 100 percent.

**1 BREATHE EASY** A mobile Penlon anesthesia system is used to monitor and adjust the flow of air, oxygen and nitrous oxide to ensure the patient is properly oxygenated and ventilated. This one is equipped with smaller masks and

tubes for pediatric cases; another Penlon system is set up for adults.

**2 7 SWEET SPOT** Students practice spinal and epidural anesthesia procedures on Lumbar Puncture Simulators. They palpate the lower back to find the correct insertion spot; the simulator will leak water to mimic cerebral spinal fluid if it's not done properly.

**3 ALL CLEAR** A monitor shows images from a C-MAC Video Laryngoscope, a fiber-optic instrument that examines the

Photo by Brian Tietz



interior of the airway for obstructions, intubation difficulties and placement of airway tubes.

**4 SAFE PASSAGE** Assistant Professor Ann Miller observes as a student intubates SimMan 3G, a \$100,000 Laerdal manikin that mimics human physiology. It can bleed, stop breathing, urinate, simulate cardiac arrhythmias and low or high blood pressure.

**5 TOOL TIME** An anesthesia cart containing syringes, medications, airway tubes, an esophageal stethoscope and

other instruments serves as a tool chest for nurse anesthesia students.

**6 TAKING STOCK** The supply room also houses a computer on which instructors can covertly manipulate SimMan's condition to dilate its eyes, stop its heartbeat or induce coughing. This helps students learn how to read and react to changes in a patient's condition and stimulates critical thinking.

**8 KEEP IT CLEAN** Students practice sterile technique, wearing surgical masks

and caps and scrubs as they would in a real hospital. A hands-free washing station is controlled by a knee pedal.

**9 SOUNDING BOARD** Ultrasound technology allows nurse anesthetists to pinpoint nerve locations and improves the success rate of peripheral nerve blocks – applications of local anesthetic around nerves that control sensation and movement to a specific part of the body. Ultrasound visualization helps improve patient safety, increase efficiency and decrease complications. ■



# ALUMNI OF DISTINCTION & SOARING EAGLES SOCIETY awards

The Florida Gulf Coast University Alumni Association inducted three accomplished graduates into its Soaring Eagles Society in the spring. Those who receive the award have dedicated their 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.

By BETSY CLAYTON

## SOARING EAGLES SOCIETY 2013

Tiffany Esposito-Kittinger, '09, '12



**AGE:** 25

**FROM:** Born and raised in Fort Myers, and a current resident

**DEGREES:** Bachelor's in Communication (concentration: public relations); Master's in Business Administration

**OCCUPATION:** Director of Operations, Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce; responsible for managing day-to-day activities. In 2011, she won one of six merit-based national scholarships for the U.S. Chamber of

Commerce Institute for Organization Management.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** Involved in United Way, March of Dimes, Habitat for Humanity Relay for Life, and the Florida Public Relations Association. Speaker to FGCU's Nonprofit Public Relations and Public Relations Strategy classes.

**ABOUT FGCU:** "FGCU represents community advocacy to me. It is more than just higher education. It is an opportunity to be a leader, advocate and partner in the community. I have risen quickly in my chosen field and work

every day to make the community more diverse and sustainable."

**FROM MICHAEL KENNEDY, VISITING INSTRUCTOR, FGCU DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND PHILOSOPHY, WHO NOMINATED HER:**

"She brought real-world experience to my students ... She then offered to meet with any students after class to review their portfolio and help them in any way ... Tiffany brings enthusiasm, professionalism and positive energy to everything she does."

## SOARING EAGLES SOCIETY 2013

Ashley Izzo, '08



**AGE:** 27

**FROM:** Chicago, now lives in Fort Myers

**DEGREE:** Bachelor's in Elementary Education

**OCCUPATION:** First-grade teacher and grade-level team leader at Gateway Charter School. She received the Charter School USA's A-plus Bonus for four consecutive years, recognizing creative education techniques and an innovative approach to teaching methods.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** Volunteers with Make-A-Wish Foundation and Give Kids the World. She was selected as the 2011 Rising Star for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Leads youth-group activities and provides one-on-one tutoring.

**ABOUT FGCU:** "FGCU has helped me become the teacher and person I've always wanted to be. I started at FGCU because of the palm trees. However, I'm proud to be an alumna of FGCU because it gave me opportunities to leave a legacy, venture outside my comfort

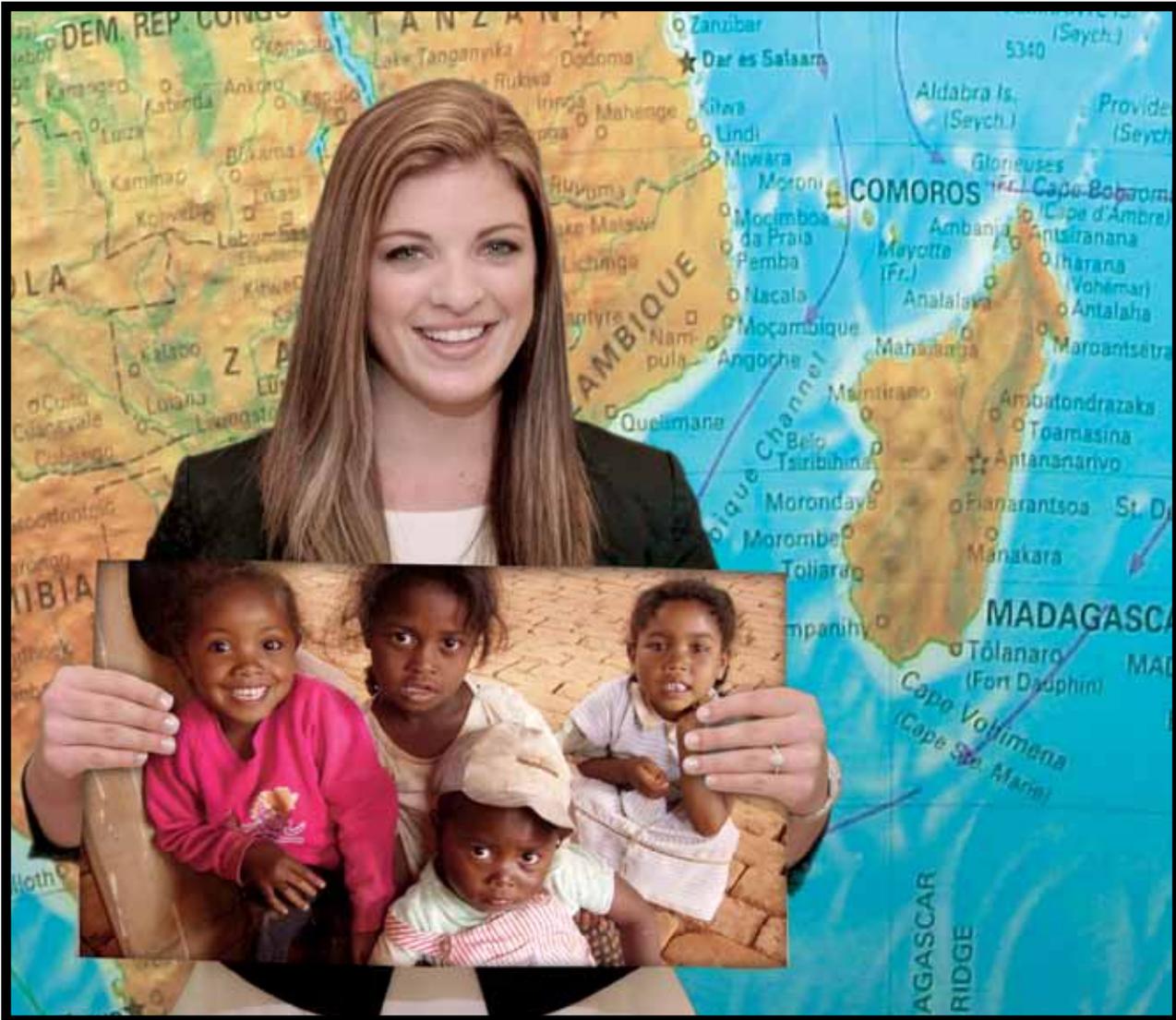
zone, meet so many amazing people, and develop the courage and knowledge to succeed in my career. I am proud to be an Eagle."

**FROM NOMINATOR GATEWAY CHARTER ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

**PEGGY LEIS:** "Ashley is, by far, one of the best teachers I have ever worked with and an inspiration to all those starting out in the field. She's a credit to FGCU and its education department."

## SOARING EAGLES SOCIETY 2013

Ann Reuter, '11



**AGE:** 24

**FROM:** Lives in Estero

**DEGREE:** Bachelor's in Finance

**OCCUPATION:** Trust administration and investment associate, FineMark National Bank & Trust

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** Financial adviser on board of directors for The Ladybug Project, which fosters educational and health infrastructures in Equatorial Guinea and Madagascar.

She also guest lectures to FGCU finance classes and mentors underprivileged students in English.

**ABOUT FGCU:** "FGCU offered me the opportunity to grow as a person and to develop a passion for finance. I do not think this would have been possible without the dedicated team of professors in the finance and economics department, who continue to mentor me today."

**FROM COLLEAGUE AND NOMINATOR MICAH BURKEY:** "Ms. Reuter is kind,

giving and always ready to assist, whether it be for charity, networking or in business. She has overcome personal obstacles (having lost a parent during her time at FGCU, dealing with a learning disability and immigrating to the United States during middle school) to achieve great success."

## 2013 ALUMNUS OF DISTINCTION

Jim Robinson, '99

# Legal Eagle

Jim Robinson successfully blends law career, family life and social commitment.

**F**lorida Gulf Coast University alumnus Jim Robinson completed 75 credit hours in 18 months – earning all A's except for one B – while raising a newborn with his wife and propelling himself toward law school admittance at the University of Florida. You'd think he'd be too busy to glance back to the school where he started.

Instead he's made his mark on the university by creating a scholarship, serving on the Alumni Association Board of Directors ('05-'11) and living a high-profile life as a community leader and trial attorney for the world's seventh-largest law firm.

"Jim is a constant and consummate professional. He works super hard for good causes and always thinks about how to improve FGCU and FGCU's image with the community," says Carlos Cavenago, '00, of Fort Myers, who nominated Robinson for the 2013 Alumni of Distinction Award.

Robinson, 38, of Miramar (a Fort Lauderdale suburb) is a 1999 summa cum laude graduate who exemplifies the criteria for the annual award, which is selected by the FGCU Alumni Association Board of Directors. It's the highest honor the association bestows. Among the reasons he was selected, according to Lindsey Touchette, '05, director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving: "He strives every day to advocate for his alma mater in any way possible and continues to make an impact in the lives of not only other FGCU alumni but in current students' lives as well."

Not bad for a son of a champion bull-

riding father and barrel-racing mother who raised their brood of six on a cattle ranch. Robinson once wanted to be a rodeo clown, but instead became an Advance Placement test-taker, 1993 North Fort Myers High grad who attended Brigham Young University before fulfilling a two-year mission in Australia for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

By the time he started at FGCU in summer 1998, he was married to wife, LaTeshia. Their first son, Christian, was born while Robinson was earning his Business Management undergraduate degree. His only B came from an economics course in which he missed a test because of his newborn.

He went on to graduate from UF's law school in the top 1 percent of his class. He landed a prestigious job at White & Case LLP, an international firm based in New York with offices worldwide. He became the first litigator in the history of the Miami office to join the firm as a summer

associate and work his way up to partner.

Today, he's been involved in some of the largest lawsuits in Florida. Clients include foreign and domestic corporations, banks and other financial institutions, as well as real estate developers. "Most lawyers were poly-sci majors as undergrads. They can write but they can't read a balance sheet or defend an accounting firm accused of business malpractice," Robinson says. "Having been through FGCU's business school, it's like second-nature for me."

Family and community remain high priorities. His leadership position as Stake President in his church has him overseeing 4,500 people in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. His commitment to the FGCU Alumni Association reaffirms his school ties. "I thought I could have an impact," he says.

He and his family – parents Nial and Mary Robinson and grandmother Louise French, all of Fort Myers – established an FGCU scholarship for a North Fort Myers High graduate in the name of his sister, Kellie Jean Robinson, who died in a car crash at age 18.

It's another way to illustrate a commitment to education. Not that he doesn't ever have fun. With LaTeshia, Christian and second son, Dylan, the family enjoys Miami Heat basketball, Florida Gators football – and, of course, Dunk City basketball.

Incoming FGCU freshmen "don't realize how lucky they are," Robinson says. "I have always believed FGCU is a hidden gem. But with the basketball team's success it won't be for very much longer and it will become more competitive to get in."

– Betsy Clayton

**“Jim is a constant and consummate professional. He works super hard for good causes and always thinks about how to improve FGCU and FGCU's image with the community.”**

— Carlos Cavenago, '00 of Fort Myers, who nominated Robinson for the 2013 Alumni of Distinction Award.



Photo by Mitzi Capote



From  
**Hurt**

# to Healing

FGCU program helping domestic abuse victims piece battered lives back together.

**E**ven as she walked down the aisle, a beautiful teen-aged bride, Christy knew she was making a mistake marrying Ben, the man she'd dated for two years.

*"There had been warning signs, but I always made excuses," she says now. "I didn't recognize it as abuse."*

*Over the course of two decades and the birth of three children, Ben grew progressively more controlling. He forced his wife to give up her job, denied her access to their bank accounts and credit cards and doled out only scraps of cash. Still, she thought it was all part of being married.*

*Ben chose what television shows the family watched and what his pre-teen daughter wore. No one went anywhere on their own. Eventually, Ben stopped Christy and the children from seeing her family. (Names have been changed to protect the family.)*

*She was thinking about leaving when her daughter, Heather, delivered news that propelled Christy into action: Ben had been sexually abusing her.*

*When Ben went to work the next morning, she hustled the kids into the car and headed straight to The Shelter for Abused Women & Children.*

*In the two months they spent there a legal advocate helped Christy obtain a temporary injunction barring Ben from contacting her or the children. That was when the family's life began to change for the better, through the efforts of the shelter staff, the judicial system, an instructor and students from FGCU who together are helping domestic violence victims become survivors.*

By KAREN FELDMAN

**T**he unlikely setting for this unique program is Naples, best known for its lush beaches, sprawling estates and idyllic lifestyle. But beauty and riches aside, a malevolent force rages behind the walls of wealthy private enclaves, well-manicured middle-class neighborhoods and hardscrabble farmworker villages.

Victims are primarily women but some are men, too. They are of all skin colors, ages and faiths. They range from undocumented workers to the seemingly pampered spouses of tycoons. Behind closed doors the abusers brutalize their partners – and often their children and pets – physically, sexually, emotionally, economically and psychologically.

For victims with no money, or who are in the country illegally, or who are too embarrassed or isolated from family and friends to ask for help, it can seem as if there is no way out.

That's where The Shelter for Abused Women & Children comes in, along with the Children's Advocacy Center and Legal Aid Service of Collier County. Joining them are people like David Steckler, an attorney and FGCU legal studies instructor, who brings with him a growing number of student interns. Working through the auspices of Legal Aid, Steckler has represented domestic violence victims without charge for several years, but increased his involvement in 2011, when the shelter asked him to help fill the void after it lost a grant that had funded an attorney to assist these women.

With the help of former Dean of Professional Studies Tony Barringer and then Justice Studies chair Mary Ann Zager, he started the internship program.

"How many times do we have the opportunity to do good and do well at the same time?" he says of his motivation for donating 10 to 15 hours a week to

the cause. "We are helping the most vulnerable underserved."

Earlier this year, Steckler was one of 22 lawyers recognized by the Florida Bar for their work on behalf of poor and indigent clients during 2011-12.

"Since July 2011, he's handled more than 100 cases," says Carol O'Callaghan, managing attorney for Legal Aid Service of Collier County. "Having somebody do what a staff attorney would do is phenomenal. He's getting wonderful results for clients. He never says no."

Assisting him in the effort is the carefully selected group of interns.

"I teach family law, legal research and writing, ethics, introduction to law," he says. "The students who participate in class and, through their written

assignments, show depth and maturity, are the ones I'm looking for."

Interns are mostly legal studies or justice studies majors, but they also have come from fields such as communication and social work.



David Steckler

"Some cases are routine divorces where the people can't live together and lack assets but need us to put together the divorce," Steckler says. "In cases of domestic violence, interns help me interview the victim and as women serve as strong role models. Many of our clients are kept from being educated and holding real jobs. Now they are dealing with young women who are planning to go to law school. For the interns, it gives them experience in effective critical thinking. They learn that domestic violence is not overcome by legal intervention alone. It needs psychosocial intervention, child therapy and educational, housing and employment intervention, medical and dental intervention."

■ ■ ■

*As the date for the court hearing approached, Steckler, FGCU intern*

*Ines Hadzismajlovic and members of the Children's Advocacy Center began working with Christy and her children to understand what had happened and to prepare the traumatized family for the day on which Heather would testify.*

*The Child Protection Team (part of Children's Advocacy Center) interviewed the children, but Hadzismajlovic also connected with Heather.*

*"Ines developed a big-sister relationship instantly with Heather," Christy says. "She developed complete trust in her."*

*As a result, Heather confided in Hadzismajlovic, telling the college student things she'd never told her mother.*

*Although Christy felt bad that she hadn't known earlier, she understood and felt relieved that her daughter had someone in whom she could confide.*

*"It made me feel good that she felt she could tell her things that would be embarrassing to tell me, things she didn't want to tell a mom," Christy says. "There was a bond and trust."*

*When the court date arrived, Heather spent heartrending hours testifying. Under questioning by Steckler, Heather bravely described the abuse she'd endured – how her father took every opportunity to expose himself and discuss things of a sexual nature with her. Through all the testimony, Steckler and Hadzismajlovic were at her side.*

■ ■ ■

The interns perform many functions, including filling out forms, tracking court appearances, accompanying clients to mediation, preparing them to testify, even meeting the women outside the courthouse and escorting them to court so there will be no chance they will encounter their abusers alone in an elevator or hallway.

"The interns are wonderful," says O'Callaghan. "We have women who have been abused. Sometimes it's difficult for

*(continued on page 30)*

## ONE SURVIVOR'S STORY

# Maria: A victim no more

**M**aria has a slight build but possesses a sturdy soul that blazes through her big, brown eyes as she talks about life with her abusive husband and the struggles she continues to grapple with even now, years after their divorce.

Jack was American; Maria (her name has been changed to protect her identity) was from Mexico, an undocumented immigrant.

He hit her, abused her sexually and verbally, angrily broke dishes in front of their young children and continually told her she was worthless.

When Maria would take the children to the park, he would spy on them. He frequently accused her of sleeping with other men.

Jack told her that because she was undocumented and he was a U.S. citizen, she had no rights. If the police came, he said, they would take her away and she'd never see the children again. But Jack's controlling and violent behavior finally got to be too much for her and she summoned the courage to ask for divorce.

"He said, 'Sure. I'll just take the kids to the park first' and he didn't come back," she says.

Jack and the children disappeared.

"I was desperate. It was two months without the children. I had no idea where they were," she says. "He'd always say I'd regret it if I left, that he'd hurt me where it hurt the most – the children."

She finally tracked them down through school records, discovered he'd taken them out of state and sought help through Legal Aid Service of Collier County.

"I went to them for help with the children, but they told me that I could get papers [to stay in the country], too, because I'd been abused," she says. "I didn't know I'd been abused."

The police tracked Jack down, arrested him and brought him back to Florida. Maria traveled to where the children were and brought them home.

David Steckler, an FGCU instructor and a lawyer who volunteers to represent victims of domestic abuse, helped Maria obtain a divorce.

But a few months ago, Maria sought help again. Jack and his current girlfriend were sharing a single hotel room with her kids and, when they visited, Maria's four children.

““

**She's very strong. She's a perfect example of what it takes to be a survivor.”**

*— David Steckler, an FGCU instructor and a lawyer who volunteers to represent victims of domestic abuse, speaking about Maria.*

Steckler and FGCU interns Sachi Castaneda and Kelly Novak took the family out to McDonald's to talk. While Steckler and Maria sat at one table, Castaneda and Novak sat at a separate table with the older children. Over Happy Meals, the children said they, their father, his girlfriend and her two children shared a single hotel room and the girlfriend's children were bullying their little brother. In addition, they never had pajamas or a change of clothes and there were never real meals, only junk food or fast food.

After the Department of Children and Families got involved, Steckler sought an

emergency order to prevent the father from having overnight visits until he could provide a safe environment for the children. With Castaneda translating for Maria, Steckler requested that a guardian ad litem, a volunteer who watches out for the children's welfare, be assigned to ensure that Jack's living situation was suitable before the children were permitted to stay overnight again. A judge quickly granted that order.

Today, Maria and her children live in a house provided by The Shelter for Abused Women & Children in Naples. They have a car and Maria has a full-time job. The children attend school and two who have learning disabilities are getting extra help.

Steckler is encouraging Maria to go back to school and further her education.

"She's very strong," he says. "She's a perfect example of what it takes to be a survivor."

Maria says she used to be afraid – of her ex-husband and the authorities. The people who have helped her – those from the domestic violence shelter, Legal Aid and, particularly, Steckler – have allowed her to change her life and her children's lives.

When she had to start giving the children to their father for visitation, Steckler would meet her at the sheriff's office. She would hide so she didn't have to see Jack and "David would take the children by the hands and walk with them to his car and remind him not to smoke with them inside," she said. "With every problem I've had I always called David and he always helped."

She feels the same way about the interns.

"For me, they are all like angels that came for me because I thought no one was going to help me," she says, a single tear escaping from her right eye. "I'm very grateful. I'm feeling safe now." ■

them to deal with a male attorney. But female interns can be comforting, especially when clients don't speak English. They also keep David's court calendar organized."

With a domestic violence course being added to the curriculum next spring (see accompanying story), the number of interns will grow from the current three or four at a time to as many as 30 or 35. As the program expands, O'Callaghan expects to assign interns to other pro bono attorneys to help them work family violence cases, obtain injunctions, issue support orders, obtain divorces and develop parenting plans.

"We only have money for one family attorney on staff," she says. "This expands the number of people we are able to help."

Legal Services receives 30,000 calls a year from people looking for legal assistance of all kinds from criminal cases to parking tickets. It handles about 2,200 cases.

"That's 28,000 we are not able to serve," O'Callaghan says. "Family law is the most requested service. This program will allow us to expand our services even more."

Lisa Fasanella, director of programs for the Shelter for Abused Women & Children, also finds that Steckler and FGCU interns help stretch that agency's limited resources. Last year, the shelter took in 452 women and children, fielded 2,028 hotline calls, provided 32,423 hours of counseling, and created 30,219 safety plans, in all assisting 2,434 individuals.

"We love that the students come and do internships here. We see some who are

**I started my internship and they gave me responsibilities. I got to display my skills. They liked what I did and offered me a job. I'm very grateful to be on board with Legal Aid. I love this job. I have roots in this community. I want to pay it back."**

— *Ivan Moreno, ('13, Legal Studies) of Naples, head of low-income taxpayer clinic, Legal Aid Service of Collier County*



working on their master's of social work or mental health counseling. Survivors need clinical counseling for what they've been through and what children have witnessed in order to stop the cycle," she says.

The interns assist in that therapy, which is critical to helping women finally leave abusive situations. Fasanella says it typically takes women seven attempts before they leave for good.

"With interns, we are able to serve more folks," she says. "It's helpful in resolving their issues, empowering them to get out of those situations."

While the program clearly benefits abused women and their children, agencies with limited resources and society in general, the student interns benefit, too, by learning lessons that aren't possible to teach in a classroom.

"The best thing about this type of internship is the unlearning," says Steckler. "All the clichés roll away in a couple of weeks. They learn that abusers don't look any different from the rest of us and, often, neither do the victims."

Nonetheless, he says, "We have to remember our students are students and are not delivering professional services, especially to a stressed population. But it seems to me that they can do really invaluable stuff. These interns are changing the world, one victim at a time."

The program is changing the students' lives as well.

After having two children, Nikki Bossert, ('12, Legal Studies), returned to college with plans to become a paralegal, but after working with Steckler, she's now entering her second year of law school at Quinnipiac University, with a hefty scholarship to boot.

When she began her internship, she knew some of the issues from having experienced her parents' divorce when she was 10.

"But I think about how much help people need who don't have money or access to legal services," she says. "Many couldn't

## ONE DAY'S RECKONING

There's no way to assess accurately how many cases of domestic violence there are. Most incidents go unreported. But the National Network to End Domestic Violence's annual one-day survey of requests for service provides a snapshot of how vast the problem is. On Sept. 12, 2012, some 1,646 local shelters throughout the United States (about 86 percent of those operating) reported their day's activity. The totals are as follows:

64,324	> People were served
35,323	> Found refuge in emergency shelters or transitional housing
29,001	> Sought nonresidential assistance (legal assistance, transportation, counseling, other services)
10,471	> Requested services that could not be provided because the programs lacked resources

do it for themselves because they don't speak English or they work two or three jobs to support their family or they are in a domestic violence situation and don't have access or don't know how to go online or are afraid of the law. I learned how important what Dr. Steckler is doing is.

"For me, Dr. Steckler gave me a lot of confidence. I wasn't sure I had it in me [to go to law school]. It was his influence that made me believe I could do it."

Kelly Novak, ('13, Communication), started her internship in January, taking the Naples shelter's required 32-hour core competency course that everyone who works with domestic violence cases must complete.

Not having had legal studies in school, the course and her subsequent internship opened her eyes to the insidious nature of domestic violence and the challenges so many women face. One lesson she learned was not to judge the women she met.

"It's not my job to ask why – why do they stay?" Novak says. "My job is to say what can we do now? How can we get them safe? What can we do to enrich their lives, help them get happy and content and safe?"



Sachi Castaneda

Sachi Castaneda, ('13, Legal Studies), worked as an intern for the spring semester then kept on volunteering for most of the summer, running Steckler's

litigation calendar, preparing clients and conducting research even as she also took on a paid job as a paralegal.

The internship has made her view people differently, to realize that anyone can be an abuser or someone who is enduring abuse. The first victim she worked with was a 22-year-old woman "who looked like someone I'd meet at school," she says, "a really nice, bubbly girl."

It turned out that her boyfriend, with whom she lived, had been beating her and her dog and she'd been covering it up. She finally had enough and moved

out. Castaneda worked with her and Steckler to get a restraining order.

"The part I loved most of this heartbreaking thing, at the final hearing, she was shaking, she was a mess," Castaneda says. "I sat next to her, calming her down. When she testified, she'd look over at me and I'd smile that she was doing well and she'd start back up. I loved helping her. We got a four-year injunction for protection. She thanked me a thousand times and gave me the biggest hug. In the end, she got exactly what she wanted. She felt better, safer."

Experiences like that have made her consider a career in family law.

"I like helping people," she says. "I like to see the happy ending, to get that fuzzy feeling, the phone calls from clients. It's really gratifying."



*Before it was his turn to testify, Ben called a halt to the proceedings, agreeing to a permanent injunction that bars him from further contact with his ex-wife or children. Steckler says it might not be the ideal solution in that he didn't face any criminal charges but "in a case like this it's 'he said, she said'" so getting an injunction in civil court at least protects the abuser's family.*

*Today, Christy and her children are living in a two-bedroom apartment, going to counseling and healing bit by bit.*

*"We put up pictures on the walls and do whatever we want," says Christy. "We turn the music up and dance and act goofy. We watch what we want on TV. The kids are doing well in their new schools. They play with other kids at home. Mommy has friends and gets phone calls. The kids have friends and get phone calls.*

*"When we visit my family, the kids play with their cousins and laugh and no one has to worry about what they are allowed to say. The shelter is helping us. We'd been trained to think certain things were normal. Now we're learning what's really normal."* ■

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 101

In the spring of 2014, FGCU will offer a course called "Special Topics: Domestic Violence – Causes and Effects." A three-credit elective, it will introduce students to the issues of domestic violence from a variety of perspectives, including healthcare



Sandra Pavelka

providers, social service agencies, law enforcement and the courts. It will also explore the impact it has on children.

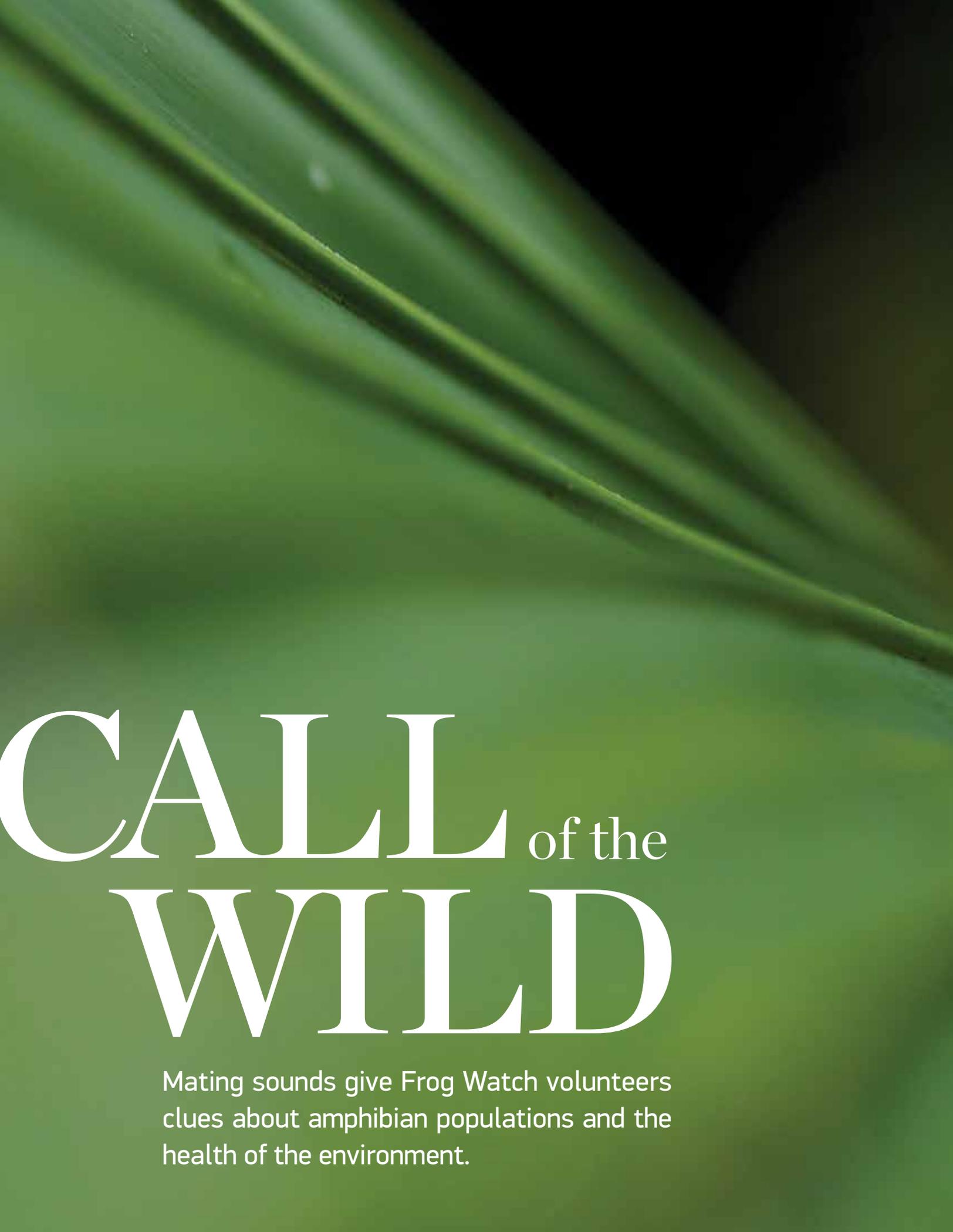
The course will be taught by Sandra Pavelka, associate professor of public

affairs and director of FGCU's Institute for Youth and Justice Studies.

"This project fulfills the mission of the university and the institute," she says.

Students who successfully complete this course will be eligible to participate in internships similar to those that students are already participating in with David Steckler, FGCU legal studies instructor (see main story), but there will be more of them placed in a greater variety of agencies. While there are usually three at a time now, there could be as many as 30 or 35 per semester as well as faculty members from a diverse array of disciplines.

That means a greater number of agencies will benefit, students will have a broader range of options for real-life training and faculty will have more research opportunities. Among the agencies expected to participate are many that are part of the Collier County Domestic Violence Task Force, including Legal Aid Service of Collier County, The Shelter for Abused Women & Children, Children's Advocacy Center, the Collier County Sheriff's Office and various substance abuse and mental health providers. The initial goal is to work in Collier County then to branch out into the rest of the circuit – Lee, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades, Pavelka says. Eventually, she hopes to make it a statewide program. ■



# CALL of the WILD

Mating sounds give Frog Watch volunteers clues about amphibian populations and the health of the environment.

By DREW STERWALD

Photos by BRIAN TIETZ



**K** *wee-kwee, kwee-kwee, kwee-kwee.*

Green tree frogs set a steady rhythm for a nocturnal symphony of natural sounds in a field off Ben Hill Griffin Parkway south of FGCU. Florida cricket frogs chime in with chirps that sound like glass marbles clacking together. At random intervals, a pig frog grunts a few bass notes in counterpoint.

These courting calls are music to Win Everham's ears. "There's a lot of interesting sex going on out there," he whispers.

But the FGCU environmental studies professor and a half-dozen volunteers are not peeping toms out on a muggy, buggy June night to watch frogs get frisky. They're there to listen to their love songs.

Once a month from June through September, when rainy season downpours leave standing puddles ideal for frog and toad spawning, the Southwest Florida Amphibian Monitoring Network, aka Frog Watch, hits the road. Trained volunteers travel nine established routes in three counties to check on the status of croaking critter populations. They rate the intensity of mating calls at 12 stops on each route, based on whether they hear solos or a chorus of overlapping calls. They note the different species they hear. They observe weather and sky conditions, traffic noise, water levels and major changes to habitat.

The collected data helps scientists document the status of indigenous amphibians, which are declining around the world. Across the United States, amphibian populations fell by 3.7 percent annually from 2002 to 2011, according to an analysis of U.S.

Geological Survey data released in May. "Amphibian declines may be more widespread and severe than previously realized," the report states.

Such news is cause for concern about these sentinel species as well as the state of the environment.

"Frogs are an excellent indicator of the ecosystem's health – wetlands, especially," says ecologist David Ceilley, a research associate in FGCU's Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences who has been part of Frog Watch since it began in 2000. "Frogs are the canary in the coal mine in terms of the health of the environment. If they disappear, it's a signal that something's wrong."

In Southwest Florida, very little information exists on amphibian diversity, distribution, abundance and ecology. Frog Watch is meant to fill that void and provide insight into how frogs and toads are affected by habitat loss and hydrology changes due to development as well as factors such as climate change, drought, natural population fluctuations and introduction of non-native species. The first decade of reporting revealed a

slight decline in some native species and a slight increase in exotic species, but the scientists leading the effort have to be careful about drawing conclusions until more information is gathered.

"Just because we don't hear them doesn't mean they're gone," Everham says. "They could still be there, but we can't hear them over the traffic. We're just addressing a piece of the puzzle. We don't know the whole story. We don't know where it's going."

Where they hope it's not going is the direction of the golden toad, or *Bufo periglenes*. In one of the most infamous real-life examples of a "Silent Spring"-like extinction, this diminutive denizen of the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve in Costa Rica went from populous to dwindling to nonexistent between 1987 and 1990.

Earth's oldest terrestrial vertebrate class, amphibians are estimated to date back 350 million years. In the grand scheme of amphibian evolution and population, the golden toad's disappearance might not seem particularly ominous.

But it wasn't alone in its precarious position.

"By 1990, 19 other amphibian species had gone into serious decline or disappeared entirely from Monteverde," according to a 2000 report by Worldwatch Institute, an independent research group devoted to global environmental concerns. "And it wasn't just a matter of Monteverde: As the 1990s wore on, reports of declines and disappearances emerged from most of the regions where amphibians were reasonably well monitored – in North America and parts of South America, in Europe and Australia."

Reading this magazine article, "Amphibia Fading," alarmed John Cassani, deputy director of the Lee County Hyacinth Control District and an FGCU marine and ecological sciences adjunct instructor. He couldn't find any local amphibian surveys

**Win Everham records data during a Frog Watch outing in June.**

in Lee, Charlotte or Collier counties outside of Big Cypress National Preserve.

“I found this very disturbing,” he recalls. “We knew Southwest Florida was undergoing massive landscape changes. Sprawl was taking off east of Interstate 75. I was concerned that maybe amphibians were in trouble here. We have a moral obligation to not diminish the native populations, a moral imperative to sustain life. Amphibians were the first vertebrates on the planet to crawl out of the oceans. They adapted to changes. Now they’re one of the most threatened life forms on the planet. It’s staggering.”

Within months, Frog Watch leapt to life.

Cassani rallied scientists, natural resource managers and concerned citizens to study recordings of frog calls until they

could differentiate a native squirrel tree frog’s quack from a non-native Cuban tree frog’s squeak. They developed a geographically diverse range of routes to monitor, mixing urban and suburban settings, sites undisturbed and under development.

Armed with scientific protocol developed by the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program, they brave mosquitos and wary law enforcement patrols to tromp around in the dark wielding flashlights like detectives looking for clues. More than 100 volunteers have participated in the project since it began, walking routes from Corkscrew Swamp east of Naples to Sanibel Island to remote Rotonda in Charlotte County.

“It’s a lot to ask someone to keep doing

for a decade,” Cassani says. “I see a lot of positive coming out of it – it’s a feel-good project. To me, it’s one of the best examples of citizen scientists. It’s a real contribution to science. The longer the database is, the more valuable it is.”

Already, the project may have raised a red flag where one species is concerned, the Southern chorus frog, *Pseudacris nigrita*.

“I think 2001 was the last time I heard one,” Cassani says. “It’s probably extirpated from this area. By the time we realize a species is in trouble, it’s more than likely gone.”

FGCU students helped map Frog Watch Route L-7, which includes 12 stops on campus and along Ben Hill Griffin Parkway, Alico Road and Three Oaks Parkway. Everham serves as team





lamp across her forehead and smooths insect repellent on her arms and legs.

As darkness falls and sprinkles peter out, Firth hops into a white FGCU pickup truck to hit the road with Everham and Ceilley. Two French graduate students conducting research at FGCU, Anne Rolton and Julien Vignier from the Université de Bretagne Occidentale (University of Brest), join volunteers in another car.

“When you hear something, point and call it out,” Everham instructs the team.

Over the next three hours, they park and pile out at a dozen pull-offs where they listen to frog calls for 3 minutes each time. Along the way, they collect some interesting sightings along with their sonic scores: black widow and brown widow spiders in webs laced to Ben Hill Griffin Parkway guardrails; an alligator’s eyes reflecting in a flashlight beam in an Alico Road culvert; an exotic Cuban tree frog – an invasive species that eats its native cousins – camouflaged on a branch.

Firth bounds off a rain-slicked campus boardwalk on a hunt for a green tree frog she heard, undaunted by the prospect of spiders, snakes and other creepy crawlies lurking in the damp darkness amid clutches of sawgrass and wax myrtle.

“That’s dedication,” Ceilley observes. “Win really gets the students involved. You can see him light up – he really enjoys this.”

Eventually, Firth picks up a green tree frog roughly the size of her fingernail and offers it up for closer inspection. At some sites, they hear as many as seven species and rate each from zero to three for intensity of calls. At others, the roar of traffic drowns out the natural soundtrack. Even a strong wind can muffle mating calls, Everham says.

“This is a zero – our first zero of the night,” he says near a pasture off Three Oaks Parkway. “It’s data, too, but it’s much more fun to hear something call.”

For most frogs and toads, temporarily flooded patches of land are the ideal setting for nocturnal nookie – or amplexus, as

leader and cheerleader, corralling current and former students to participate in a project that gets them out of the labs and into pine flatwoods and wetlands, nurturing a sense of place.

“This is something completely new to me – field work,” says Chris Olteanu, a senior biology major from Naples who joined the June outing. “I’m broadening my horizons. I really love science and biology, but I don’t know my niche yet. Maybe this will be it. It’s fascinating.”

Two-year veteran Joan Firth (’13,

**Top photo: The noise of passing traffic can obliterate frog calls.**

**Bottom: Frog Watch volunteers sometimes stop to catch and study an amphibian.**

Environmental Sciences) based her senior research project on Frog Watch and is expanding it into a paper she hopes to publish as she heads off to graduate school in Oregon.

“It would be amazing to hear something rare tonight – maybe a little grass frog,” she says as she straps a head

“

Amphibians were the first vertebrates on the planet to crawl out of the oceans. They adapted to changes. Now they're one of the most threatened life forms on the planet. It's staggering.”

— John Cassani, deputy director of the Lee County Hyacinth Control District and an FGCU marine and ecological sciences adjunct instructor.

scientists refer to the mating embrace in which the female lays eggs in water and the male fertilizes them. The word “amphibian” derives from a Greek expression meaning “double life,” a reference to the partly aquatic-partly terrestrial lifecycle. Some species need as much as 200 days in water before they can live on land, leaving them vulnerable to drought and predation.

Land development can take away the open, watery spaces frogs and toads need to reproduce, but it can also give them back by creating stormwater ponds or restoring wetlands. This is the case near the South County Regional Library where L-7 Frog Watchers stop near the end of their night crawling. The land across the road, where Estero Medical Center now sits, was a pine forest when he began monitoring frogs in 2000, Everham says. When the property was developed, space was set aside for wet pasture.

In the long view, such eco-friendly development offers a glimmer of hope for species in danger of being displaced or destroyed.

“We have to be patient and have hope,” Everham says. “If we create and maintain wetlands maybe the frogs will come back.” ■

## FOR MORE INFO

Visit [www.frogwatch.net](http://www.frogwatch.net)



## RIBBIT!

Following are the species commonly observed by the Southwest Florida Amphibian Monitoring Network.

1. **Southern chorus frog** *Pseudacris nigrita nigrita*

Call sound: Teeth of a comb

2. **Little grass frog** *Pseudacris ocularis*

Call sound: High-pitched tinkling

3. **Florida cricket frog** *Acris gryllus gryllus*

Call sound: Marbles bumping

4. **Spadefoot toad** *Scaphiopus holbrooki holbrooki*

Call sound: Nasal yonk

5. **Southern leopard frog**

*Lithobates sphenoccephalus*

Call sound: Rubbing a balloon or chuckle

6. **Gopher frog** *Rana areolata aesopus*

Call sound: Snore

7. **Bull frog** *Rana catesbeiana*

Call sound: Jug-o-rum

8. **Pig frog** *Rana grylio*

Call sound: Pig's grunt

9. **Green tree frog** *Hyla cinerea*

Call sound: Cow bell

10. **Squirrel tree frog** *Hyla squirella*

Call sound: Quack

11. **Barking tree frog** *Hyla gratiosa*

Call sound: Baying hound

12. **Pinewoods tree frog** *Hyla femoralis*

Call sound: Morse code

13. **Eastern narrow mouth toad**

*Gastrophryne carolinensis carolinensis*

Call sound: Nasal bleet

14. **Oak toad** *Anaxyrus quercicus*

Call sound: Baby chick peep

15. **Southern toad** *Anaxyrus terrestris*

Call sound: Trill

16. **Giant toad** *Rhinella marina*

Call sound: Slower, deeper trill than Southern toad

17. **Cuban tree frog** *Osteopilus septentrionalis*

Call sound: Similar to leopard frog; more cry-like

18. **Greenhouse frog**

*Eleutherodactylus planirostris planirostris*

Call sound: Insect-like chirp or bat sound

# THE ARTS

▶ "Expressing the inexpressible"



Photo by Diana Levine

“Performing in the most celebrated hall in the world will open doors for her and is a huge accomplishment. It is also a testament to the Bower School of Music that we attract and produce world-class talent such as Priscila.”

- MICHAEL BARON,  
FGCU MUSIC PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF KEYBOARD STUDIES



## [ MUSIC ]

# Pianist makes triumphant Carnegie Hall debut

**W**ALKING THROUGH THE PLUSH PASSAGEWAYS OF CARNEGIE HALL, Priscila Navarro thought about the legendary musicians in whose footsteps she followed. Composer Gustav Mahler, pianist Vladimir Horowitz and soprano Maria Callas are just a few of the myriad artists who have graced the hall's stages since it opened in 1891.

“It makes you think,” said Navarro, 19, an FGCU senior who in March reached another milestone in her burgeoning career by making her Carnegie Hall debut. “They were standing in the same place where I was standing. Most people just remember the music, but they were also human beings.”

It's typical for the young woman from a small town in Peru to bring things back down to earth. Naturally soft-spoken, she remains composed in the spotlight on stages around the world as well as in the media limelight that accompanied her as she achieved a new pinnacle of distinction for FGCU.

“I don't feel like I'm doing a great thing,” Navarro said humbly, as she prepared for a summer of competitions and international concerts. “It's so nice to be at a school that's so supportive of what I'm doing.”

Eva Sugden Gomez of Naples, whose scholarship fund has helped Navarro attend FGCU, recently donated an additional \$15,000 for the globe-trotting virtuoso's international travel costs. Navarro also is supported by the Steinway Piano Society of Southwest Florida, which sponsored the reception in New York City after her performance in Carnegie Hall's 268-seat Weill Recital Hall.

Navarro said she felt relaxed once she

Priscila Navarro performed before a packed house at Carnegie Hall.

was on stage, especially because her mother and grandparents were able to come from Peru for her recital – their first trip to the United States.

“I'm pretty happy with how it turned out,” she said. “It was one of my best performances – and it's a good place to play your best.”

Navarro's ticket to the prestigious stage was winning the 20th International Chopin



Priscila Navarro

Competition of Texas in 2012 – one of several national and international contests she has won while studying at FGCU. In May, she won first place in the 15th Biennial Beethoven Sonata Competition in Memphis, Tenn.

“In the three years that Priscila has been a student at FGCU she has gone from triumph to triumph,” said Michael Baron, FGCU music professor and head of keyboard studies, who discovered Navarro at the National Conservatory of Peru when she was 15.

“Performing in the most celebrated hall in the world will open doors for her and is a huge accomplishment. It is also a testament to the Bower School of Music that we attract and produce world-class talent such as Priscila.”

As she begins her final year at FGCU, Navarro will make a third trip to the Warsaw Conservatory in Poland and prepare for her senior recital and graduate school auditions. She's also working on adding Rachmaninoff's famously challenging “Third Piano Concerto” to her repertoire. Horowitz was the first to record and popularize the dramatic piece in 1930.

“It's one of the hardest ever,” Navarro said. “It's more technically and musically demanding, more mature. It will take some time.”

– Drew Sterwald



[ ARTS ]

# DC journey inspires art and theater students

Sponsored trip capitalizes on city's cultural riches.

**T**HE WEEK AFTER HER SPRING BREAK TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C., Andrea Dickinson was still bubbling with enthusiasm from a week of cultural immersion. She and 13 other FGCU art and theater students braved sleet, snow flurries and frigid March temperatures to take in the city's treasures: the National Gallery of Art and The Phillips Collection, the Arena Stage and the Washington Improv Theater, all of the memorials and monuments they could squeeze in and much more.

"As an artist, it really opened me up," said Dickinson, then a senior art major from Fort Myers. "We were all moved by the National Gallery, the memorials. It was a great experience."

Students on the sponsored excursion were required to produce a work of visual or performance art inspired by the journey after they returned to campus. Dickinson welded a wall sculpture of swirling, shimmering layers of steel streams on a circular base – a nod to one of the students' theater outings. They saw Arena Stage's production of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," which was staged around – and in – a shallow pool of water.

"(The sculpture) was inspired by the movement of the water in the pool when the actors walked through it," she said.

Like Dickinson, Julianna Javier had never visited D.C. before. Part of the mission of the trip, underwritten for the second year by Raymond Vitelli of Naples, is to expose budding artists and performers



Above, students created a photo album of their trip to present to their sponsor, Raymond Vitelli.

Left, Andrea Dickinson explains the inspiration for her metal sculpture.



to a broader cultural experience through arts-related travel. In 2012, Vitelli paid for eight art majors to tour New York City museums and galleries.

"There was so much to see and be inspired by," said Javier, a junior art major from Naples whose highlight of the trip was the National Gallery. "Seeing (works by) all the artists I've seen and read about in textbooks – it made me

think more about where I want to take my art."

To be considered for the annual trip, students must submit an essay, obtain endorsements from two faculty members and be in good academic standing, according to Art Gallery Interim Director Anica Sturdivant, who coordinates the selection process and plans the outings.

"One of the primary goals is to find a committed student who has had limited travel or limited access to the arts of major metropolitan areas," she said. "Traveling with fellow art and theater majors is so freeing – we're all excited about what we take in together."

– Drew Steward

“His contributions to the fields of poetry and art have paved the way for future generations of writers.”

- PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA,  
ON POET RICHARD BLANCO

## Writers conference takes a turn for the verse

IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT.

THE STORY OF THIS YEAR'S Sanibel Island Writers Conference begins with a cliché, but it's an apt one. Tom DeMarchi of FGCU's Department of Language and Literature was indeed standing outside a Boston hotel at 1 a.m. in a blizzard, trying to convince one of the hottest literary stars in America and an agent who represents him that said writer should come to sunny Florida in November to headline the eighth annual island confab.

"I'm now convinced that all negotiations should take place under such circumstances," says DeMarchi, conference director.

He had an ace up his sleeve, though: DeMarchi attended the Florida International University MFA program with poet Richard



Richard Blanco

Blanco, the target of his pitch. The Cuban-born, Miami-reared writer is in high demand in the wake of his poetry reading at President Barack Obama's second inauguration in January. "He was in my very first fiction writing workshop," DeMarchi says. "So I've known him for 17 years, but it's not as if we have kept in constant contact or anything. I've bumped into him



at readings and parties over the years."

Nevertheless, Blanco agreed to present the keynote speech at this year's conference, set for Nov. 7-10. Joining him will be guest speaker Darin Strauss, whose award-winning memoir, "Half a Life," was chosen for the 2013-14 One Book, One Campus reading project at FGCU. Two dozen other writers of varied genres and media also will take part.

DeMarchi places Blanco in the company of iconic literary lions such as Wordsworth, Dickinson and Frost, as well as more contemporary American poets. As a Cuban-American civil-engineer-turned-poet who happens to be gay, he explores universal themes of cultural identity and assimilation.

"His poems are at once both incredibly complex and incredibly accessible," DeMarchi says. "Richard captures as well as anyone the complex American experience of being both an insider and outsider, of honoring your heritage while embracing a new identity . . . How things in our culture are constantly changing and evolving, and that individuals are the agents of that change and evolution. That's one of the many things that draws me to his work. Plus he's funny as hell."

- Drew Sterwald

## ARTS CALENDAR

8/28-11/6 ONGOING

**Library exhibit features photojournalist's works**  
Florida Gulf Coast University's Library Archives and Special Collections has its first exhibit on display. It features the works of award-winning NBC photojournalist Charles A. Ray. The exhibit provides a photo-timeline of Ray's career; beginning as a budding 23-year-old photographer in 1954, and extending through his personal photography later in life.

"We hope to show people who he was behind the camera and what he saw," said Vincent Barraza, an intern at FGCU who is earning his master's degree in museum studies from the Lorenzo de' Medici - The Italian International Institute in Florence, Italy.

The exhibit takes place in the Archive Center on the third floor of the FGCU Library from Aug. 28 through Nov. 6.

9/7 SATURDAY

**7th Annual 24-Hour Festival**

**8 p.m.**, public performance and screening of winners. Students have 24 hours to create original works of visual and performance art based on a list of predetermined themes and characters. TheatreLab, Arts Complex, FGCU campus.

9/21 SATURDAY

**"Films4Peace"**

**10 a.m.-4 p.m.**, film festival curated by Puma Creative Director Mark Coetzee. Main Gallery, Arts Complex, FGCU campus.

10/11 FRIDAY

**String Orchestra Concert**

**7:30 p.m.**, U. Tobe Recital Hall, Bower School of Music, FGCU campus.

10/19 SATURDAY

**Choir Concert**

**7:30 p.m.**, U. Tobe Recital Hall, Bower School of Music FGCU campus.

10/25 FRIDAY

**Wind Orchestra/Symphonic Band Eagle**

**Family Weekend Concert**

**7:30 p.m.**, Holmes Hall plaza, FGCU campus.

11/7 THURSDAY

**"Erwin Eisch: Kristallnacht"**

**5 p.m.**, gallery talk; reception **6-8 p.m.**, Main Gallery, Arts Complex, FGCU campus. Collaboration with Littleton Studios and the Naples Holocaust Museum. Runs through 11/21.

### FYI

**What:** Sanibel Island Writers Conference

**When:** Nov. 7-10

**Where:** BIG Arts and Sanibel Island Public Library

**Details:** [www.fgcu.edu/SIWC](http://www.fgcu.edu/SIWC)



## [ MEN'S BASKETBALL ]

### A great head start

FGCU lands Joe Dooley, one of college basketball's premier assistant coaches, to keep the Eagles soaring.

**F**GCU'S ATHLETICS DIRECTOR REALIZED YOU JUST CAN'T BUY THE PUBLICITY THAT two NCAA tournament wins on top of the Atlantic Sun Conference title would bring, especially when your school becomes college basketball's postseason feel-good story and you bedazzle with so much flash and flair that you are dubbed "Dunk City."

The key for Ken Kavanagh was to hit while

the proverbial iron was hot, capitalize before the newborn FGCU Nation – buoyed by the boost Dunk City brought to students, staff, alumni, Southwest Florida and a worldwide basketball audience that embraced the smiling, soaring, slamming Eagles – had time to deflate from Coach Andy Enfield's sudden departure to the University of Southern California.

Kavanagh, acting swiftly, reached out to a handful of candidates. Although he said

this was his hire, Kavanagh wanted FGCU President Wilson G. Bradshaw involved in the interview process for two reasons. "No one is a better representative, a better salesman for our university, than he is," Kavanagh said. "And the coach you're interviewing knows up front that the university president is supportive of your direction."

The AD said he really couldn't have gone wrong with any of his finalists. But after their meeting at a Tampa resort, Joe Dooley – a

“ I had an idea what (the campus) was like from pictures on the Internet, but the way they described the school, the facilities, the area, the growth potential ... I knew it was going to be a great place to be.”

- JOE DOOLEY, FGCU MEN'S BASKETBALL HEAD COACH

47-year-old, Irish-Catholic Jersey boy whose basketball journey most recently led him to a decade in the Kansas heartland of college hoops – emerged as Kavanagh's man.

While USC was wise to snag Enfield, arguably college basketball's hottest young coaching talent, FGCU was perhaps wiser to snag Dooley, arguably the sport's hottest coaching talent who didn't have the word "head" before his title. Kavanagh got him with a five-year, \$1.125-million base deal that amounts to a \$75,000-per-year pay cut for the longtime KU assistant.

"I wanted someone who had head coaching experience, and I wanted someone who had learned the game around winning programs," Kavanagh said. "Joe has been around success going back to high school at St. Benedict's in New Jersey," the nationally prominent Catholic prep school Dooley left with a then-school-record 1,140 career points.

"The most telling thing to me, though, is that he got caught up in an AD switch at East Carolina and lost his job, but a few years later, they ... tried to get Joe back," Kavanagh said. "You don't ever hear about a school firing a coach then trying to hire him back. That says something about the man."

It also says something about Bradshaw and Kavanagh that Dooley accepted their offer – and the big pay cut – university sight unseen.

"I had an idea what [the campus] was like from pictures on the Internet, but the way they described the school, the facilities, the area, the growth potential ... I knew it was going to be a great place to be," Dooley said.

Dooley looks, walks and talks the part of basketball coach exceedingly well – tall, slender, slicked-back hair, fair skin that's going to require plenty of sunblock and an enthusiastic, West Orange, N.J.-honed accent unaffected by 10 years in Jayhawk country. But there's a lot more to this unordinary Joe than gym rat.

He's as comfortable discussing author John Grisham as coaching legend John Wooden, declaring voracious reading as his only real hobby while nodding to his latest read-in-progress, a hardbound copy of

Grisham's legal thriller "The Litigators" in a corner of his office. Along with the discipline required of a competitive athlete, Dooley's work ethic was formed by part-time jobs in construction and the like through high school and his years at George Washington University, where the former basketball team captain was on the school's painting crew as part of a work-study program. "Best job I ever had that wasn't related to basketball," Dooley said. "We had a blast."

Most revealing about Dooley, though, is how his eyes light up like he just hit a game-winning shot when talk turns to his family: Tanya, his wife of 20 years whom he met during his first job as an assistant at South Carolina, where she was a law student and her father was chairman of the physics and astronomy department; and Max, their 10-year-old son, who has grown up in Kansas.

"It's going to be a big adjustment for him," Dooley said. "He's getting pulled away from the only life he's ever known."

Indeed, spending 10 years at the same school is rather unusual for an assistant coach, but then being a Jayhawk assistant basketball coach isn't your typical No. 2 job. As a recruiter and right-hand man to Kansas head coach Bill Self at a university where basketball falls somewhere among God, family and country, and surely not at the end of that list, Dooley has more than a taste of college basketball at its highest stakes. Failure to win conference titles, get NCAA bids and earn the faithful frequent-flier miles with regional tournament runs deep into March can be career-threatening. That pressure also comes with the added price of routinely losing underclassmen to the NBA Draft, sometimes starting almost from scratch each recruiting year.

But running with the NCAA big dogs also can be career-boosting, as it has been for Dooley, who at Kansas helped orchestrate 300 wins, a slew of Big 12 titles and a 2008 national championship among six Sweet 16, five Elite Eight and two Final Four appearances.

Dooley embraces all of it: the pressure,

the expectations and even the academic record by which all college athletics programs increasingly are being measured. "In all the years I coached at Kansas, we only had one senior who didn't earn a degree," said Dooley, who'll try to top that classroom record at FGCU with an academic emphasis that will include one-on-one tutoring.

"I don't believe in study hall," Dooley said. "You end up with a bunch of guys talking and goofing off."

One gets the impression that "goofing off" isn't happening in practices or games, either. Although he earned a bachelor's degree in speech at George Washington, don't expect any, as Dooley put it, "win-one-for-the-Gipper speeches." He's all business: direct and straightforward, much like the guys in his favorite movie, the mob classic "Goodfellas," albeit certainly without their fondness for bloody violence and four-letter words.

"You don't need any motivation if you're prepared, and we will be prepared. We will be consistent," he said of an FGCU team that returns four of its top five scorers and adds at least two transfers from top Division I schools in trying to build on last season's thrilling 7-1 finish and 26-11 overall record.

As Dooley sees it, that preparation and consistency don't necessarily include any implied obligation to play with the funk of Dunk City, even though he comes from a Kansas program that traditionally runs an up-tempo style.

No Dunk City? Say it ain't so, Joe.

"We'd all like to play that kind of ball, but you have to do what it takes to win," Dooley said. "The only reason Dunk City happened was because the team was successful ... without the wins, there is no Dunk City. I think our fans would rather see us win in the 50s than lose a high-scoring game."

Of course, on those nights when the pace is fast, all goes right and conditions are perfect for that crowd-pleasing jam-and-slam time, it never hurts to dunk with an extraordinary cup of Joe.

– Keith Gibson

## FGCU Athletics finishes memorable year of competition

**C**LEARLY, THE FGCU ATHLETICS TEAMS WERE ON A ROLL IN THE PAST year. The university swept the Atlantic Sun Conference All-Sports races, racking up more points than its conference competitors. Athletics Director Ken Kavanagh was named Under Armour Director of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics. Seven FGCU baseball players were claimed by Major League Baseball teams in the June draft.

And, of course, FGCU men's basketball captivated the nation. (See pullout in the center of the magazine.)

### [ WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ]

The women's team had an impressive 27-7 (18-0 A-Sun) season, claimed the NCAA Division I record for three-pointers in a single game (22) and won the program's third straight A-Sun regular season title. That win earned the team a spot in a Division I postseason tournament for the sixth straight year.

It was also the first school to go undefeated in A-Sun play in back-to-back seasons.

Sarah Hansen picked up a string of awards, including MVP, College Sports Madness and A-Sun Player of the Year awards and A-Sun Scholar-Athlete of the Year, amassing more than 1,400 points and 600 rebounds so far in her college basketball career. Only Adrienne McNally (2006-10) recorded that many points. With another year of eligibility, Hansen is destined to set new records.

The team won the season conference crown for the fourth time, fell to Stetson in the A-Sun championship, but earned a spot (its fifth automatic bid) in the Women's National Invitational Tour



competition, where the team lost to Winthrop in the first round.

Nonetheless, the team finished the season ranked in the nation's top 10 in five categories and head coach Karl Smesko was named 2013 College Sports Madness A-Sun and Mid-Major Coach of the Year.

### [ MEN'S BASKETBALL ]

There can hardly be anything left to say about the team's magical – and well publicized – run to the Sweet 16.

The men won 14 of their last 17 season games to finish with a program Division I record 26 wins (26-11). With a 13-5 A-Sun record in regular season play, the team earned the No. 2 seed in the conference postseason tournament and beat Stetson to win a spot in the NCAA Tournament in just its second year of eligibility.

The sand volleyball team heads into its third season of play.

As the No. 15 seed, the team soundly beat No. 2 seed Georgetown then went on to defeat No. 7 seed San Diego State, becoming the first No. 15 seed to ever qualify for the Sweet 16. Smitten by the team's high-flying, energetic game, national media flocked to campus, following the Dunk City team's every move.

Although the team fell to the University of Florida in the South Region semifinals, played at the massive Dallas Cowboys Stadium, its spectacular journey has won the program countless fans and brought FGCU invaluable publicity across the nation.

### [ BASEBALL ]

Six seniors and two standout junior pitchers carried the FGCU baseball team to

one of its best seasons in program history.

The Eagles finished second in the A-Sun regular season (37-20) and earned the No. 2 seed in the 2013 postseason tournament, only to see their hopes for an NCAA tournament berth dashed by losses to Kennesaw State (3-1) and Lipscomb (3-2) in the double-elimination A-Sun Championship.

Nonetheless, FGCU hasn't been this good since a hard-throwing lefthander by the name of Chris Sale was on the mound. Sale, who played for the Eagles in 2010, is now a pitcher for the Chicago White Sox and was the winning pitcher to play in the MLB All-Star Game.

Seniors Mike Reeves, Tito Mendoza, Dane Wisneski, Brooks Beisner, R.J. Brown and Richie Erath were difference makers all season.

"This senior class has been amazing to work with, both personally and on the field," said FGCU baseball coach Dave Tollett, whose team had a program-record 41 wins in 2006, in its second-to-last of five seasons in Division II.

FGCU junior right-handers Ricky Knapp and Harrison Cooney have distinguished themselves, too. Named the A-Sun Preseason Pitcher of the Year, Knapp won nine of his first 11 games. Knapp was one of three Eagles who were named to the 2013 A-Sun All-Conference first team. Juniors Brandon Bednar and Sean Dwyer were also named to the prestigious team.

FGCU made good on early buzz that it would rank among the top schools in the nation recruited in the 2013 Major League Baseball draft.

Seven Eagles were snapped up in June, tying FGCU for the fourth-highest number of draftees: Cooney, Los Angeles Angels; Bednar, San Francisco Giants; Knapp, New York Mets; Dwyer, Colorado Rockies; Brandon Bixler,

**Senior runner Argeo Cruz set a program-best time at the Greater Louisville Classic last season.**

Minnesota Twins; Reeves, Toronto Blue Jays; Kyle Buchanan, New York Yankees.

## [ SAND VOLLEYBALL ]

FGCU sand volleyball coach Dave Nichols expects his sport to become an NCAA-sanctioned, varsity sport in 2015, and when that happens the Eagles will be ready.

FGCU, which has been playing sand for two years, was one of five A-Sun Conference teams playing last season. The Eagles fell to No. 3 seed Jacksonville on the final day of the A-Sun Conference Championships. FGCU finished the season with a 5-10 overall record.

"The level of play this year versus last year was really big," Nichols said. "It's really neat to see that improvement. The kids enjoy it. It's a great environment. It's like a rock-and-roll vibe. And sand is really beneficial to the indoor game."

The Eagles are one of 30 schools that played sand volleyball last season. Nichols expects 40 teams to play next season. According to NCAA laws, an emerging sport needs to have 40 teams for two

consecutive years to become sanctioned.

"I really think the NCAA will have official sand volleyball championships in 2015," Nichols said. "There are five teams in the A-Sun, but some schools have sand-only teams. It's great to see the growth of the sport."

## [ CROSS COUNTRY ]

The FGCU men's and women's cross country teams look primed to have strong fall seasons.

The men are ranked as the third-best cross country only school in NCAA Division I. The men are coming off one of their best seasons culminated by a 20th-place finish at the 2012 NCAA South Regionals.

Seniors Argeo Cruz and Chris Rudloff are expected to take the team to a new level this fall. Cruz set a program-best time of 25 minutes, 20.64 seconds at the Greater Louisville Classic last season. Rudloff set the second fastest time in program history with 25 minutes, 28.98 seconds at the 2012 A-Sun championships.

Senior Kelly Perzanowski is expected to spearhead the women. Perzanowski ran a school-record time of 22 minutes, 2.6 seconds in the 6K at the 2012 NCAA Division I Cross Country South Regionals.

## [ SOCCER ]

A team loaded with freshmen and sophomores pushed the nationally ranked South Florida Bulls to the brink before losing in the NCAA postseason last year.

Now, the FGCU men's soccer team is ready to avenge that defeat.

FGCU coach Bob Butehorn believes last year's first-round NCAA Tournament defeat will only fuel his young team. With 20 freshmen and sophomores returning to the team, the Eagles feel confident they can challenge the nation's top programs this fall.



“Our goal is to be one of the elite programs. It’s going to take a lot of work,” Butehorn said. “We know that. But I think it’s coming together for us.”

The Eagles women’s team will also carry a positive outlook. Despite playing with 19 underclassmen, the Eagles won their third consecutive A-Sun Conference championship this year and advanced to the NCAA Tournament.

“Hats off to our girls, we had a lot of young players on the team and no one expected us to do anything last year,” said Jim Blankenship, the FGCU women’s coach.

The Eagle men will play without sophomore Daniel Stanese, who signed a professional contract to play in Germany’s top-tier Bundesliga for FC Nuremberg. He’s the second Eagle soccer player to sign a professional contract in the last two years.

## [ SWIMMING AND DIVING ]

Dominance.

That’s the only word that can describe the FGCU swimming and diving team the past five years.

This fall, the squad will be attempting to win an unprecedented sixth consecutive Coastal Collegiate Swimming Association championship. With junior Emma Svensson returning to the squad, the Eagles have an excellent chance at repeating.

The CCSA Swimmer of the Year, Svensson won the 50-free, 100-free and 100-back events, and was a member of the winning 200-medley relay and the 400-medley at the CCSA Championships. She qualified for the NCAA “B” cuts in the 50-free, 100-free and the 200-medley relay.

In addition to her swimming success, Svensson earned the Elite 89 award at the 2013

NCAA Tournament. The award goes to an NCAA Tournament qualifying swimmer or diver who has the best grade-point average. Svensson had a 4.0 grade-point average.



Emma Svensson

## [ TENNIS ]

The FGCU women’s and men’s tennis teams left an indelible impression on



their opponents last season, even without bringing home a championship.

With just one senior on the squad, the women posted 11 match victories and advanced to the A-Sun championship semifinals, where they lost to Stetson. The women were led by All-Freshman selections Johanna Sterkel, Elizabeth Means and Sarah Means. The Means sisters played on one of FGCU’s doubles teams.

“We are a young team with one senior and coming off our first winning season,” head coach Jennifer Gabou said. “This team has a bright future if they continue to learn.”

The men, meanwhile, captured their first-ever A-Sun postseason victory. The men (11-11 overall) also set a program Division I record for most wins in a season. The men were led by sophomore All-Tournament selection Jordi Vives.

## [ GOLF ]

A fleet of precocious golfers stands ready to take FGCU to new heights this fall.

Sophomore Edward Figueroa will lead the men’s golf team.

Figueroa posted four top-10 performances last season en route to being named the A-Sun Conference Freshman of the Year. Figueroa nearly advanced to the 2013 NCAA Championships, finishing four strokes shy of qualifying at a Tallahassee regional.

Men’s tennis, led by sophomore Jordi Vives, captured its first-ever A-Sun postseason victory. The men (11-11 overall) also set a program Division I record for most wins in a season.

“ They stand for all that is right with college athletes. They’re dedicated students, hard working on the practice court and in the weight room, terrific teammates, and were extremely clutch for us all year long.”

- DAVE NICHOLS, WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL COACH,  
TALKING ABOUT TWO RETURNING PLAYERS

Figueroa finished with 16 birdies over the three-day regional, pushing his year total to 97 over 30 rounds played last season. The 97 birdies are the fourth-most in program history, while they helped lower his season scoring average to 72.8, good for eighth-best. He finished with 12 par or better rounds, which is also good for eighth in program single-season history.

Junior Georgia Price and redshirt sophomore Kristin Swindell will lead the women’s club. Both received postseason honors last spring. Price was named to the All-Conference second team squad while Swindell was a member of the All-Freshman team.

Price was named to the All-Conference second team after recording six top-20 finishes last season, highlighted by winning the 2012 JU Courtyard Classic in Jacksonville. At the 2013 Atlantic Sun Championship, Price placed 11th at the three-day event and was within the top four after the first two days of competition.

## [ SOFTBALL ]

A year after it became the first team in school history to win a Division-I NCAA Tournament game, the FGCU softball squad had visions of building on its success.

Injuries, however, got in the way.

FGCU ended its season with a 2-1 loss against top-seed North Florida in the 2013 Atlantic Sun Conference postseason tournament. The Eagles, who finished third in the A-Sun regular season, played without ace pitcher Shelby Morgan and standout catcher Chelsea Zgrabik for the last month of the season. Morgan tore her biceps and Zgrabik her ACL tendon in April.

“Our expectations after last season were very big and our players lived up to it,” coach Dave Deiros said. “We



Sophomore Edward Figueroa posted four top-10 performances last season en route to being named the A-Sun Conference Freshman of the Year.

improved in every category, but when you lose your best pitcher and you lose your best hitter with a month left in the season, it makes your margin for error a lot smaller.”

Morgan, who was responsible for half of the team’s wins and innings pitched, will be healthy this fall. Zgrabik should return to the lineup in January, Deiros said.

The injuries allowed senior pitchers Jackie Owen and Amanda Josie to garner experience. Owen became FGCU’s No. 1 pitcher after Morgan got injured and helped lead the team to an

11-4 record in her first 15 games. The performance gives FGCU hope for the future.

“We only lost two starters to graduation and our entire pitching staff returns this year,” Deiros said. “We should be as good or better this year.”

## [ VOLLEYBALL ]

With eight returning players from the 2012-13 juggernaut squad, the FGCU volleyball team could have its best chance at qualifying for the NCAA Tournament for the first time.

FGCU, which captured the regular-season A-Sun Conference championship last year but failed to reach the NCAA Tournament, returns several three-year starters. Coach Dave Nichols also brought in a stellar three-member freshmen recruiting class. The Eagles will also be buoyed by two international transfers, including a 6-foot-3 power-hitting German.

“We feel we will be more talented and more experienced this year,” Nichols said. “It’s a veteran group. They won conference last year. We didn’t advance to the NCAA Tournament and that’s a huge goal. We feel if we had a do-over on that match, we would win.”

FGCU lost to North Florida in the A-Sun Tournament semifinals. The defeat ended a season that saw the Eagles tie the program’s Division-I record with 15 straight wins, including 14 straight in the A-Sun.

The 2013 A-Sun All-Conference first-team selections Jill Hopper, a junior, and Kaitlin Holm, a senior, will be back to spearhead the Eagles this fall.

“They stand for all that is right with college athletes,” Nichols said. “They’re dedicated students, hard working on the practice court and in the weight room, terrific teammates, and were extremely clutch for us all year long.”

– Compiled by Chris Duncan



## [ SPORTS PROFILE ]

## Field of dreams

Former FGCU baseball player hopes to score spot as MLB umpire.

**D**EREK MOLLICA IS LIKE MANY OF US WHO WRESTLE DAILY WITH THE LITTLE DECISIONS.

“It takes me forever to pick out a pair of shoes,” admitted the 29-year-old Mollica, who graduated from FGCU in 2007 with a marketing degree.

In his line of work, though, Mollica can’t be so wishy-washy as to waver between oxfords and cross-trainers. As a professional baseball umpire, this season in the Double-A Southern League, he’s paid to make fraction-of-an-inch decisions in a split second, bang-bang

calls that can go one way or the other by a fraction of an inch.

Ball or strike.

Fair or foul.

Safe or out.

He gets it right probably 99 times out of 100. But what happens when Mollica gets that one wrong, as even the best umpires occasionally do, and he knows it? “What’s done is done,” he said.

But when challenged by a manager or player, Mollica says he’s approachable.

“If you’re honest with them and say, ‘Hey, I know I might have missed that one ... sorry, but I can’t take it back,’

they usually respect that,” he said.

As for the loudmouth taunting him from the stands? “I’m used to getting booed by 7,000 people,” Mollica said with a laugh.

Mollica hopes eventually to get booed by 7,000 people times five in major league ballparks as he tries to climb the final two steps of an umpiring ladder that began in 2008 at the Wendelstedt Umpire School in Daytona Beach. His first season began in the rookie Gulf Coast League, and Mollica quickly moved through the low Single-A New York-Penn and South Atlantic leagues to a year in the high-A Florida State League.

This is Mollica's second season in Double-A, where he's paid near the top of the \$2,300-\$2,700 monthly salary range as chief of a three-man crew that rolls through the Deep South in a league-furnished van for a schedule that reads like the lyrics to a Johnny Cash song. His recent tour of five-night stands started in Chattanooga, Tenn., moved on to Mobile, Ala., then back to Tennessee for stops in Jackson and again in Chattanooga, which Mollica calls "home" these days, for lack of a more permanent address.

Along the way, he'll be judged by evaluators who decide if Mollica moves on to Triple-A, where he'd get a slight pay raise and, more importantly, reach the threshold of The Dream, Plan B: making the majors as an ump.

Mollica got closer than most to realizing The Dream, Plan A, playing primarily second base for FGCU in 2004-07. Mollica's double-play partner his final two seasons was pitcher and shortstop Casey Coleman, now in the Chicago Cubs organization. "I haven't talked to Casey in a while, but he's a great guy," Mollica said.

**Derek Mollica officiates at a Southern League game in Chattanooga.**

For Mollica, the FGCU experience was mostly about playing ball. "We were a bunch of guys who lived baseball day and night," he said.

Mollica had his best season as a senior in 2007, batting .344 with four homers, 47 runs batted in and a solid .942 fielding percentage. He hoped the numbers would be enough to continue pursuit of The Dream, Plan A.

When "I didn't get drafted by a major league team, I realized it was time to move on," Mollica said.

And so he's been moving from league to league, town to town, motel to motel ever since. It's all umpiring all the time for Mollica; in the off-season, he works for Perfect Game, an Arizona-based organization that stages showcase tournaments in which college coaches and professional scouts can evaluate young talent.

Assuming he gets promoted to Triple-A next season, Mollica figures he has three years to reach the majors or, as he puts it, "the dream's over."

He doesn't even want to think about Plan C, at least for now. That would be the toughest call Derek Mollica hopes he never has to make.

— Keith Gibson

## FAIR OR FOUL?

We asked FGCU graduate Derek Mollica to put his umpiring skills to use and make the call – fair or foul – on these three pitches:

**Pinnacle:** If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't change a thing about my experience at FGCU.

**DM:** "Fair. I had a fabulous time at FGCU. Some of my closest friends today are my former baseball teammates. I still love going back to see everyone."

**Pinnacle:** Now that the men's basketball team has brought national notoriety to FGCU, the school will become as well-known for athletics as for academics.

**DM:** "Foul. Basketball team? I thought the night our baseball team beat Notre Dame at a packed Swanson Stadium in 2007 put FGCU athletics on the map ... or at least the map of Florida!"

**Pinnacle:** One day, hopefully in the major leagues, you get behind the plate to call a game and you see your former FGCU double-play partner, teammate and friend, Casey Coleman, on the mound. On borderline pitches that could go either way, he'll get the strike calls.

**DM:** "Foul. There's no borderline in an MLB game. If Casey hits the black (edge of the plate), 'Strike!' If he misses, 'Strike!' Only kidding ... it's a ball. I don't want anyone to ever question my integrity. It's the single most important quality an umpire should have." ■



# PHILANTHROPY

"The results ... are always beyond calculation"

## FGCU names suite in honor of longtime supporters

**G**EORGE AND REBECCA FOGG HAVE BEEN enthusiastic supporters of Florida Gulf Coast University for more than a decade. This spring, their names became inextricably linked with the institution with the dedication of the Rebecca and George Fogg Lakeview Suite in FGCU's Cohen Center.

Friends and family gathered for the festive ceremony naming the second-floor suite, which overlooks a lake and gets frequent use for meetings, seminars and intimate luncheons, just like the one held for the Fogs.

The couple created a deferred gift that brings their support of the university to more than \$1 million.

It was Rebecca Fogg who first pledged her estate to the university more than a decade ago.

After speaking with then-President William C. Merwin, "this is where all my money went," she said of FGCU.

Her husband thought it was a great idea so he followed suit, after providing for his three children.

Since then, the Fogs have collectively endowed scholarships, joined the President's Society and created charitable gift annuities in addition to their deferred gifts. George Fogg, a landscape architect, has donated his expertise to FGCU, designing landscaping for Lutgert Hall and the athletic complex as well as developing the university's approved plant list of native species for future landscaping projects. As season ticket holders, the Fogs also support the



George and Rebecca Fogg

**“It is really a pleasure for Rebecca and me to have a chance to enjoy something being named after us and to share it with our friends and the university. FGCU has become our second family. Everybody here has treated us wonderfully.”**

— George Fogg

university's basketball program, and can be seen regularly cheering on the Eagles from their front-row seats.

“It is really a pleasure for Rebecca and me to have a chance to enjoy something being named after us and to share it with our friends and the university,” George Fogg said. “FGCU has become our second family. Everybody here has treated us wonderfully.”

His daughter, Linda Parrish, remarked during the reception, “When I was a teen, he would dream of being part of a university. This is a perfect spot for him with all the landscaping and water.”

President Wilson G. Bradshaw said of the couple, “Your generosity will allow us to support students forever. Our students will know of your good works and great generosity. Thank you for supporting them in perpetuity.”

— Karen Feldman

“Donating to local colleges has been a way for us to give back to the community, as it enriches campus programs and exposes students and faculty to a broader range of artists and works.”

- DERAN SOOVAJIAN,

DONATED ARTWORK COLLECTION TO FGCU



## Soovajian art collection gift valued at \$500,000

**E**XOTIC ORCHIDS FROM COLOMBIAN CLOUD FORESTS ARE RENDERED in finely detailed botanical illustrations. Parisian street scenes are sketched out in evocative ink and wash. Athletes and race horses caught in action come splashing to life through kinetic, color-saturated brushstrokes on paper.

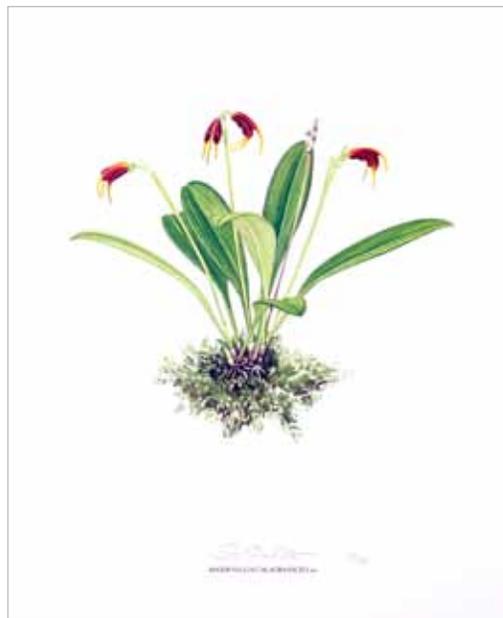
The artworks that Deran and Karen Soovajian donated to FGCU explore a seemingly boundless spectrum of subject matter as well as a wide range of artistic styles and media. Their gift this spring of 202 works on paper valued at \$296,000 completed a two-part donation of 470 works with a retail value of \$503,875.



Deran Soovajian

The Soovajians, who split their time between Naples and Beacon, N.Y., have been donating portions of their collection to higher-education institutions for several years.

“Karen and I have been collecting art



Landscapes and botanical prints are among the works donated by Deran and Karen Soovajian.

for over 20 years,” Deran Soovajian said. “Donating to local colleges has been a way for us to give back to the community, as it enriches campus programs and exposes students and faculty to a broader range of artists and works.”

Their own interest in art was kindled by their travels around the world and experiences seeing others’ collections, he said. Over the years, they purchased original lithographs, color serigraphs and some signed and numbered print series.

The collection will be used for educational purposes for a minimum of three years; duplicates may be used for display. If pieces are sold after that time, proceeds will benefit the museum studies program.

The gift benefits FGCU in several ways, according to Interim Art Gallery Director Anica Sturdivant.

“Multiples of prints can provide museum studies students, or professional practices students, the same print for training on establishing condition reports, matting and framing, even conservation,” she said. “Prints can be selected for display on campus. Students can choose from the collection to create an exhibition based upon a theme they see in the assemblage of works.”

— Drew Sterwald

## PHILANTHROPY

(continued from previous page)



Cecile and David Wang

## Wangs create Immokalee Fund to benefit First Generation students

ONE OF FGCU'S EARLY SUPPORTERS HAS MADE A GIFT THAT WILL ENABLE many future students to achieve their families' dreams of higher education and better lives.

David I.J. Wang, and his wife, Cecile Liston Wang, donated \$500,000 to the FGCU Foundation to create The Immokalee Fund, a quasi-endowment that will provide scholarships through the First Generation program for students who aim to become the first in their families to earn college degrees. Preference will be given to students from Immokalee.

The Wangs' generous gift will be matched by the State of Florida First Generation Scholarship Fund.

"Such a magnanimous gift will have a ripple effect on our scholarship program," said President Wilson G. Bradshaw. "This is a gift that will change lives, better the community and society, and encourage others to reflect on their own philanthropic philosophies and make decisions that will accomplish a greater good."

The Wangs, who live in Naples,

have previously given more than \$200,000 to an endowed scholarship fund and the First Generation program at FGCU. For 15 years, they have supported the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, a community-based organization fighting to improve wages and working conditions for farm laborers.

"This is the most deserving cause that I have been involved with. Just seeing the poverty in Immokalee tells me there's got to be some way for the new generation to do better than the old generation," David I.J. Wang said. "A scholarship fund gets an immediate return on investment."

Born in Beijing, China, Wang emigrated with his family after World War II and earned degrees in engineering from George Washington University and Georgia Tech. He retired in 2010 after a career as an executive in private equity investment and at International Paper Co. and Union Carbide Corp. He has served as a trustee of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights as well as the Southern Poverty Law Center. ■

## Southwest Florida Children's Charities supports music therapy

Helping children heal through the power of music is one of the goals of the Southwest Florida Children's Charities, which has pledged \$1 million over five years to help launch music therapy at Florida Gulf Coast University.

The organization recently presented a check for \$200,000, the second installment for the Southwest Florida Children's Charities Music Therapy Program Endowed Fund.

Music therapy courses, which will be taught within FGCU's Bower School of Music, will address a growing need for professionals in the field and a gap in educational opportunities as few universities offer degree programs for this in-demand profession.

"Studies have shown that music therapy helps premature babies," said Dr. Steve Machiz, founding chairman of the Southwest Florida Wine & Food Fest, the charities' signature fundraiser. "We're interested in doing whatever is possible to reduce their stress and increase their well being. Music therapy fits very nicely with our mission to help the children of Southwest Florida."

Research shows that music benefits people with autism and other neurological impairments. It also soothes the autonomic nervous system and helps allay anxiety and depression.

"We are grateful to the community for making the Southwest Florida Wine & Food Fest such a success, and to the Southwest Florida Children's Charities for so generously supporting FGCU's music therapy program," said FGCU President Wilson G. Bradshaw, who serves as a trustee of the organization along with his wife, Jo Anna. The couple co-hosted a vintner dinner this year with FGCU Foundation board member emeritus Jim Knupp and his wife, Lynn. "The continuing support by Southwest Florida Children's Charities in developing an FGCU music therapy program will greatly benefit children in the years to come."

The Southwest Florida Children's Charities has raised more than \$8.9 million for children's charities in the last five years. Its festival is sponsored by Northern Trust. ■



Steve and Ester Machiz, Elaine and Fred Hawkins

## Fort Myers couple pledge \$100,000 deferred gift

**D**R. AMAL AND BETTY DAS HAVE BEEN GENEROUS SUPPORTERS OF HIGHER education for many years in Southwest Florida and in the Midwest.

The Fort Myers couple established scholarships at Indiana University before moving to Florida. Since 1999, they have supported a variety of FGCU programs, including green building initiatives and First Generation Matching Grant Scholarships. In 2012, they established The Dr. and Mrs. Amal K. Das Endowed Scholarship Fund, which awards money for tuition and fees to undergraduate and graduate students in the College of Health Professions and Social Work.



Dr. Amal and Betty Das

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

In March, she and her husband surpassed their previous philanthropic contributions to FGCU by pledging one quarter of a charitable remainder trust, a deferred posthumous gift that is expected to total at least \$100,000. The funds will be used to meet the university’s greatest needs at the time of receipt.

“We want to help kids improve themselves,” says Amal Das, a retired physician. “If they have financial challenges, we don’t want that to prevent them from going to the university.” ■

## Meeting FGCU students inspires Naples couple to give again

**J**OHAN AND GEORGIA DALLEPEZZE UNDERSTAND THAT ACCESS TO education can change lives. That is what motivated them to establish a scholarship at Florida Gulf Coast University.

“Georgia and I are big supporters of education. We think it’s an important issue for our country, for everyone,” says John DallePezze, who was a first-generation student who earned an engineering degree and an MBA, then went on to become a successful businessman before retiring.

The couple, who live in Naples, contributed \$30,000 to create the DallePezze Scholarship, which will award a minimum of \$6,000 a year to FGCU students. They had previously donated to FGCU and, as a result, were invited to the annual President’s

Scholarship Luncheon at which donors and scholarship recipients get to know one another. Their experience at the event made them want

to give more.

“We had the good fortune of sitting with half a dozen students and came away very impressed,” John DallePezze said.

The scholarship may be awarded to any degree-seeking student that university officials deem deserving, he said. He particularly likes the First Generation Scholarship program, through which the state matches gifts from individuals, doubling the amount available for students who are the first in their families to attend college.

“The DellaPezze Scholarship is custom-designed to test the viability of a new fund type at the Foundation in hopes of maximizing donor dollars and scholarships to students,” says Judie Cassidy, senior director of Advancement. ■



Georgia and John DallePezze

## NCEF helps at-risk youngsters prepare for academic success

**C**HILDREN WHO ENTER SCHOOL WITHOUT A FIRM GRASP OF ENGLISH stand the chance of falling behind from the very start. Helping at-risk youngsters expand their grasp of the language – both in written and verbal form – is the aim of the Early Literacy and Learning Model and Wings on Words.

The Naples Children and Education Foundation supports the programs through funds raised at the annual Naples Winter Wine Festival. The programs help more than 1,200 pre-kindergarten pupils in 70 Collier County classrooms who come from impoverished homes, particularly those in which English is not the primary spoken language.

The Early Literacy and Learning Model and Wings on Words help children improve their reading and communication skills, furnishing classrooms with engaging materials for children and literacy coaches who help pre-K teachers develop lesson plans and student activities.

As it has in previous years, the NCEF donated \$350,000 this year to enable the programs to enrich the education of children in sites such as the Guadalupe Center, Redlands Christian Migrant Association and Head Start classrooms throughout Naples and Immokalee.

Assessment tests show the programs help teachers

more effectively teach these critical skills, with at least 95 percent of the children who participate improving their English vocabulary skills.

Debby Shaver, ELLM project director, says participating children take assessment tests at the start and end of the academic year to gauge their progress.

“Some 4-year-olds come in with no English at all and score less than an average 2-year-old on the first test,” Shaver says. “By the end of the year, we can often help them gain two years’ growth so that they may be just a few months behind rather than 2 ½ years behind [their peers] when they start kindergarten.”

That makes a huge difference in their chances for success.

“Research clearly shows we have to begin with children at a young age to help them really grasp literacy and be ready to start kindergarten,”

says Pat Riley, executive director of Southwest Florida’s Alliance of Educational Leaders, who directs the programs on behalf of the FGCU Foundation, which administers the funds.

“Children, especially those from poverty, are often behind their counterparts from affluent backgrounds in regard to how many words they hear and the kind of feedback they get. If they aren’t ready to learn, they are likely to become part of that gap that keeps getting wider as the years go on.” ■



## Estero Bay Chevrolet expands support for university

**E**STERO BAY CHEVROLET, LONG A GENEROUS SUPPORTER OF FLORIDA Gulf Coast University’s athletics program, has expanded its philanthropy. Owners Charles Winton and Pat Dennison have created an endowed scholarship and signed on as sponsors of the university’s two



Charles Winton



Pat Dennison

signature events, the President’s Celebration and the Founder’s Cup Golf Tournament.

They have pledged \$30,000 to create the Estero Bay Chevrolet Scholarship Endowed Fund, which will be awarded in perpetuity to students who come from the Dunbar community in Fort Myers, desire to live on campus and maintain a 2.5 or better grade point average.

“We believe in FGCU and want to give back,” says Winton, who chairs the FGCU Foundation board. “We have a passion for investing in young people.”

Winton and Dennison have also pledged to support the 2014 President’s Celebration, and the 2013 and 2014 Founder’s Cup Golf Tournaments, which both raise money for critically needed scholarships.

“Estero Bay Chevrolet has been a good friend to FGCU since its inception,” says FGCU President Wilson G. Bradshaw. “Creating scholarships for students who might otherwise not attend college, and encouraging them to live on campus to enjoy the full collegiate experience, will prove life-changing for countless young people. FGCU is grateful to Charles Winton and Pat Dennison for recognizing the need and answering the call.” ■

“ We believe in FGCU and want to give back. We have a passion for investing in young people.”  
 - CHARLES WINTON, CO-OWNER, ESTERO BAY CHEVROLET AND FGCU FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIRPERSON

## Ben Hill Griffin, III establishes football scholarship fund



Ben Hill Griffin, III

**A**LTHOUGH BASKETBALL HAS BEEN THE ATHLETIC DARLING AT FLORIDA Gulf Coast University of late, longtime benefactor and FGCU Foundation board member Ben Hill Griffin, III sees football in the university's future.

To help prepare for that day, Griffin donated \$25,000 to establish the Ben Hill Griffin Scholarship Endowed Fund. Half of the scholarship will be awarded to student-athletes who play football once the university launches a program. The other half will be awarded to students enrolled in the Lutgert College of Business.

He hopes other people will contribute to help fund football scholarships that

will be needed in the future when FGCU launches a team.

“Athletic scholarships are the backbone of a university program,” he says. “I hope the fund will continue to grow until such time as we can award the first football scholarship.”

Football is a Griffin family tradition. The University of Florida's football stadium was built with funds from Griffin's father and is named for him.

Ben Hill Griffin, III “has always been there, leading the charge for Florida Gulf Coast University,” says President Wilson G. Bradshaw. Because of him “we already have an accomplished intercollegiate athletics program that is breaking records in every sport and we applaud his vision and support for the future.” ■

## Professor of nursing makes deferred gift to benefit nursing students

**W**HEN JO STECHER'S BIRTHDAY ROLLED AROUND EARLIER THIS year, she invited her friends to join her to celebrate. But in lieu of gifts, she asked that they make a donation to a scholarship for nursing students instead.

Now she's expanding her own support of the university beyond the Jo Stecher Nursing Scholarship. She recently made a deferred gift bequeathing the assets of her life insurance policy to the university when she passes. It has a minimum value of \$150,000 and will establish the Dr. Jo Stecher Scholarship Endowed Fund.

In addition to being a donor, Stecher is also an assistant professor in the FGCU School of Nursing, focusing on gerontology and end-of-life issues. She has designated that her scholarship be awarded to nursing students who hold a 3.75 GPA or higher.

“It's such a new and growing university,” Stecher said, “and the School of Nursing is young as well. I want to foster a commitment by students to give back as well as to excel in their profession. I feel very fortunate to be able to make this gift.”

Mitchell Cordova, dean of the College of Health Professions and Social Work, said, “Dr. Jo Stecher's commitment to the success of students in the School of Nursing has once again been confirmed through the tremendous scholarship endowment she has established at Florida Gulf Coast University. Dr. Stecher cares deeply about her students, challenging them on a daily basis to be the best that they can be. Her love and passion for the nursing profession and the School of Nursing at Florida Gulf Coast University is unparalleled and will always be remembered by all of the students, faculty and staff who have learned from her, worked with her, and who benefit from her scholarship.” ■



Jo Stecher and FGCU President Wilson G. Bradshaw

## Lund fund to support early childhood education

**I**N A GESTURE THAT DEMONSTRATES THEIR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING Florida Gulf Coast University's mission to ensure the quality of tomorrow's teachers, Tom and Carol Lund of Naples have created an endowed scholarship fund at FGCU.

Their gift of \$25,000 established the Lund Family Foundation Scholarship

Fund, which will assist students in the College of Education. Scholarships will be awarded to seniors majoring in early childhood education who make a commitment to teaching young children for at least one year for each year that they receive support.

By investing in better teachers, the fund ultimately benefits young children, who are our nation's greatest asset, said

Marcia Greene, dean of the College of Education.

"There is a plethora of evidence that quality early childhood programs are a cost-effective means of strengthening society," she said. "Children who participate tend to be more successful in later school and have better social, emotional, intellectual and physical development." ■

## Hospitality students toast donor of fine wines

**F**EW COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TASTE THE LIKES OF Chateau Latour, Chateau Figeac and Christian Moueix, but those in FGCU's Wine Merchandising Tasting and Technology course can say they have.

They have the opportunity to sample and study these high-end wines thanks to an anonymous benefactor who donated 14 cases valued at about \$15,000 to the School of Resort and Hospitality Management.

"She was downsizing her home, including her late husband's wine collection, and wanted it to benefit someone. She thought this would be a good way," says Ted Hudgins, the course instructor.

"A gift like this helps educate students in a way that wouldn't be possible otherwise," he says. "Many will go on to work in the food and beverage industry and, having tasted wines like these, they will be better equipped to develop wine lists and assist guests in selecting wines."

There's an advantage to the donor as well, says Hudgins, who is also a practicing tax attorney. When donating wine for educational purposes, the



FGCU's Wine Merchandising, Tasting and Technology class benefits from a wine donation.

donor enjoys a tax deduction on the appreciated value of the wine, rather than on the purchase price. So if the person purchased the wine for \$5,000 but it now

has a market value of \$25,000, the donor can take a tax deduction for the higher amount.

"It's a huge advantage tax-wise," he says, "and it allows our students to experience wines they might never have tasted otherwise." ■



## Scholarships help teens in Boys & Girls Clubs succeed in college

**W**HEN ADEBOLA ADIGUN WALKED ACROSS THE ALICO Arena stage last spring to receive his bachelor's degree in elementary education, he wasn't just another FGCU graduate to John and Donna Schubert of Captiva Island, who were watching in the audience.

Adigun was the third of their scholarship recipients over the years to complete a college education.

"Two of them are now working in the Lee County school system as teachers," John Schubert said.

Each year, the Sanibel-Captiva Trust/Schubert Scholarship supports a student at each class level. The Schuberts' recent gift of \$18,000 to the trust is just the latest in a long line of generous donations to provide



John Schubert, Adebola Adigun and Donna Schubert

financial assistance and encouragement to promising youth who have participated in the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lee County.

"We look at it as a way to provide young folks with more opportunities," Schubert said. "Often we find a young person who

is the first in their family to have a chance to go to college. It allows them to become role models in their own communities, so someone else might think, 'Hey, I can do that, too.'"

The trust's need-based scholarships support students who show the promise of academic success. Hearing about the Boys & Girls Clubs' efforts to help young people stay on a path to success inspired the Schuberts to reach out, and they hope others will, too.

"It got me thinking, there's a good opportunity to work with them and let kids know there's a chance for scholarships, and they should look at college as one of the possibilities," Schubert said. ■

## Environmental mission inspires Haffenreffers' support

**W**HEN PETER HAFFENREFFER AND MALLORY MARSHALL Haffenreffer began living seasonally on Sanibel Island, they looked around for organizations and causes to get involved with. As they grew to know the area and to learn about the natural environment, they became aware of Florida Gulf Coast University and its commitment to environmental and sustainability education.

They liked what they saw.

"The environment and education about the environment is, as far as I'm concerned, the biggest push of our age," Mallory Marshall Haffenreffer says. "Everyone at the university is interested in integrating the knowledge of their surroundings into all parts of education. The university has really made it a point to integrate ideas of personal responsibility into every student's life."

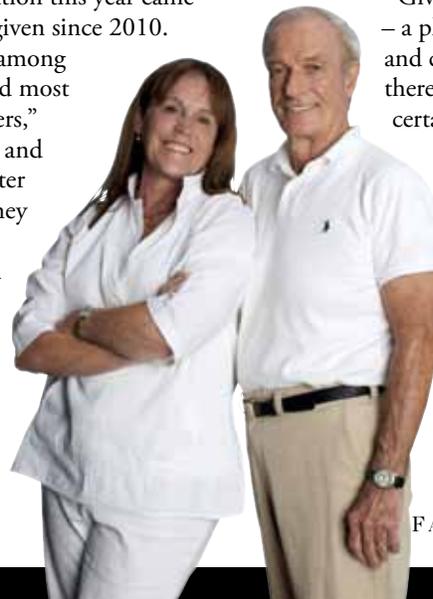
Soon, she put her extensive fundraising experience in Maine to work for FGCU's Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education (CESE). She and her husband host annual money-generating receptions at their home and contribute financially to support CESE programs and grants. Their \$12,000 donation this year came on top of \$30,000 given since 2010.

"They have been among our longest-term and most committed supporters," says CESE Director and FGCU Professor Peter Blaze Corcoran. "They are very thoughtful philanthropists, and I feel privileged to have their support."

Mallory Marshall Haffenreffer and Peter Haffenreffer

The Haffenreffers have extended their hospitality and networking skills to many a worthy cause in Maine. If all you can do is make crab cakes and get people to attend a party, it's still a worthy contribution, Mallory Marshall Haffenreffer insists.

"Giving to the university – a place where excitement and curiosity and passion is there every single day – you certainly get a lot more than you give," she says. "I want people coming down here to be aware of how much the university has to offer. I like to think part of the reason people move down to a place like this is that they care about it and want to be part of saving it." ■



## When it comes to art, donor sees bigger picture

**D**ONNE HUTCHESON BELIEVES IN ART FOR MUCH MORE THAN ART'S SAKE. "I love the arts, especially drawing," says the Bonita Springs resident and artist. "It improves eye-to-hand coordination. It's the foundation of right-brain activity. Those skills are being cut out [of school curricula] and putting kids out in the workforce incomplete."

To help students develop their artistic skills and creativity, Hutcheson donated \$10,000 to FGCU's fledgling printmaking program, which takes drawing to the next level.

"You have to have a foundation in drawing," says Hutcheson, an art major who has been taking classes at FGCU for 10 years.

"I'm never graduating," she says. "I'll be a senior for the next 30 years. FGCU is a great place. It's a fountain of youth. It's fun. I enjoy it and get to interact with the kids, who have so much energy."

She previously made a gift in memory of her late brother, John Dacey, which provides



FGCU art student Alexa Pavone pulling a print.

an annual award to a student artist who excels in painting, drawing or printmaking. Her recent gift builds on that one, helping expand the printmaking program, for which students first must develop drawing skills.

She hopes the gift will help students "take drawing in an unexpected direction, helping people become unique individuals who will contribute more to society."

Andy Owen, FGCU associate professor of art who teaches printmaking, says there's a lot of demand for the class, which was introduced in 2010.

"We have taken a non-toxic approach to printmaking, staying away from the solvents and acids traditionally used with printmaking methods," says Owen. "With the studio still in its early stages of development our efforts have been somewhat limited, leaving me feeling like a chef with a great oven and stove but lacking pots, pans and miscellaneous tools."

"Ms. Hutcheson's generous donation will provide support to the curriculum through the purchase of additional equipment while also creating interesting opportunities for our students. Her support will have a tremendous impact on the print studio and foster the creative efforts of printmaking students in the FGCU art program for years to come." ■

## Underwater adventurers create marine science scholarship

**K**IMBERLY AND KEN JOHNSON ARE AVID TRAVELERS AND DIVERS who have explored the waters' depths in locales such as Fiji, the Galapagos Islands, Palau and the Bahamas. In an effort to support the next generation of marine scientists, the Naples couple established the Kim and Ken Johnson Scholarship Fund, created with a pledge of \$10,000, to be awarded to undergraduate or graduate students majoring in marine studies or marine biology.

"We have never had a disappointing experience in our adventures," said Ken Johnson, adding that they have enjoyed seeing



Kimberly and Ken Johnson

a wealth of sea life and that "no matter how common or rare, each creature is special."

Kimberly Johnson, an FGCU Foundation board member, said, "We hope that this gift will encourage students to learn more about

the diverse marine life on our planet and to pursue a career expanding our knowledge and teaching others to appreciate the underwater world that only relatively few of us are able personally to observe."

Vice President for Advancement Chris Simoneau said the Johnsons' gift will benefit deserving marine science and marine studies students "who are working on many of today's critical environmental issues through academic programs and their applied learning opportunities, and are destined to become the next generation of environmental scientists, managers, policy makers and educators." ■

“ There are so many kids who can’t participate because they lack the funds. We wanted to help and think the university is doing a great job at assisting these students in getting the resources they need to change their lives.”

- CHARLES AND HELEN KETTEMAN, FGCU DONORS

## Sanibel couple establish endowed fund for aspiring STEM students

**C**HARLES AND HELEN KETTEMAN ARE FIRM BELIEVERS IN THE transformative power of education. The Sanibel couple recently donated \$10,000 to create an endowed scholarship to be awarded to students wishing to pursue degrees in STEM subjects.

The Charles H. and Helen M. Kettelman STEM Scholarship Endowed Fund will benefit students with financial need who are majoring in science, technology, engineering or math.

“I’ve got a science and tech background,” says Charles Kettelman. “I was interested in helping with STEM programs. My wife is interested in students who need financial help. There are so many kids who can’t participate because they lack the funds. We wanted to help and think the university is doing a great job at assisting these students in getting the resources they need to change their lives.”

Both of the Kettelmanns are actively involved in helping further the cause



Charles and Helen Kettelman

of education. Charles Kettelman serves on the FGCU Foundation board while Helen Kettelman writes children’s books and frequently reads to youngsters in schools.

“STEM education is vitally important and this gift helps make it accessible to students who might otherwise be unable to realize their dreams of a college education and successful career,” says Linda Lehtomaa, senior director of Advancement. “We are grateful to the Kettelmanns for their generous gift.” ■

### College of Life supports Wings of Hope

Charles Dauray, chairman and CEO of the College of Life Foundation, and Peg Egan, the organization’s secretary/treasurer, visited FGCU’s Panther Posse room after pledging \$50,000 to support Wings of Hope, the program that teaches elementary-age students the importance of endangered Florida panthers, water conservation and other important environmental lessons. The foundation has pledged \$5,000 per year for 10 years to help operate the program that educates and engages thousands of Southwest Florida children each year. Wings of Hope relies on grants and gifts in order to provide the program without charge so that all students, regardless of income, may participate. ■



### Naples man works to enrich lives of disadvantaged youngsters

As a child in Belize, Cornelius “Pat” Cacho’s home country, conditions were poor. His parents had scant education, there was no high school in the town of his birth and no college or university in the country. But his parents made the extreme sacrifices necessary for him to attend high school.

Later, he was fortunate to be helped to make his way to Great Britain, where he became a certified accountant and earned two degrees at the London School of Economics. He went on to serve as the economic secretary of Belize, then was recruited by the World Bank where, among other posts, he served as Chief of Mission in Somalia.

Upon retirement in 1990, he and his wife, Laura, moved to Naples.

“We looked around and discovered minority kids, particularly black kids, in dire straits,” he says. “We decided to devote the rest of our lives to helping them.”

They volunteered in area schools and financially supported students and programs that assist them, including the College Reach-Out Program at FGCU, which aims to help improve the odds for success for disadvantaged middle and high school students. Through a host of enrichment activities, CROP helps students prepare for and succeed in college.



Cornelius “Pat” Cacho

Some CROP students participate in a summer program called Close Up Washington, D.C., spending a week in the nation’s capital witnessing how government works.

When funding for this year’s trip fell short, Cacho reached out to help, donating \$15,000.

“The trip to Washington for a poor kid could mean a lot,” he says. “It could open his or her eyes and make them think there’s more to life than hanging around the area where they live.”

The students were required to write essays about what they saw and learned.

“One of the kids now wants to be in the House of Representatives, then become a senator, then president,” says Cacho, who has served on the FGCU Foundation board. “I have seen the essays they’ve written. I see that their eyes have been opened to new possibilities.” ■

# CLASS NOTES

► This world is but canvas to our imaginations

► '99, '03

## Fred and Tony Price

Brothers use college experience to build successful real estate firm.

**F**RED PRICE ('99, MARKETING) HAS A LOT OF CELEBRATING to do this year.

In addition to his wife delivering his first daughter in the midst of the NCAA Sweet 16 game in March, he and brother, Tony, are celebrating the 10-year anniversary of their company, Priceless Realty.

"The 10-year anniversary is a big deal for us," Fred says. "We've been here for 10 years now, we're established and it's nice to see repeat customers."

Brothers Fred, Tony and Kevin Price (who works for Gartner) all attribute their success to the leadership roles they undertook as students at Florida Gulf Coast University.

"We're successful because we took the initiative to seize opportunities to take on leadership roles, to learn new things and stumble along the way," Kevin says.

"All those experiences from when FGCU was young made us develop the skills and traits we have today that have made us successful."

While in school, Tony ('03, Business) helped to ramp up FGCU's Programming Board, which books concerts and events for students on campus. Kevin ('04, Communication) began the Eagle's Greek Life initiative. Fred Price helped lobby for the first FGCU student government.

After graduating, Tony joined Fred in building their self-described "one-stop shop" of real estate. Priceless Realty has



offices in both Fort Myers and Cape Coral. They also own Fairview Lending, which opened in 2006, and Omega Title, launched in 2009.

The Price brothers built their business by harnessing their creativity, just as they did as students at FGCU.

"When we opened Priceless Realty there wasn't someone that we could lean on to learn [from]," Fred said. "We had to come out, and open it, and learn as we [went]."

The Price brothers have seen their hard work pay off and now give back to fellow FGCU graduates who possess the same

### Fred and Tony Price

drive. Currently the Price brothers employ six FGCU alumni at Priceless Realty.

The qualities that allowed the brothers to build their success are the same qualities they seek when hiring alumni.

"We don't hire bulk Realtors," Tony says. "We look for quality, hardworking individuals who will treat customers the way we would treat them. And a lot of the time we find that at FGCU."

— *Kalhan Foley Rosenblatt is a senior at FGCU and editor of Eagle News.*

“All those experiences from when FGCU was young made us develop the skills and traits we have today that have made us successful.”  
- ALUMNUS KEVIN PRICE, '04 COMMUNICATION

## [WEDDINGS, ENGAGEMENTS AND BIRTHS]

'03

**Charity Hamilton**, (Clinical Laboratory Science), and Sean Dugan were married on March 2. Hamilton is a doctor of osteopathic medicine and Dugan is a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army. She recently completed her general surgery residency and the couple relocated to Enterprise, Ala., where she will begin her practice.

'06



**Stephanie Hoffman**, (Marketing), and Joseph Olivarez were married at Southern Waters in North Fort Myers on March 2.

Hoffman works for Senior Choices of Southwest Florida as a volunteer liaison. The couple reside in Cape Coral.



**Braxton Rhone**, (Management), and Jill Rhone, '08 (Master's, Social Work), welcomed their second child, Brynn Marie, on

Nov. 18. The Rhones also have a 2-year-old son, Barron. They live in Fort Myers.

**Melissa Shannehan**, (Marketing), and Michael Hansen were married March 9 at The Plantation in Fort Myers.

'07

**Jesse Bouchard**, (Marketing), and Victoria Coppard were married on April 6 at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club. They honeymooned in Italy. Bouchard is the operations manager at Northwestern Mutual The Glenn Black Group. They live in Estero.



**Jena Tipping**, (Criminal Forensic Studies), and Brad Crone were married in Naples on April 6. Tipping is the assistant general

manager of the Athlete Institute and also is an event director of the Brampton A's, a professional basketball team in the National Basketball League of Canada. They live in Aurora, Ontario.

'08



**Jennifer Hamilton** (Communication), and Billy Hamilton welcomed twin boys, Theodore James and Dallas Zachary Hamilton,

on Jan. 8. Jennifer Hamilton was recently promoted to senior account executive at Hill+Knowlton Strategies. She joined the company in March 2011. They live in Tampa.



**Mark Stuckey**, (Secondary Education), and Jennifer Stuckey, (Community Health Services), welcomed the birth of their

son, Benjamin, on Feb. 20. They live in Bonita Springs.

'09



**Ashley Koza**, (Civil Engineering), and Josh Koza welcomed their first child, Lillian Grace, on Feb. 26. Ashley is a contract

support specialist at Kisinger Campo & Associates. The Kozas live in Fort Myers.

**Della Vernsey**, (Communication), and **Kazik Zajda**, (Communication), became engaged on Feb. 14. Vernsey, a member of Tri Delta sorority and Zajda, a member of Kappa Alpha

fraternity, met at FGCU. A May wedding is planned in Fort Myers. The couple live in Chicago.

## [NEWSMAKERS]

'99

**Janice Jong-A-Kiem**, (Accounting), has been promoted to audit associate at Myers, Brettholtz & Company, P.A. She lives in Fort Myers.

**Amber Leone**, (Nursing), has been promoted to the rank of major in the U.S. Air Force. She is based in Japan.

'00

**Michael McCabe**, (English), has achieved an AV Preeminent rating by Martindale-Hubbell. McCabe is an attorney at Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A. He lives in Bonita Springs.

'01

**Bruce Hershey II**, (Marketing), is the senior director of mobile strategy and practice leader at Merkle Inc., a customer relationship marketing agency. He lives in Naples.

'02

**John Nagle**, (Master's, Nursing), is the certified registered nurse anesthetists director at Bon Secours St. Francis Health System in Greenville, S.C.

'03

**Cherise Brummer**, (Master's, Educational Leadership), is the new principal of South Christian Elementary School in Herndon, Ky.

'04

**Suzanne Decopain**, (Liberal Studies), has joined Saxon, Gilmore, Carraway & Gibbons, P.A. as an associate in

the firm's Tampa office. She will concentrate her practice in the areas of affordable and public housing.

**Idela Hernandez**, (Human Services), started her own business, Interpreting and Application Services, LLC., in Naples. The company links individuals to appropriate services to improve lives.

**Angela McNulty**, (Master's, Accounting and Taxation), was promoted to assurance manager at Myers, Brettholtz & Company, P.A. She has 10 years of public accounting and audit experience, specializing in nonprofit organizations for the past 8 years. She lives in Fort Myers.

'05

**Ashley Coone**, (Management), has been named the new executive director for the DeSoto County Chamber of Commerce.

**Joey Lamielle**, (Management), has joined RE/MAX Alliance Group as a Realtor in the Sarasota office. He specializes in golf course properties and communities.

'06

**Nicole Fink**, (Psychology), has graduated with her doctoral degree in applied psychology and human factors from Clemson University. She lives in North Wales, Pa.

'07

**Danilo Baylen**, (Elementary Studies), was elected executive board chair of the Southern Regional Faculty and Instructional Development Consortium (SRFIDC) for a three-year term. The Consortium includes personnel from faculty and instructional development programs in two- and four-year degree-granting institutions in the greater South. He lives in Carrollton, Ga.

(continued on next page)

## CLASS NOTES

(continued from previous page)

**Chelsea Birczak**, (Marketing), has been named the director of marketing and communications at Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce.

## '08

**Robert Anstett** (Master's, Accounting and Taxation), has become a principal in the firm of Sobelman & Anstett, P.A. in Naples. The firm specializes in tax services for businesses, individuals, estates and trusts.

**Joel Aronson**, (Management), has been promoted to assistant customer service manager at Publix in Fort Myers.

**John Calabrese**, (Finance), has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Ohio Association for Justice and will chair the organization's young attorneys group. He is an attorney at Plevin & Gallucci Company, LPA, in Cleveland, Ohio.

**Melissa Cofta**, (Master's, Business Administration), has joined Priority Marketing in Fort Myers as marketing and public relations account manager.

**Jonel Gomez**, (Master's, Nursing), of Ophthalmic Facial Plastic Surgery Specialists, is the editor in chief for INSIGHT: The Journal of the American Society of Ophthalmic Registered Nurses (ASORN). She is also co-editor of the 4th Revision of ASORN's Core Curriculum for Ophthalmic Nurses textbook. She lives in Fort Myers.

**Mitchel Kuhn**, (Communication), graduated on the Dean's List from Palmer College of Chiropractic in Iowa. He has accepted a position at Ballas Chiropractic in Huntersville, N.C.

**Lauren (Donnelly) Surratt**, (Athletic Training), is the CEO and co-founder of aToJ Productions, a music production group based in Orlando. She recently signed two alternative hip-hop artists, Sonar Eclipse & The Working Class.

## '09

**Tiffany Abend**, (Marketing), was named the 2013 MBA Student of the Year at the University of Cincinnati. Abend was also selected to study abroad in Chile over spring break as a Paxton Scholar and participated in an Intercollegiate Duke Energy Case Competition for Green Button Technology in which she was awarded second place. She graduated in April and lives in Cincinnati.

**Bobbi Jo Crouse**, (Management), is the newest Realtor to join Counselor Realty Inc. of Alexandria, Minn.

**Yolanda Perkins**, (Master's, Health Science), published a book, "Consequences," based on a true story of how one wrong decision can cause someone to lose everything. She lives in Lehigh Acres.

**Stefen Wynn**, (Legal Studies), graduated in May with a Master of Public Administration degree from Indiana University. He is the elected vice-chair of the Saint Joseph County Republican Party and is the Second Congressional District Chairman for the Indiana Federation of Young Republicans. He lives in Mishawaka, Ind.

## '11



**Elliott Long**, (Political Science), has been named an intern with the Office of Legislative Affairs at the White House.

**David Plazas**, (Master's, Business Administration), received the 2013 Individual Leadership and Diversity Award by the Gannett Company. Plazas is the engagement editor for The News-Press in Fort Myers.

## '12

**Kristine Barrett**, (Master's, Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner), has joined the private practice of Sanibel physician Edward LaMotta as a nurse practitioner.

**Mehieddine Nassri**, (Master's, Accounting and Taxation), is the tax auditor for the Florida Department of Revenue. He lives in Naples.

**Joseph Rosen**, (Marketing), works for the business development department at Energy Saving Solutions USA in Miami.

## '13

**Alan Gaunt**, (Finance), has joined Private Wealth Consultants in Fort Myers as the wealth management coordinator.



**Brandi Harrison**, (Communication), was crowned the 2013 Florida Watermelon Queen during the 45th annual Florida Watermelon Association Convention held in March at the Gaylord Palms Resort in Orlando. As Florida Watermelon Queen, she will travel throughout the United States and Canada, serving as a spokeswoman for the watermelon industry.

## [IN MEMORIAM]

## '03

**Raven Kneally**, (Psychology), died on April 3. She was 30. She leaves behind her mother, Kira Kneally; uncles and aunts, Mark and Debbie Canary, Chester and Linda Canary; and her cousins, Ryan, Kyle, Stephen, Dennis, Thomas and Krista.

## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION CALENDAR



### 9/21 SATURDAY

#### Dollars for FGCU Scholars

Have a ball bowling for a good cause at the seventh 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 or donating a silent auction item may call (239) 590-1087. 6 p.m., Beacon Bowl, 5400 Tamiami Trail, Naples.

### 9/25 WEDNESDAY

#### Eagle Law Reception and Alumni Panel

Learn what it's like to be a legal Eagle. Join practicing attorneys for a panel discussion on topics such as what to expect when applying to law school and what a career in law entails. Appetizers and refreshments will be served following the panel discussion. 6 p.m., Sugden Welcome Center, FGCU main campus.

### 10/26 SATURDAY

#### Make a Difference Day

Join current students, faculty, staff, alumni and Wells Fargo employees by volunteering in our community. Service projects include gardening, painting, packing groceries, walking homeless dogs, clearing nature trails and more at organizations in Fort Myers, Bonita Springs and Naples.

Want to make a difference in your community? Email [alumnirelations@fgcu.edu](mailto:alumnirelations@fgcu.edu) to register your service project.

### 11/7 THURSDAY

#### Alumni Professionals

Maximize your career opportunities as you network with fellow alumni business owners and Eagle supporters. 6 p.m., Location TBD ■

## SEND US YOUR NEWS

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

►'08

## Karen Watson

Former single mom gives teen mothers hope for the future.

**F**OLLOWING A 16-YEAR CAREER TEACHING AT-RISK PRESCHOOLERS in Lee County's Head Start program, Karen Watson ('08 MSW) is finally home.

As executive director of Our Mother's Home in San Carlos Park, Watson is the parent educator she'd yearned to be, overseeing a stable home – for eight teen mothers and their babies – as advocate, counselor and ersatz grandmother.

Fueled by frustration and optimism, Watson returned to higher education to earn a master's degree in social work from Florida Gulf Coast University. Through regular home visits, Watson, now 48, came to believe that poor parenting was the root cause of impoverished students' social, developmental and nutritional obstacles. "I wanted to teach the parents," she says.

With graduate studies focused on mental illness in women and children, Watson began volunteering at the home in 2007 as an advocate and group leader, then joined the board before becoming executive director.

Parenting issues aren't the only challenges facing residents at Our Mother's Home, which opened in 2000 as a haven for pregnant foster teens. Removed from their families by state authorities due to abandonment or abuse, the young girls have nowhere else to turn. Some were victims of human trafficking; most suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Watson's days involve managing staff and volunteers as well as juggling school, medical and legal appointments for the teens and their offspring, who range from newborns to toddlers.



Karen Watson cuddles a baby living at Our Mother's Home.

"I really enjoy making everything click and connect together," she says.

The lifelong Lee County resident takes a personal approach to her job. Growing up in a low-income neighborhood, she

was the eldest of four children and helped her single mother with chores and bills. At 18, she became pregnant during her freshman year at Edison Community College (now Edison State College).

As a single mother, she managed work, studies and child-rearing before marrying Frederick Watson. They had another daughter, Collette, and today are proud grandparents.

Watson shares wisdom. She urges teen moms to look inside themselves. She

says measured, positive support from her teachers and mentors during her formative years had the most impact, making her realize, "I didn't have to be stifled – I could go forward. They planted seeds," she says. "That's why I'm here. I am planting seeds."

– Cathy Chestnut

## Sinking in style



**T**HE FGCU AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS ONCE AGAIN took to the waters for the annual spring Cape Coral Rotary Cardboard Boat Regatta. This year's craft was the RMS Titanic. Like its namesake, the vessel sank shortly after launch. Nonetheless, the engineering students captured second-place honors for Best Original Design, Best Team Effort and People's Choice. They also won the honor of Most Spectacular Sinking. Photographer Brian Tietz captured the short-lived glory of the tuxedo-shirted crew, who gamely went down with the ship. ■

**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](mailto:kfeldman@fgcu.edu) or call (239) 590-7093.





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