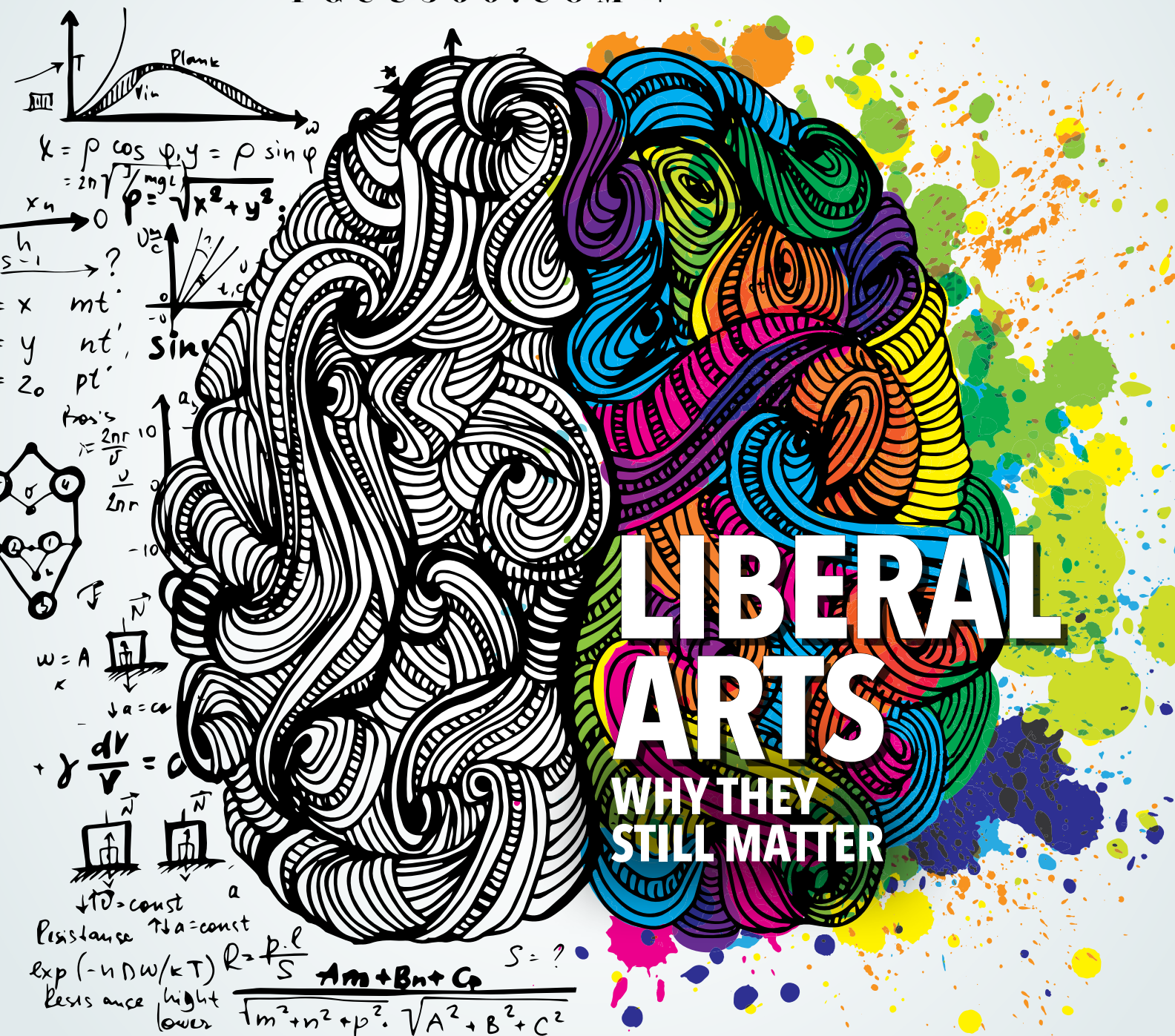


SPECIAL WATER ISSUE INSIDE

FGCU 360

FGCU360.COM



LIBERAL ARTS

WHY THEY
STILL MATTER

Alumni honor high-flying Eagles / Meet the Daves of the diamonds

SPRING 2019

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ALL ABOUT WATER

FGCU has long been a center of research for water issues. Now it has embarked on an ambitious plan to take a holistic approach to issues that affect the region's most precious resource.

FIRST



CUTTING EDGE

New community counseling center set to open this fall

Grad students will offer affordable treatment to the public / **BY KAREN FELDMAN**

WHEN THE FALL semester begins in August, Florida Gulf Coast University will open the doors to a much-needed community service — low-cost mental and behavioral healthcare.

The Community Counseling Center will

offer these services provided by graduate student interns under the supervision of faculty of the Department of Counseling in the Marieb College of Health & Human Services. The center's services will include family and marriage counseling, play therapy and other forms of counseling for those who may not have insurance or

the means to pay for private treatment.

Care will be provided by graduate students who have taken the majority of their courses before they begin seeing clients under supervision.

"They will be serving the needs of the community," says Madelyn Isaacs, a counseling professor and chair of the



Our hope is that this will become a place for outreach to the community, for training students and developing who we are and the services we provide.



ALISE BARTLEY, VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR



From left: Tom Mayo, FGCU director of Facilities Planning; Jim Henley, principal, Burt Hill Pollock Krieg Architects; Howard Wheeler, president, Chris Tel Construction; James Llorens, provost and dean of Academic Affairs; Michael Martin, FGCU president; Ed Morton, member, SUS Board of Governors; Robbie Roepstorff, vice chair, FGCU Board of Trustees; Alise Bartley, visiting assistant professor, Counseling; David Bartley; Joan Glacken, interim dean, Marieb College of Health & Human Services

The center will be located in the new 27,000-square-foot building under construction next to the Family Resource Center on campus. The structure will also house the counseling center for students, known as CAPS, as well as Adaptive Services.

While anyone from the community is welcome to avail themselves of services here, there will be an as-yet undetermined limit to the number of times an individual may visit before being referred to another area agency. And because it will be students who will be providing the counseling, there will be no acute-care provided. Those requiring crisis intervention and medical care will be referred to the appropriate agency.

Isaacs says the staff plans to work closely

with area agencies such as SalusCare, Golisano Children's Hospital, Park Royal Hospital, Charlotte Behavioral Health, the David Lawrence Center and Hendry Glades Behavioral Health Center, among others.

"It's not going to be a standalone center to compete with area agencies," Isaacs says. "We seek to fit in with area agencies."

She hopes that the center will help broaden the counseling department's offerings.

"I hope it eventually is going to become a seat of research and an engine to expand the curriculum, both degree and non-degree, for post-masters and post-doc training for people who are already practitioners in the community," Isaacs says.

In addition to family and marriage counseling, Isaacs says, "we've talked about trying to develop a niche potentially in working with people on the autism spectrum, those who have experienced trauma and perhaps working toward a doctoral program, expanding the program to accept more students and developing a series of post-master fellowships for students who need additional training." ■



Alise Bartley

Department of Counseling

Fees will be whatever the individual earns an hour or \$25, whichever is less.

The idea is to offer additional resources to the community and to provide future counselors with a place in which they can gain on-the-job experience.

"Our hope is that this will become a place for outreach to the community, for training students and developing who we are and the services we provide," says Alise Bartley, visiting assistant professor. "It's going to be our training lab and we hope we will be reaching all five counties even though we are physically located at FGCU."



Professor's new book looks at 'The State of American Policing'

BY KYLE MCCURRY

IT MIGHT BE UNEXPECTED to hear a retired cop with 20 years on the force say, "As a kid growing up in Detroit in the '60s and '70s, I grew to hate police." Nevertheless, it's the origin story of FGCU justice studies Professor David Thomas.

But his youthful view makes more sense when he shares his reasoning: "[I didn't hate them] because they were police, but because of the brutality that my friends and I experienced at the hands of the police." Today, Thomas remains fixated on the relationship between the police and minority communities, which he artfully explores in his new book, "The State of American Policing."

Thomas, who holds a Ph.D. in forensic psychology, is uniquely qualified to take on this topic, but that doesn't mean it's easy.

"In my case," he said, "I am 'us' and 'them,' on either side of the equation. Police have challenged me because I was black and limited my acceptance to 'the club,' and blacks have challenged me and called me a traitor or an 'Uncle Tom' because I was a cop and now a professor. My hope is that I can act as a catalyst, a sounding board or a liaison, if you will, that both sides are willing to listen to."

But clashes between the police and minority communities have been going on for years. Which begs the question: Why this book now?

"I wrote this book because I am tired of the senseless violence on both sides. Police have done a horrible job of explaining why they do what they do. The minority communities don't trust the police, and view every shooting as an act of racism, and fail to accept the facts. The minority community fails to recognize that police are human, they will make mistakes, and



FGCU Professor David Thomas

The black community wants to be treated fairly, and the police want to be respected and supported. Both sides are lost behind their words, and neither is listening to the other.

there is no magic piece of equipment that can stop a subject in many instances without killing them," Thomas said.

Thomas' book uses real-world situations to illustrate the problems Americans face.

"These are tough issues: a failing history in policing, a culture that needs to change but refuses to, police decision making and race, implicit bias, police privilege and black hysteria, militarization of police, and deadly force, all hot topics and relevant. I understand the feelings of the black community, and I understand the cops are angry. The reality is, to continue to hate each other and not work together sets both sides up for failure," Thomas said.

The professor believes the path to common ground is simpler than one might expect.

"The black community wants to be treated fairly, and the police want to be respected and supported. Both sides are lost behind their words, and neither is listening to the other," Thomas writes at the conclusion of his book. "When will both sides be willing to place their agendas aside, come to the table, and create lasting, meaningful solutions to problems that have plagued police/community relations since slavery?"

Thomas' book, "The State of American Policing," is available now from Amazon. ■

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RECOGNITION

Martin among Southwest Florida's 'People of the Year' for second year in a row

BY KYLE McCURRY

FLORIDA Gulf Coast University President Mike Martin may be a relative newcomer

to Southwest Florida – arriving in 2017 – but he's quickly made his mark, and people beyond the university have noticed. Proof of that is his recent recognition as "Person of the Year," a year after being named "Person to Watch" by the News-Press.

The recent honor came after Martin led FGCU to a number of significant victories, including securing more than \$20 million in state funding for operations, reorganizing the university to improve student retention and graduation rates, starting construction on two new buildings, and adding multiple degree programs.

Martin accepted the "Person of the Year" honor in February at The Westin Cape Coral Resort.

"While I'm appreciative and humbled by being named the 'Person of the Year,' this is truly a recognition for FGCU and all it means to this community and



FGCU President Mike Martin strives to make a difference.

Southwest Florida," he said. "The great people who work at FGCU, our students and our many supporters have earned the honors I'm fortunate to have received."

Even so, it's not the physical award that holds the most significance for Martin and FGCU. Instead, the presentation harkens back to Martin's 2017 interview for the job he now holds.

"I still believe that the scars I've had, and the few trophies I've acquired, and the experiences I've had in a wide bandwidth of tasks and roles in public higher education, still give me a chance to make the kind of meaningful contribution I care to make," he said. "It's as simple as that. This is all about continuing to carry out a passion and commitment to a collection of institutions in public higher education, but one in which I can feel that when I do get to the point where I want to retire, I can look back and say, 'I made a difference when making a difference made a difference.'" ■

OTHER NOTABLES

In addition to Martin's 2019 honor, FGCU graduate and Alumni Board Member Nadege Borgat was named "Young Professional of the Year" for her work as executive director of The New Beginnings of SWFL, Inc. FGCU's radio and television station, WGCU Public Media, and its General Manager Rick Johnson were also honored as the "Business of the Year."



Geoff and Robbie Roepstorff have become passionate python hunters.

HOW TO

Dance with pythons, or how to hunt an invasive snake

BY KATHY BECKER

ROBIE ROEPSTORFF is the quintessentially well-dressed professional when serving as vice chair of the FGCU Board of Trustees and as president of Edison National Bank, which she co-founded with her husband, Geoff, in 1977. Her surprising after-hours passion snuck up on her.

Geoff Roepstorff and two high school friends were unsuccessful in Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission's 2016 Python Challenge, an opportunity for non-professional hunters to help rid the state of the invasive, mammal-killing snake. He wanted to try again before the end of the challenge, but his friends couldn't join him. "I'll go with you," she recalls telling

him. "At least I can call 9-1-1."

On Valentine's Day 2016, the last day of the hunt, the couple bagged their first snake. Actually, it was a regular pillow case they used to carry the 50-pound, 12-foot snake. And it wasn't easy. They had walked about 6 miles from the car. Geoff heard rustling and headed down a levy with his gun when he saw 3 feet of the

“It was the biggest rush you could ever expect. You go because you enjoy it, and you know you are doing something good. The pythons are killing all of our wildlife.”

snake “periscoping” (think: Loch Ness Monster) out of the water.

“The gun wouldn’t shoot!” Robbie Roepstorff says. “I couldn’t see the snake, but I pictured it coming right at him. He didn’t have the safety off. I’m running down there, and BAM, he got him right in the head on the first shot.”

“It was the biggest rush you could ever expect,” she says. “You go because you enjoy it, and you know you are doing something good. The pythons are killing all of our wildlife.”

The python problem is believed to have started with pet snakes released into the wild.

With few natural predators, the non-native Burmese pythons have decimated the Everglades mammal and bird population. The snakes can grow to 23 feet long and weigh 200 pounds.

It’s passion for the hunt and the environment that has the Roepstorffs taking legislators hunting to increase awareness and make sure the python eradication programs continue to receive funding.

Because the invasive snakes are a problem for native wildlife, anyone can be a python hunter. With a few restrictions, they can be hunted all year long without a license in Wildlife Management Areas, hunting areas, wildlife and environmental areas and private property. ■

TIPS ON HOW TO BAG YOUR OWN PYTHON

Robbie Roepstorff offers pointers that will increase your odds of success.

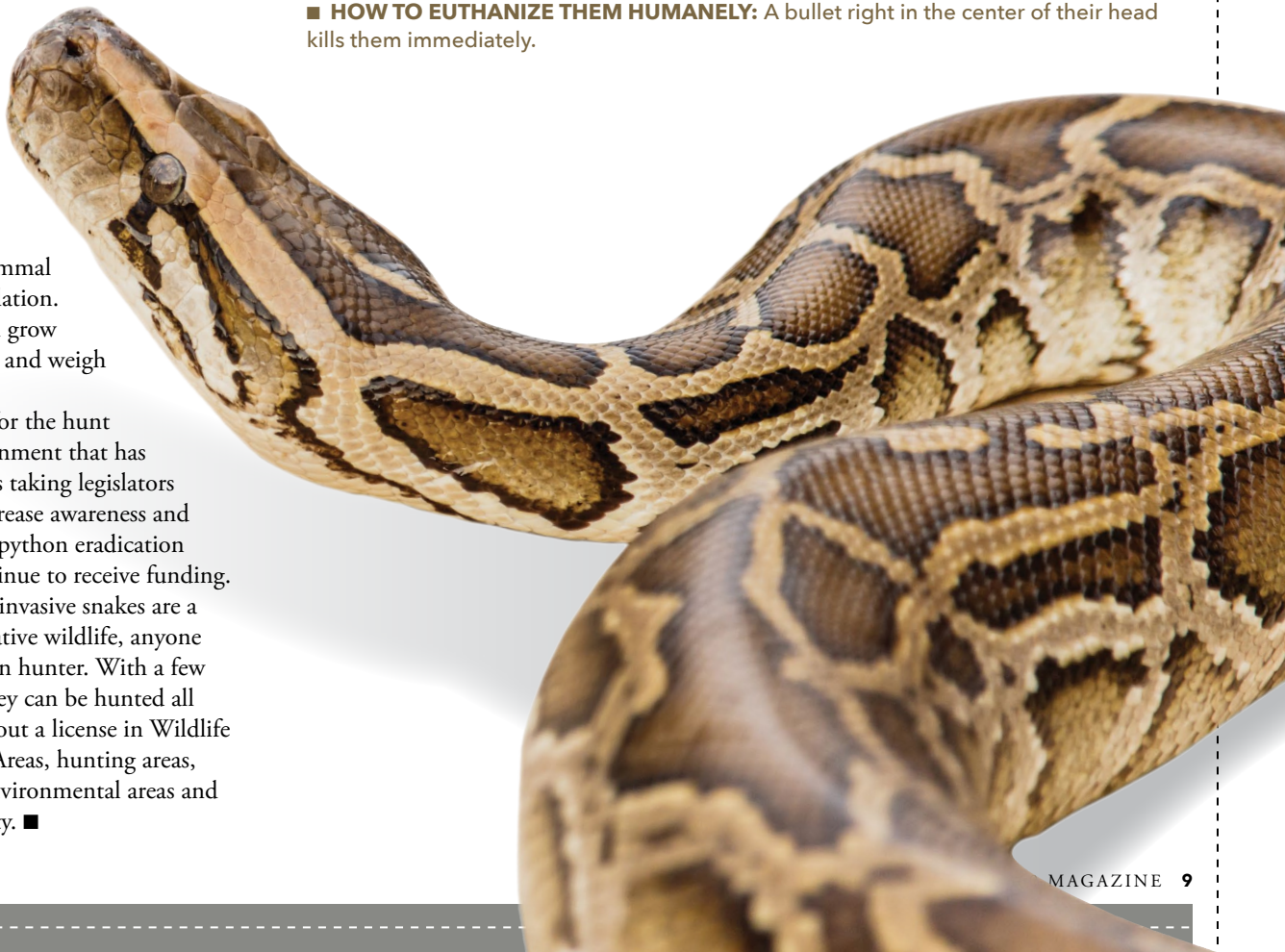
■ **BEST TIMES TO FIND PYTHONS:** In the winter during cold days because pythons like to bask in the sun. They are mostly aquatic and active at night in the summer. “They are temperature controlled, so you need to understand their eating and travel habits,” she says. “You’ll rarely catch one in the rain.”

■ **HOW TO SPOT THEM:** Don’t look for the whole python. Look for something shiny, or unusual. Also, listen for rustling that sounds like something big.

■ **WHAT TO WEAR:** A bug jacket. Mosquitoes and horseflies bite as much as snakes do. Although not poisonous, pythons have several rows of teeth and will strike. “Feels like a case cutter,” Geoff Roepstorff says. “Those teeth will stay in you.”

■ **BEST METHOD:** The Roepstorffs catch pythons with their hands, grabbing them by the tail then dragging them into an open area to wear them out. Geoff Roepstorff says you need to jump out of the way when they try to strike you, which he calls “dancing with pythons.” After about 10 minutes they are tired enough to grab them behind the head.

■ **HOW TO EUTHANIZE THEM HUMANELY:** A bullet right in the center of their head kills them immediately.



BY THE NUMBERS

The Greek Life

For many FGCU students, the transition into university life includes becoming part of a fraternity or sorority. Along with the lifelong bonds that are formed comes the positive impact made in the FGCU community and Southwest Florida in general, created by the collective teamwork of brothers and sisters. Fraternity and sorority life is flourishing at FGCU, as indicated by the facts and figures from Fall 2018 that appear on these pages, provided by Torrie Jackson, assistant director for Fraternity and Sorority Life.



FILE PHOTOS, SHUTTERSTOCK

15%

PERCENTAGE OF
UNDERGRADUATES
WHO BELONG TO FRATERNITIES
AND SORORITIES AT FGCU

Fraternity & Sorority Life
Fall 2018 Cumulative GPA

3.09 GPA

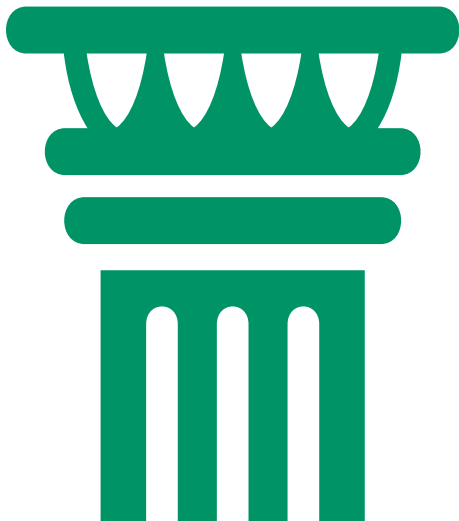
TOTAL NUMBER OF
MEMBERS OVER A

3.0 GPA

876

10K

SERVICE HOURS
PERFORMED



\$90K

MONEY
RAISED
for charity



417

EVENTS
Hosted by
Fraternities & Sororities



COLLECTIVE WE

Medieval combatants fight to ‘the death’

But it's all in fun and foam rubber / **BY KATHY BECKER**

THE MEDIEVAL Foam Fighting Club was started to give students a fighting chance.

Between 12 and 15 members use foam-wrapped swords, lances, daggers, arrows and even soft fabric “rocks” twice a week to release their frustrations on the battlefield (Rec Field 1 or 2). For the most part, no one gets hurt, despite fighting to “the death.”

“We use medieval weapons that are all foam,” says Club President Holly Hurlbutt, ’20, Civil Engineering. “Instead of padding the people, we pad the weapon.”

Ryan Fox (’17, Environmental Studies), founder of the FGCU club, heard about the sport from a friend at another university. He started a small group at FGCU in 2014.

“Participants are interested in live-action role playing,” he says. “They are people who didn’t think D&D (Dungeons and Dragons) was cool enough because you sat inside all day. It takes a lot more energy than you think. I lost 40 pounds in the first year.”

Now a park ranger at Lover’s Key State Park in Bonita Springs, he is the group’s coach and mentor for other area clubs.

Hurlbutt was a freshman when she first saw them fighting. “I thought it was the coolest thing in the world,” she says. The

student with long, curly, red hair and blue eyes watched and joined the next week.

“It’s a great way to express yourself. When you are out there hitting people, you get out of your head.”

But the club can involve the heart. Hurlbutt and Fox became a couple after meeting on the battlefield.

“I love it so much,” Hurlbutt says about the club. “I’ve made so many friends, not just here, but other colleges and other states.”

Started as a Registered Student Organization, the group became a Registered Sports Club through Campus Recreation in 2016. In exchange for requirements, such as service learning, the group receives funding for equipment and travel.

In February, the club from Florida Atlantic University came for a Day Battle at FGCU, with another scheduled in April. The FGCU club took some members to Trenton, S.C., to a regional event expected to draw 200 to 300 combatants.

Fighting, weapons and garb are regulated by Dagorhir Battle Games, an organization for live-action role-play combat. Rules of fighting and how points are awarded are based on honor and safety. Hits to certain body parts are instant “death,” while strikes to the limbs require fighters to drop to their

knees or put a hand behind their back. Battles are based on scenarios that could include capture the flag or bridge, king of the hill and other games.

The honor comes in determining points. When a Herald, who acts as a referee, isn’t present, it’s up to the participants to determine if weapon hits are of “sufficient force” to be worthy of points.

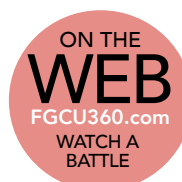
“It’s an honor-based sport,” Hurlbutt says. “The person who gets hit determines if it is a good shot or not.”

Everyone who participates must sign a waiver. Injuries are rare but do happen. During this interview, Hurlbutt was recovering from a knee injury caused when her shield broke and she tripped.

“There aren’t that many injuries in what we do, but you can break a finger, roll your ankle or take an accidental head shot.”

Each participant creates a character for their battles. For competitions and gatherings, they wear hand-made, period-authentic costumes, and leather and metal armor, all governed by Dagorhir rules.

Hurlbutt, a skilled seamstress, is often hired by members to create tunics and shields. “I’ve made a side business out of it,” she says. “I take satisfaction in making things with my own hands. There’s a lot more to it than just fighting.” ■



“

It's an honor-based sport. The person who gets hit determines if it is a good shot or not.

HOLLY HURLBUTT, CLUB PRESIDENT

”



The Medieval Foam Fighting Club does battle with the club from Florida Atlantic University on Eagle territory.



WGCU

WGCU TV airs fresh, short and curious local segments

BY DAYNA HARPSTER

ONE TRAIT WGCU HAS noticed among viewers and listeners is that they're an inquisitive lot. They have plenty of questions about Southwest Florida, whether they are natives (the few, the proud!), long timers, newcomers or sometimers.

Some of their questions have histories as big and murky as the Everglades, and you can be sure the WGCU news team is

talking about them. Others can be answered in less than two minutes in video segments now airing between programs on WGCU TV in the series "Curious Gulf Coast."

"Curiosity Correspondents" Gabby Kadoo and Mariana Lamb are hosts of the features in English and Spanish, respectively.

"Curious Gulf Coast is a way for us to engage with our audience because the questions come from them," said WGCU's

Associate General Manager of Content Amy Shumaker. "The spots are fresh and chosen to appeal to a wide audience. They'll run across all of our platforms – on the website, on social media and on TV."

Questions cover the waterfront. More than one person in Southwest Florida wondered why the sand on Siesta Key seems so different from what's on other area beaches. The answer actually digs up a kinship between that barrier island off Sarasota and

PHOTOS BY JAMES GRECO



ON THE
WEB
FGCU360.com
CATCH A
SEGMENT

the mountainous region of Appalachia. Tune in to WGCUTV for the answer.

How much do you know about the mural on the eastern façade of the federal courthouse in Fort Myers? Titled “An Alternative History,” it was done by muralist Barbara Jo Revelle and depicts various historic scenes as she imagined them, including the arrival of the railroad crossing the Caloosahatchee, a Cracker cowboy and Seminole leaders.

Also depicted on that mural is a rendering of the fort in Fort Myers. But who was Myers? He was the son-in-law

ABOVE: This photograph, taken through the editing room’s window, shows Mariana Lamb in the WGCUTV studio talking with video editor Tony Rodriguez about an upcoming segment.

CURIOUS GULF COAST

Can be seen on WGCUTV between various programs.

- Segments also can be seen online at wgcu.org/curiousgulfcoast.
- Submit your questions to wgcu.org/curiousgulfcoast.

of Union General David E. Twiggs, and whose full name was Quartermaster General Abraham Charles Myers, and he may never have even set foot in the fort – or the city – before he died in 1889. He certainly seems to have made an impression on his wife’s father. WGCUTV answered that one with help from the Southwest Florida Historical Society.

What’s up with Chokoloskee, Caloosahatchee and Cocohatchee? These

three local names are more than just tongue twisters; each represents a bit of Southwest

Florida history with which to impress vacationing guests or even longtime residents.

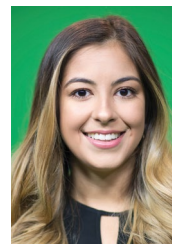
“I’ve lived in Southwest Florida for almost 40 years, but researching and producing these Curious Gulf Coast segments has opened my eyes to a lot of new fun facts about the area,” said WGCUTV Senior Producer Jim Goin.

Host Kadoo is a soon-to-graduate theater student at FGCU who is from Davie, Fla. Lamb is a broadcast reporting intern at WGCUTV who will graduate from FGCU in May.

These video shorts add to the collection of earlier WGCUTV “Curious Gulf Coast” TV and radio segments that addressed such topics as the origin of the word “cracker,” the history of dog racing in Florida, and why the state doesn’t have a ban on plastic bags. ■



Gabby Kadoo



Mariana Lamb

UPDATES:

NEWS EN ESPAÑOL

The WGCUTV news team recently collaborated with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to launch short radio news segments voiced in Spanish and broadcast via Radio Conciencia La Tuya 107.7. The goal for this effort is to expand WGCUTV’s reach to Spanish speakers in Southwest Florida.

The segments can be heard online at news.wgcu.org/term/en-espanol. ■

TRUST CONTINUES

For the 16th consecutive year, Americans rated PBS and its member stations the most trusted institution in a nationwide survey. Americans rank PBS as more trustworthy than institutions such as courts of law, the federal government and Congress, as well as media sources such as digital platforms, commercial broadcast and cable television, newspapers and social media. Respondents also said that PBS was their most trusted source of news and public affairs programming.

PBS KIDS is also viewed by parents as the most educational media brand, substantially outranking other cable and commercial networks.

This survey was developed by PBS and conducted online within the United States by Marketing & Research Resources, Inc. (M&RR) on behalf of PBS from January 3-8, 2019, among 1,015 adults ages 18 and older. The sample included 490 men and 525 women. The results are weighted to be nationally representative of the U.S. adult population. ■



SPOTLIGHT

Savior of the lost archives

FGCU's VandeBurgt collects, protects SWFL history / **BY NINA BARBERO '16**

DEEP IN THE HEART of the Florida Gulf Coast University campus – on the third floor of the Library, windowless and behind six-inch-thick walls protected by UV-sleeved lights, temperature controls and security cameras – are the treasures of Southwest Florida.

There, in the vault of the University Archives, are musical instruments from South Florida's first orchestra, journals from forensic anthropologist William R. Maples, day books and press passes from 20th-century photographer Charles Ray, and even the history of FGCU as told through notes from each of its presidents.

These treasures are collected and protected by Melissa VandeBurgt, FGCU's Head of Archives, Special Collections, and Digital Initiatives. The Los Angeles native has spent the past seven years at FGCU, focusing on building area relationships, collecting historic works, creating FGCU's digital repository and giving some items permanent residence in the FGCU Archives and Special Collections. Keeping items in the vault – a humidity-and-temperature-controlled room attached to the Archives — or on display in the Gallery protects them from the heat, humidity and bugs of Southwest Florida in a way that local historical societies can't match.

"Organizations do the best they can with the resources they have," VandeBurgt said. "They're doing the best they can to preserve these materials, but sometimes they're not equipped."

It was FGCU's Archive resources that saved seven signed Salvador Dali lithographs from acid-burn.

When VandeBurgt started her role in 2012, the Dalis that had been gifted to the university three years prior were still in their original mattes. The mattes were not acid-free, so they were burning the edges of

each print. VandeBurgt removed the mattes, put the prints in cold storage to stop the burn, and then held an exhibition with the lithographs and several borrowed pieces from the Dali Museum in St. Petersburg.

Now, all seven lithographs are on display on the first floor of the Library.

"Things like that shouldn't be in a vault," VandeBurgt said. "They're yours – you should be able to see them."

Library Dean Kathleen Miller says VandeBurgt's high energy level and ability to envision the future have been assets to the Archives.

"She brings such a wonderful combination of a scholar's curiosity and an artist's eye to those exhibits, that I think really have brought the Archives forward in a way that they couldn't without those exhibits," Miller said. "We had an Archive and Special Collections in name only before Melissa came."

VandeBurgt is assisted in her efforts by a team of interns, and calls working with them her favorite part of the job.

Natalie Schneider has worked with VandeBurgt for three years, first as an intern, then as a student worker, and now as a full-time Senior Library Technical Assistant.

Her favorite memory of working with VandeBurgt is installing the exhibit on display in the Gallery this spring – "UNDERCURRENT."

HOW TO USE THE ARCHIVES

FGCU has 23 collections in its University Archives and Special Collections. There are finding aids on the FGCU website:

■ **Archives.fgcu.edu/repositories/resources** to help people search for specific records.

■ DigitalFGCU, **fgcu.digital.flvc.org**, where digitized materials and scholarly work from FGCU students and faculty are housed.

■ **The Archives are open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.**

They had gone to the artist's house to pick up the collection, and although they returned to the Archives at the end of the working day, they stayed for hours excitedly bantering back and forth about how to display the pieces.

"Even though she is the expert and the department head, my ideas were valid to her and she wanted to hear them," Schneider said. "She is incredibly kind and patient."

Every member of VandeBurgt's nine-person team started as an intern.

"I feel like it's my job to help them trust their instincts," VandeBurgt said. "I fail in front of them a million times every day, because you don't get to do something new, you don't get to innovate, you don't get to push boundaries if you're terrified to fail – because you're never going to try."

Students and faculty are beginning to play more of a role at the Archives, with classes coming in to use primary resources and in return using their academic specialties to help VandeBurgt catalog items.

According to VandeBurgt, FGCU's future may include hiring an archivist to focus on FGCU's past. That individual will decide how to best capture the university's history as more and more of it is created online and through email versus physical documents.

"We don't think about our emails and letters and personal notes as being valuable, but in 100 years, they will give an entire snapshot of what this university was like when it was only 20 years old," VandeBurgt said. In 100 years, it will tell people a great deal about what we were, and what motivated us."

Whatever the future holds, VandeBurgt wants to see more people take advantage of FGCU's Special Collections.

"These aren't mine, these aren't the Library's, these are yours," VandeBurgt said. "You own them. Our job is just to take care of them and preserve them so that your children can see them, too." ■



OBJECTS OF AFFECTION

Beach Objects

“The beach is not a place to work; to read, write or think.”

— Anne Morrow Lindbergh

IRONICALLY, THOSE words were written by the same woman whose best-selling and critically praised book published in 1955, “Gift from the Sea,” was inspired by her secret getaways to Captiva Island off the Lee County coast with her husband, famous aviator Charles Lindbergh. But the author, philanthropist and avid shell collector was on to something when she described the beach as a place to clear the mind and relax—advice that serves the studious, always busy young population of Florida Gulf Coast University well.

Either go to the on-campus waterfront or drive west about 20 minutes, and textbooks, lectures, midterms, research papers and finals are sometimes miles away literally, and worlds away figuratively, as students gather a few of their favorite things and soak up the sun, sand, surf and, most of all, sense of togetherness with friends. A few even bring along their FGCU-inspired love of the environment.

Heather Kobrzynski, a junior environmental engineering major from Chalfont, Pa., tosses her paddleboard atop the Jeep of close friend and 2018 English literature grad Zoe Skrivan of Naples and spends Saturdays getting “in touch with the environment.”

“We also try to bring out a trash bag, knives and scissors so we can collect trash and fishing line tangled in the trees,” Kobrzynski said.



Another steward of the environment, senior integrated studies major Cathy Shepardson of West Palm Beach, takes discarded coconut shells and repurposes them as **bowls** **1**, even selling them through what she calls her “zero-waste shop,” Mango Earth. The pictured bowls are ones Shepardson said she “custom wood-burned for two friends to help them live more sustainably and make, as I like to call it, a sustainable statement.”

A day at the beach often includes music, and Alexsey Goodman, a senior from Parkland, brings it with her personal **speaker** **2**. “I believe music is essential to bring good vibes and positivity when just relaxing and hanging out with friends,” said the communication major with a minor in education. “I love listening to music that lifts my spirit and gives off a positive message. There is nothing better than playing your favorite songs surrounded by your favorite people and the beach.”

Beach essentials also include sunglasses

and hats, and some have more meaning than just being off-the-rack accessories.

“My **sunglasses** **3** are special to me because I’ve collected them over many years, and you can have a pair to match any outfit, especially bathing suits,” said Jordan Seavy, a senior environmental science major from Anna Maria Island. “I think it’s important to protect your eyes ... as well as look stylish.”

Andrea Prytulak has a special **beach hat** **4** that was “gifted to me by a good friend on the day of my surprise birthday party at the beach.”

“I love that the hat is embroidered with ‘do not disturb’ because it makes it fun and unique ... the perfect summer hat to feature in vacation photos,” said the senior integrated studies major from Venice Beach.

Another must-have at the beach is a **cooler** **5**, and Vincent Pace, a senior accounting major from Waterbury, Conn., makes sure his looks as cool as the drinks and snacks it keeps that way. “My cooler is special to me because I’ve been able to collect stickers over time that showcase my different hobbies and the different places I’ve lived,” Pace said.

Of course, the ultimate necessity is the **beach towel** **6**, and senior art major Juliana Newman of Fort Lauderdale owns one that’s refreshing-looking, indeed. “My watermelon beach towel is special to me because it has become a beach-trip tradition,” Newman said. “Its fun colors and unique design always spark impromptu photo-ops with my friends, which create memories and photos that’ll last a lifetime.”

So just as Anne Morrow Lindbergh wrote that shells were her “island eyes,” these students have created and coveted their own personal reminders of salty-but-sweet times along the shore. ■

— Keith Gibson



5



2



3



4



6



STUDENT SUCCESS

FGCU's Runway Program opens doors for entrepreneur

BY RICK WEBER

IN MAY 2015, ONE DAY AFTER graduating from West Essex High School in North Caldwell, N.J., Jakub Adamowicz jammed his belongings into his car and drove 22 hours straight to the FGCU campus.

That's how fired up he was to start his undergraduate career in a state he had visited only once before.

Four years later, as he prepares for a May 2019 graduation ceremony, the son of first-generation Polish immigrants has an impressive resume:

- ▶ Founder and CEO of RoomDig, an app that helps college students find the housing and roommates that best fit them.
- ▶ An original class member in FGCU's first Runway Program cohort, the Institute for Entrepreneurship's student startup incubator.
- ▶ As a Forbes Fellow, he received a fellowship to attend the Forbes 30 Under

30 Summit, where he mingled with the world's greatest entrepreneurs, visionaries and disruptors and picked their brains for secrets to success.

- ▶ Became a licensed real estate agent.

This isn't how he had charted his master plan, which was to earn a master's degree in architecture, move to New York and work for his father or another company. And that's the intrinsic beauty Adamowicz treasures.

He started at FGCU as a double major in civil and environmental engineering. On the side, he earned his real estate license at age 19 and quickly sold three properties. He saw the potential, but wanted to do more.

After his freshman year, he found his calling in the Runway Program – in which students develop a business idea and launch a plan to start their business while still earning a degree.

"Initially, my goal was to sell million-

dollar houses in Naples to kick off my real estate career," he says. "But as I was sitting through that orientation for the Runway Program and I saw the resources that were being provided and the support it had from the community, I realized that if all I did was just sell more houses and bigger houses, I'd be wasting this opportunity."

Adamowicz poured his heart into the Runway Program and came up with the idea for RoomDig. He canvassed the opinions of other students and realized he was on to something big.

"Almost everybody I talked to had an issue with housing and roommates," he says. "I listened to what everybody told me and utilized all the resources I had here."

But during his sophomore year – burdened by an inflexible schedule that wasn't allowing him to develop RoomDig – he contemplated leaving FGCU. Then Dr. K stepped in.

“Dr. Kauanui said, ‘You’re not dropping out. You’re going to finish school, and you’re going to start your business, and we’re going to help you build your business, and it’s going to be successful.’ That was really reassuring. The entrepreneurship major had just become available and I really believed in what Dr. Kauanui was building.”

Sandra Kauanui, director of FGCU’s Institute for Entrepreneurship, told him that she dropped out of college and regretted it, even though she ultimately earned her undergraduate degree and Ph.D. after launching her business.

“Dr. Kauanui said, ‘You’re not dropping out. You’re going to finish school, and you’re going to start your business, and we’re going to help you build your business, and it’s going to be successful,’” Adamowicz says. “That was really reassuring. The entrepreneurship major had just become available and I really believed in what Dr. Kauanui was building.”

He abandoned engineering and entered the entrepreneurship degree program.

Adamowicz continued to refine his RoomDig idea. Then, using \$8,000 he earned from the entrepreneurship pitch competition at FGCU and another at the University of South Florida, he launched RoomDig in 2017. In four months, RoomDig had 4,000 users with a 60 percent active user rate.

“That was mind-blowing,” Adamowicz says. “Our coding expertise wasn’t that good, so we were not expecting that many people on it, and so our database crashed. Over the summer, we had to rebuild the entire app and platform from the ground up so it was built for more users. We were expecting small growth and to change gradually.”

RoomDig ended up being accepted into the online version of Y Combinator’s Startup School, which has produced companies such as Airbnb, Dropbox

and Reddit. Based on his experience there, Adamowicz gives FGCU’s entrepreneurship program the ultimate endorsement.

“What we learned at Y Combinator’s Startup is identical to what we’re learning at FGCU,” he says. “All our professors in the entrepreneurship program are teachers and previous business owners. They understand that starting a business and going to school is very difficult. They’re both kind of full-time things. So when you have understanding professors who have been in your shoes and are flexible and

really care about your success, it makes all the difference.”

In one year, RoomDig won six pitch competitions, including the Florida Governor’s Cup, where it triumphed over startups from all the state universities, including Florida State University, which had received \$100 million in funding over 10 years for its entrepreneurship program.

“It says a lot about the program, resources and the quality of information and education being given to us,” he says.

“Incubators like this rarely exist in the world, let alone in a university ecosystem. I really believe this is going to change the economy in Southwest Florida.”

Adamowicz says that after he graduates, he plans to take his creation to another level. Kauanui is not surprised.

“He’s one of our success stories in the entrepreneurship program,” she says.

“He keeps telling me, ‘When I make a lot of money, Dr. K, I’m going to give it back.’ To me, that’s a testament to him and his work ethic.

He’s your typical entrepreneur that would have outgrown going to college.

That happens often with very successful entrepreneurs. They don’t have the patience with staying in school because they have a vision and want to move forward.

But from where he started to where he is today, it’s been a wonderful transition.” ■



Jakub Adamowicz, founder and CEO of RoomDig.

ARTS





THEATRE

Green scene

Theatre department adds acts of sustainability to repertoire

BY MICHAEL McNALLY / PHOTOS BY BRIAN TIETZ

TAKING A CUE FROM its Broadway peers, Florida Gulf Coast University's Theatre Department has gone green.

It all began in 2008 when "Wicked," a show starring a green-faced witch, sparked a nationwide movement to make the notoriously wasteful theatre industry more sustainable, says Anne Carncross, FGCU associate professor of theatre and technical director.

The Broadway Green Alliance (BGA) launched, motivating the theatre community to become more environmentally friendly. Enter the Green Captain program. By 2013, every Broadway and touring show was on board with a Green Captain in place.

That same year, the BGA started the College Green Captain program, and vibrant partnerships with colleges and universities have been forming ever since. It's a natural fit for FGCU, which defines itself as a sustainable university.

That's one of the elements that drew Carncross to the university.

"I gravitated to FGCU 12 years ago because I wanted to live in a climate that allowed for yearlong outdoor activities," she says. "I was also drawn to the university's mission of environmental sustainability

and service. I think that a university that is willing to put that kind of commitment in its missions and goals is progressive and the type of environment I want to work in."

She believes the same philosophy should extend to theatre.

"FGCU's Theatre department has naturally embraced the initiative as a means to further broaden the green philosophy that is already a critical part of the fabric of the university," she says.

Carncross knows that it isn't a natural practice in the theatre world.

"I have grown up in theatre," she says. "I remember in graduate school filling up dumpsters with trash during strike (tear down) of a show and thinking there must be a way to reuse this stuff. It still has a useful life. I want to preserve the environment for my own enjoyment, but also for that of my children. If I can take that passion for the environment into my theatre space through the Green Captain program, the world will be a better place for it."

The Green Captains work as a team that consists of a faculty or staff member who provides continuity, leadership and institutional support for student Green Captains. At FGCU, that's Carncross.

Currently, senior Elana Deutch is the Lead Green Captain and sophomore Joey

Elana Deutch and Anne Carncross



FGCU's Theatre department has naturally embraced the initiative as a means to further broaden the green philosophy that is already a critical part of the fabric of the university.

ANNE CARNCROSS, FGCU ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
OF THEATRE AND TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Herrera completes the team. Deutch and Herrera alternate as show captains, often performing or serving as stage manager at the same time. Herrera was unavailable for an interview because he was serving as Green Captain while also performing in "Machinal."

What does the Green Captain do?

"The theatre is notorious for the use and waste of paper, lumber, fabric, electricity and many of the same things that we all use daily, such as batteries, lights, plastics and cleaning agents," Deutch says.

She heads backstage to point out bins in which are stored batteries and light bulbs that still have life left, as well as

recharging stations for batteries and electronic devices. This may not seem like it would make a huge difference, but that's just the beginning. As stated in the Green Captain Toolkit, "Climate change is not impacted because of one large negative action, but from the cumulative effect of billions of small actions."

Lighting and scenery pose challenges for theatres attempting to go greener, but investments in more efficient lighting pay off environmentally and fiscally. Carncross and Deutch point out that FGCU has updated the theatre's entire lighting and dimmer system.

"Our previous lighting instruments cost 8 cents an hour each to run," Carncross

says. "Our new LED instruments cost 2 cents an hour to run. We typically use 80 lights per show. So, by using our LEDs we are saving 75 percent in energy costs for each hour we use them. We can cut down on the number of instruments we use as well. So 75 percent would be a conservative estimate for energy saving."

Enhanced safety is another benefit.

"The LED lighting produces very little heat when in operation. This makes it easier for students to focus the lighting without worrying about burning their hands. Standard lighting instruments can cause first-degree burns if handled improperly," she says.



It also results in lower air conditioning costs, says Carncross, because the lights run cooler.

Every show uses scenery to create locations. Sets are built using a variety of materials and in the new, green world of theatre, the goal is to use materials that may be re-purposed and used in multiple shows.

That's a far cry from the days when everything was discarded.

"No scenery was saved after a show," Carncross recalls. "We would just fill dumpsters to the brim and have them hauled off to landfills. In graduate school my job was to facilitate the filling of the dumpsters so that every piece of wood we threw away had a spot."

Elana Deutch shows various green aspects of the FGCU theatre including, from far left: repurposed wood used on a set, energy-efficient lighting and a bulletin board with a minimum of paper.

These days, Deutch and Carncross say, they save between 45 percent and 90 percent of the materials from each show. It's not easy to do, especially considering that you have to anticipate the needs of shows that could be a year or more in the future. Nonetheless, it's worth the effort and given the FGCU philosophy, everyone embraces it.

"It's an easy sell," Deutch says. ■

COMING ATTRACTION:

THEATRE, MUSIC STUDENTS CREATE ORIGINAL WORKS

"Water Stories," a collection of short pieces about the beauty, power and danger of water, told through theatre, music and movement, will make its world premiere at FGCU in the fall.

It is a collaborative work by members of the FGCU theatre and music departments. It includes students in the Creating New Theatre course, taught by Associate Professor Gerritt VanderMeer, in collaboration with music theory and composition Assistant Professor Jason Bahr and students from the FGCU Composers Guild.

The project provides a showcase for undergraduate students as creative scholars and theatre artists who will have spent about 10 months researching and developing the works then rehearsing and performing them.

These works are particularly relevant to FGCU and Southwest Florida as the university prepares to launch The Water School and the region grapples with so many issues involving water. The stories will also explore the roles water plays in mythology, folklore and fairy tales and will incorporate a variety of theatrical ways in which water is represented on stage through lighting, music, dance, scenery, stagecraft and sound.

"Water Stories" will have its world premiere Dec. 8-11 as part of the FGCU TheatreLab's 2019-20 Mainstage Season. More information will be available once the new season is announced at fgcu.edu/cas/bsma/. ■

Elaine Nicpon Marieb leaves a legacy for learning

Author, teacher, philanthropist was generous with knowledge, wealth / **BY FGCU STAFF**

WHEN YOU think about the most-read women authors among college students, it's no surprise that Jane Austen, Toni Morrison, Mary Shelley and Virginia Woolf are among them. But in the seventh spot on Time Magazine's 2016 list of "Most Read Female Writers in College Classes" was the name Elaine Nicpon Marieb.

Her well-respected textbooks on anatomy and physiology are used in more than 3,000 classrooms worldwide. It's estimated that some 3 million nurses and healthcare professionals practicing today have learned about the workings of the human body from her books.

It was that far-reaching success that created the wealth that enabled her to become a philanthropic force as well. During the past seven years, she donated \$15 million to FGCU, where both the College of Health & Human Services and the building in which it stands bear her name. Her gifts make her the largest individual donor in the university's history.

Marieb had a storied writing career that spanned four decades. She authored and co-authored more than a dozen best-selling textbooks and laboratory manuals.

Marieb earned a bachelor's degree from Westfield State College and a master's degree from Mount Holyoke College, both in Massachusetts. She began her teaching career at Springfield College and, after receiving her doctoral degree in zoology from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, she

taught at Holyoke Community College.

Always striving to understand the relationship between the study of the human body and the clinical aspects of nursing, she enrolled in Holyoke Community College's associate degree nursing program while she was teaching and earned her nursing degree. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing from Fitchburg State College and a master's degree from the University of

"A publishing company asked to see it, and I sent them half a dozen sections and the next thing I knew, I was offered a contract. One thing I want to say to young people is don't ever turn your nose up at an offer," she said. "You never know what it's going to lead to."

Since 2012, when Marieb bestowed her first gift upon FGCU's health professions program, 35 nontraditional students have received more than \$200,000 in scholarships. These are students who are older than average and have been out of school for at least three years.

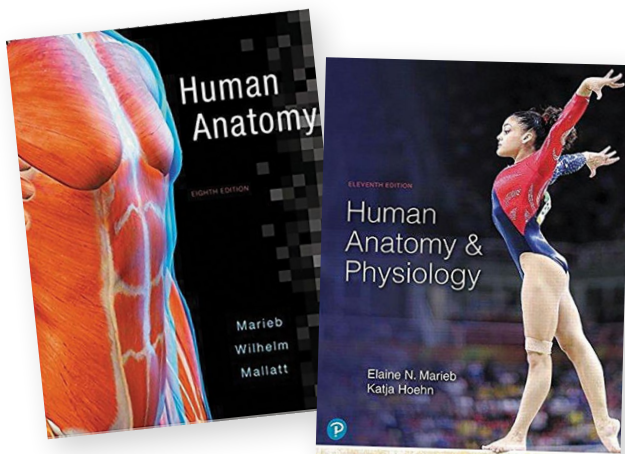
It is a situation Marieb knew well. Her husband became disabled and she recalled having to work while also going to school.

"Many times I thought I would have to drop out," she said. "Somehow, I made it. You do what you can. I was an older student. I didn't have much in the way of help. I fully believe almost anybody can be successful and have a life that can make them happy. Mine has made me very happy. That's why I'm giving back."

In addition to her gifts to FGCU, she also gave generously to Holyoke Community College, Mount Holyoke College and University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Born April 5, 1936, in Northampton, Mass., to Evelyn Rose (Paley) Nicpon and Francis Joseph Nicpon, she grew up on her family's farm. As a teen, she sang the blues at a local café and attended Smith College.

She died Dec. 20 in Naples at the age of 82. She was preceded in death by her husbands, Joseph Marieb and Harvey Howell, as well as her daughter, Pamela Marieb. She is survived by her grandchildren, Shanna Torres and Joseph Mossler; three sisters, Rose Marie Weibel (Charles), and Marilyn Ann Gawle (Paul), both of Easthampton, Mass., and Susan Ellen Koldis (William) of Northfield, Mass. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews. ■



Massachusetts at Amherst with a clinical specialization in gerontology.

In 2016, FGCU awarded her an honorary doctorate as well.

Marieb described herself as an "accidental author" as she'd written only a few academic journal articles before reviewing textbook manuscripts in the 1970s.

During an interview in 2012 with an FGCU reporter, she said that she "just kind of fell into writing textbooks," primarily from doing a lot of reading and critiquing of others' books for publishers because she needed the money at the time.

Then she began looking for a lab manual that suited her and couldn't find one, so she began creating her own.



ON THE
WEB
FGCU360.com
CELEBRATING
ELAINE MARIEB

FOND MEMORIES

■ "At a time when it was uncommon for women to be working outside the home while raising a family and continuing to pursue her education, she overcame all odds. She is an inspiration to all women and (an example of) what one can accomplish when you put your mind to it."

- **Libby McHugh, board member,**
Elaine Nicpon Marieb Charitable Foundation

■ "Outside of my immediate family, she had the most profound impact on my life. Her generosity allowed me to get my degree, and knowing that someone believed in me, especially in the moments when I didn't believe in myself, was so important to me."

- **Jillan Charlemagne, '17 Health Science,**
now working for Neogenomics

■ "Each day I have witnessed the fruits of her magnificent generosity. She was an extremely gifted educator and scholar, a household name among scholars and professionals. There's no question that Dr. Marieb was a scholar among scholars. Her legacy lives and breathes here and will continue to do so in every student who walks through her hallways."

- **Joan Glacken,**
*interim dean of the
Marieb College of Health & Human Services*

■ "Early in my career as a young faculty member, I used to teach anatomy and physiology to undergraduate students and often used her textbooks. You can then imagine how much I was in awe when I actually met Dr. Marieb - *the Dr. Marieb* - for the first time in August of 2011. But as Dr. Marieb became Elaine to me, I viewed her much more than just the most renowned anatomy and physiology textbook author in the world. I viewed her as a true friend. I viewed her as a mentor, someone I could rely on for her honest counsel and advice. I admired and revered her perspective on how to educate students so that they genuinely learned the subject matter."

- **Mitch Cordova,**
*vice president for Student Success
and Enrollment Management*

THE CHARM AND MAGIC OF STUDYING AT HARLAXTON

BY KEITH GIBSON

It's not exactly the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, but Harlaxton College in the lush English countryside about an hour north of London is about as close to the fictional world of young wizard Harry Potter as most Florida Gulf Coast University students are going to get.





I WANTED TO MAKE SURE THAT FGCU STUDENTS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY AT HARLAXTON AND HAVE LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES LIKE I HAD SEEN OTHER STUDENTS HAVE.

CLAY MOTLEY, FGCU HONORS COLLEGE DIRECTOR

That's why for Chandler Burwell and Kaliegh McFadden – two FGCU students who grew up following the fantastical adventures of British author J.K. Rowling's young good wizard and his friends in their battles against evil wizard Lord Voldemort – the chance to spend a semester studying in England was almost a childhood fantasy come alive.

"As an avid Harry Potter fan, the thought of being able to practically live in Hogwarts while I explored England and Europe was like a dream come true for me," said Burwell, a Clearwater Beach resident who spent spring 2018 at Harlaxton.

McFadden, a Naples native who went to Harlaxton during fall 2017, said she has "wanted to study abroad in England since I was a child, courtesy of my love for the Harry Potter series."

But once Burwell, a junior elementary education major; and McFadden, a senior psychology major, spent a few months studying at Harlaxton in a 100-room Victorian manor house and got fully immersed in British culture, their study abroad experience turned out to be a lot more meaningful than a magical literary escape.

The students' experience takes place on the British campus of the University of Evansville (Indiana). Harlaxton College has been operating for more than 40 years, and the program is designed to give American college students an intensive study abroad experience in England.

About 75 American students from about 20 partner schools – including FGCU – attend Harlaxton each semester.

The program is one semester or one summer term, and students take a full 12 or 15 credit hours of classes, six hours of which are a British Studies core class taught



by British faculty. That intensive, team-taught, interdisciplinary course – which Harlaxton calls the program's "centerpiece" – focuses on the history, culture, arts, economics and politics of England presented through a combination of lectures, seminars and travel. Also, a variety of humanities and social-science courses are offered each

semester so students can progress toward graduation in their respective majors.

As Clay Motley, the director of FGCU's Honors College who pushed to get FGCU involved in the program, put it, "Students have the unique opportunity to intensely study England while living in England."

"I wanted to make sure that FGCU students had the opportunity to study at Harlaxton and have life-changing experiences like I had seen other students have," said Motley, who coordinated the Harlaxton program at his previous university, Western Kentucky, before coming to FGCU in 2015 to lead what was then called the Honors Program.

Motley said he has "probably spent collectively about two months of my life living at Harlaxton," and that almost every student who takes part in the program has what he calls an "amazing academic and personal experience."

"Through all of these activities, I was able to get to know Harlaxton's administration, faculty and staff very well," Motley said. "They are a very impressive and committed group of people who provide an extraordinary academic experience for American students."

But we don't just have to take Motley's word on that. Consider the personal

LEFT: Chandler Burwell in England. RIGHT: Inside and outside Harlaxton Manor, built in 1837.





experiences of students Burwell and McFadden.

Elementary education major Burwell, who is minoring in art, was lured to the educational adventure by the Study Abroad Fair on the FGCU campus when she was a freshman, “captivated by the beautiful picture of Harlaxton Manor.”

“Once they told me that people who join the program get to live in the manor, I was instantly hooked and started doing some serious research into the program,” Burwell said.

The manor, built in 1837, is considered unique among remaining Jacobethan-architecture estates as it combines elements of that style and Elizabethan style with symmetrical Baroque massing. Besides a higher-education shrine, it’s a popular film location.

Psychology major McFadden, a Naples resident who minors in creative writing,

said taking classes in the manor was her favorite part of the academic experience. “I don’t think I’ll ever be able to top having lessons in The Great Hall,” she said.

While some students might naturally be intimidated going overseas to study, these FGCU students found it to be welcoming, enriching and rewarding. “Culturally, my favorite part of the experience was coming into England feeling like a cultural outsider, and slowly learning about and adapting to British culture over the semester,” Burwell said. “I didn’t realize just how much British culture I picked up until I came home.”

McFadden said she was “pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to adjust to the independence of moving across an ocean for three months. Of course, it was difficult at times, but it was also a very eye-opening experience in being

an independent individual as well as a student.”

For Burwell, part of what McFadden calls being “independent” was “participating in the Meet-A-Family program, where every Wednesday I would have dinner with a local family near Harlaxton,” she said. “The families that volunteer for the program are so sweet and really make you feel at home. I had some great times with my family, and we keep in touch through Facebook.”

So, what advice would these more-worldly FGCU students give to peers considering a semester at Harlaxton?

“The way this program is set up is incredibly unique,” McFadden said. “The four-day school week and three-day weekend provide the opportunity to take trips either with the school or on your own. While I recommend taking every chance to travel, I also warn that it might



I DON'T
THINK I'LL EVER
BE ABLE TO TOP
HAVING LESSONS IN
THE GREAT HALL.

KALEIGH MCFADDEN,
PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

be difficult to balance these trips with schoolwork, so plan accordingly.”

Burwell cited her reasons for embarking on the adventure: “Harlaxton credits transfer easily to FGCU credits, the program has lots of preplanned travel options, having all my classes in one place, and having a college experience that is similar to an American college while still being able to immerse myself in British culture.”

It sounds like these Eagles are grateful for the experience. You could even say they followed the wizardly advice they first learned about in childhood, a signature line from “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone”:

It does not do well to dwell on dreams and forget to live. ■

Kaliegh McFadden outside
Harlaxton Manor.



BY JAY MACDONALD / PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN TIETZ





HURRICANE PROGNOSTICATING

RESEARCHER DIGS DEEP INTO
THE EARTH TO PREDICT FUTURE
OF FLORIDA STORMS



W

hen it comes to hurricanes, Jo Muller can predict the intensity of future storms by digging up the past – literally. What she is unable to foresee is if and how mankind will respond to the scientific challenges of global warming.

Prior to being recruited in 2011 to join Florida Gulf Coast University's Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences, the Australian native was already well up to her neck in offshore sediment analysis, hand-driving a hollow tube deep into the ocean floor to study storm sediment dating back thousands of years. Her fascination with the relatively new but fast-growing barefoot field of study earned Muller a doctoral degree in paleoclimatology from Australia's James Cook University and Imperial College in London, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship at the prestigious Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts. Today she is an associate professor at FGCU.

What can a shaft of dripping beach sand possibly reveal about our stormy past? Plenty, it turns out. According to Muller, while human accounts of hurricanes date back a mere 160 years, the cores enable paleoclimatologists to study the strength and frequency of storms dating back more than 1,000 years.

"For example, we have a record here for Naples that is about 1,200 years old," Muller says. "One of the purposes of this field is to understand hurricane history, especially natural variability before humans were affecting climate. Then you can start to look at the trends of storms and their potential relationship to long-term climate drivers like sea surface temperatures. Here





in Southwest Florida, there's been very, very little research done. The only published research is from our group, so it's largely untouched."

To get an even clearer picture of the past, paleoclimatologists share their gritty findings with core samples collected elsewhere. "Our local record looks very similar to the one from the Florida Panhandle and the one from Belize," Muller says. "And that's nice. It makes you feel like what you're seeing is real." Next stop for team Muller: Florida's east coast.

The expanded view from below the waterline has been quite an eye opener for hurricane scientists. By examining the increased storms of what's termed the "Medieval warm period" (roughly 800-1600 AD) and the subsequent cool-down of the "Little Ice Age" (1400-1700 AD)

that followed, it's been easier to predict the hurricane havoc ahead, courtesy of manmade global warming.

"The real difference now is the rapidity of the warming," Muller explains. "In all our records, there has never been evidence of this sort of rapid warming. The only way it's been shown on so many different experiments and climate models is that it can only be related to fossil fuel emissions."

As our oceanic and atmospheric temperatures continue to rise, what effect will this have on Florida's least-welcome seasonal visitors?

"All of our hurricane research points to the idea that there will be stronger storms but not necessarily more frequent storms," Muller says. "Why? Because we're providing the conditions that storms really enjoy: warmer sea surface temperatures,

At left, Lexi Morales, a marine science student, environmental science graduate student Blake Faucett and paleoclimatologist Jo Muller take sediment cores from a North Palm Beach coastal lagoon.

higher atmospheric water vapor. Those warm seas are not just at the surface; the warm water is extending quite deep. If you can provide those things, then the storms themselves can grow really large in size, like (2017 Cat 5) Hurricane Irma."

Research has turned up one encouraging hurricane trend however. "One of the predictions with a warming atmosphere is that wind shear will actually increase, so there is a caveat there that if there's more wind shear, it might help break more of these storms apart," she adds.

It doesn't take a coring tube to discover that global warming is a



sensitive subject in today's political dialog. How does it feel when a paleoclimatologist steps forward with the news from ground zero?

"I think initially there was some discomfort when I gave public talks and I got kind of harassed. That wasn't fun," Muller admits. "But I've learned that if I'm not out there discussing these things, then I'm almost on the other side. I find I have a duty to do that. And as an academic at FGCU, 12.5 percent of my job is service. I feel very strongly toward that aspect and making sure that this science is reaching the general public."

Chief among her pastimes is pulling the public's head out of the sediment of powerlessness and despair that global warming can't be licked by offering tools to help the planet literally cool down.

"We talk about that a lot, where people feel like they can't fix something. Unfortunately, what is out there about climate change is very negative, and it is easy for scientists to focus on all the bad stuff without offering lots of opportunities for people to make changes or give them advice on that," Muller explains.

One of her favorite tools is Drawdown, a 2017 scientific workbook that features 100 substantive solutions to reverse global warming. "Obviously the big one is stop emitting so much CO2. But others include making things like air conditioners and coolant systems more efficient, eating more plant-based food and actually just eating more of the food you buy," Muller says. "The amount of waste humans create from just buying food and not eating it is significant."

Back at the FGCU lab, Assistant Professor and paleoclimatologist Jo Muller examines sediment extracted during the east coast trip.

One Drawdown solution that surprises most on first encounter is the education of women.

"That increase in CO2 emissions is mostly related to population increase,

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INSTEAD OF
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ASSOCIATED
WITH CLIMATE
CHANGE.

and that is occurring in countries where education is pretty poor," she explains. "When you think about the African continent, most women will have four to seven children, but it's been shown that an educated woman in that environment will have two to three. So just by educating women in those targeted areas, you can maybe draw that down to two.

That, in itself, is overwhelming. While it's hard for me to individually effect change like that – that really has to be at a larger level – it also can really help to broaden this topic. There are small things that

people can do to reduce CO2 emissions and their footprint, while there are other topics that our governmental bodies really need to be looking at, and that's where voting comes in."

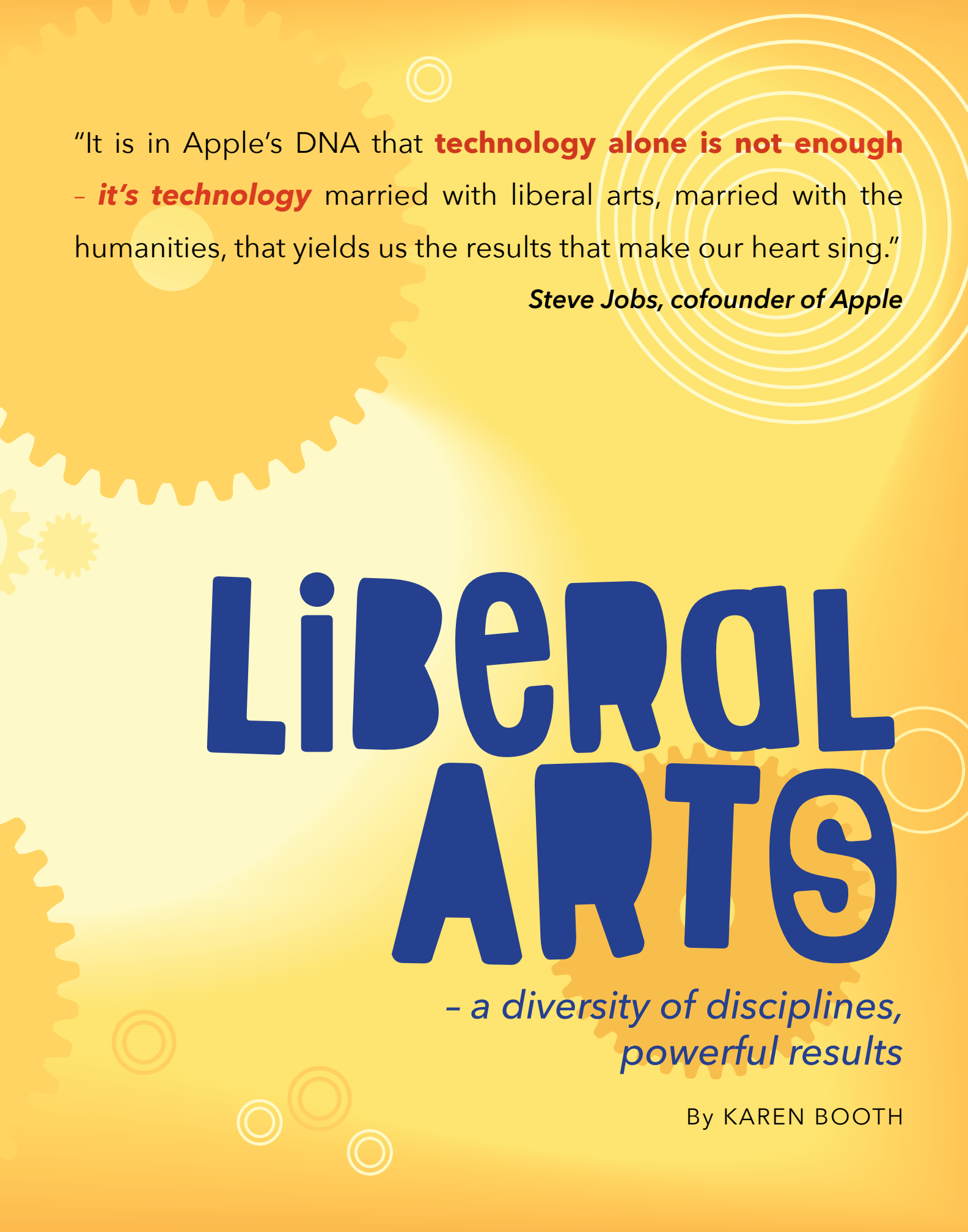
Muller admits that one of her personal challenges is to instill a sense of public service and confidence in her budding paleoclimatologist students.

"I have these conversations with my students a lot, because they feel that same sense of despair," she says. "I think it's really important to remain positive about how we can effect change, instead of just talking about all the issues associated with climate change. My students always say to me, 'Oh my God, what about the Earth?!?' and I'm like, 'The Earth is going to be just fine; it has been for 4.5 billion years. It's more about us as humans. Do we want to create these really difficult conditions for ourselves?'"

True to her philosophy, Muller unwinds by competing in triathlons and Iron Man competitions. "I cycle, I run, I swim. I really like being outdoors, so I do a lot of it," she says. The solo nature of her relaxation also gives her time to ponder how to best prepare for Florida's coming mega-storms.

"How do we make sure that we're prepared for a future where we will potentially see stronger storms like Irma and Harvey and Maria and Michael? With planning, that's how," she says. "Make some decisions upfront with your family regarding when you will stay, when you will leave and how you will prepare your home. That sort of planning can really take away the stress and make you a lot safer." ■





"It is in Apple's DNA that **technology alone is not enough** – **it's technology** married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our heart sing."

Steve Jobs, cofounder of Apple

LIBERAL ARTS

*– a diversity of disciplines,
powerful results*

By KAREN BOOTH

The battle cry of a 21st century education is seldom a call for liberal arts. English, philosophy, history and the humanities too often are dismissed “as lesser than” when compared with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Yet the reality is education is not an either/or; it’s not a them vs. us; nor liberal arts vs STEM. It’s more a case of first cousins sharing a common bloodline.

Clay Motley, associate professor of English and director of the FGCU Honors College, is emphatic: “I don’t see STEM education as being fundamentally different, incompatible or unconnected to the liberal arts.

“A liberal arts education is well rounded and teaches students about different aspects of the world. An English major, for example, needs to learn a little about economics: an engineering major should know something of literature or history. The liberal arts approach is where students, regardless of their major, graduate knowing how the world works.”

It all boils down to a common misconception that the purpose of education is purely vocational.

“Too often politicians and legislators – people who control state university funding – put pressure on universities to produce more majors in specific areas of study that they define as immediate, positive and lucrative – business, nursing, construction, engineering, for instance,” Motley said.

So, the thinking goes something like this: an engineering major is sure to find job postings for an engineer; computer science majors will have employment opportunities



Clay Motley

Isn't **the goal** of a college education to train students **to think critically**, to communicate clearly and **to solve problems?** Students who **major in a liberal arts** field get intensive training in these skills. Skills that are transformative and **prepare them well** to take on a variety of different tasks.

Glenn Whitehouse,
associate professor
of philosophy at
FGCU

in the field of technology. But a philosophy major, argue those who question the value of a liberal arts education, won't find a job posting for a philosopher. Hence, what value philosophy as a career choice?

This black-and-white approach to education is far too simplistic. And, importantly, not fair. A college degree does not have to have the name of a job.

Reflecting on any pushback regarding a liberal arts education, FGCU President Mike Martin examined its history – how we got from respecting a liberal arts education to dismissing its value. “We, in higher education, are somewhat culpable,” he said. “When the recession hit and hard times met higher ed, we tried to resell a college degree based on its vocational impact.

“In some respects, we set ourselves up. In our attempt to get legislators to fund workplace development, we made the case that vocational training and economic development was essential.” And, he said, unfortunately, “We made the case for the short term, not thinking long term.”

The argument captured the imagination of legislators and college and university board members, many of whom got caught up in the singular focus.

Next, of course, the matter of student debt loomed large. Funders focused solely on outcomes and, as a result, looked to support curriculum that promised graduates higher-paying jobs as a result.

“A series of things conspired to create today’s environment,” Martin said. “Some of it self-inflicted. We are now defending that which we never should have had to defend.”

Embedded in that argument is a deep-seated belief that liberal arts majors are less likely to enjoy a lucrative career. That, too, is flawed thinking. As noted in a recent report by the Wall Street Journal: “... a year-long survey of 1.2 million people with only a bachelor’s degree by PayScale Inc. shows that graduates in these subjects [philosophy or international relations,

as two examples] earned 103.5 percent and 97.8 percent more, respectively, about 10 years post-commencement. Majors that didn't show as much salary growth included nursing and information technology."

Glenn Whitehouse, associate professor of philosophy and director of the PAGES program, cut to the chase: "Isn't the goal of a college education to train students to think critically, to communicate clearly and to solve problems? Students who major in a liberal arts field get intensive training in these skills. Skills that are transformative and prepare them well to take on a variety of different tasks."

Whitehouse is quick to say that many professions, especially in the STEM fields, require a specific set of skills and an intense focus on acquiring those skills. However, he agreed with Motley that even these



Glenn Whitehouse

students need a basic understanding of the humanities in the same way that liberal arts majors need to know something of biology and mathematics.

Bob Gregerson, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and professor of biology, reaffirmed: "A liberal arts education helps inculcate a set of skills and habits that is applicable in almost any type of situation."

It isn't difficult to find FGCU alumni who exemplify the best attributes of a liberal arts education. Take Jonathan Morhaim ('11, Philosophy), an attorney at Liebler, Gonzalez & Portuondo in Miami and former Florida Assistant State Attorney.

"At first glance it may not seem that there are lots of opportunities for liberal arts majors," Morhaim said. "But that isn't the case. Philosophy, for example, translates particularly



At first glance it may not seem that there are lots of opportunities for liberal arts majors. But that isn't the case. **Philosophy, for example, translates particularly well into preparation for law school**, much of which is tracing the history of jurisprudence in order to understand the law through its history. Tracing ideas. **That's what you do as a philosophy major and that's what you do in law school."**

*Jonathan Morhaim, ('11, Philosophy)
Attorney at Liebler, Gonzalez & Portuondo in Miami
and former Florida Assistant State Attorney*

well into preparation for law school, much of which is tracing the history of jurisprudence in order to understand the law through its history. Tracing ideas. That's what you do as a philosophy major and that's what you do in law school."

Morhaim said that a liberal arts education – to think, to analyze, to communicate – is a reasonable and viable



Jonathan Morhaim

preparation for many professions and added, "I can't speak highly enough of my FGCU liberal arts education," he said. "The process was great, and the professors made learning the material enjoyable."

Then, there's Tiffany Esposito, ('09, Communication, '12, MBA). Ten years after earning her undergraduate degree, Esposito was appointed CEO of the Bonita Chamber of Commerce.

"A liberal arts education teaches students the necessary people skills, the soft skills that employers look for but that are so difficult to teach," she said. "The path I took – a liberal arts foundation followed by an MBA – gave

me the critical thinking skills and accounting and finance expertise, enabling me to lead a successful organization.

"The biggest challenge with a liberal arts degree is with students who need to learn how to articulate their skill set so that employers understand the skills they bring to the table."

Esposito began her career as communications manager at the Bonita Chamber. She was promoted to director of operations, then vice president after earning her MBA. A brief stint at the Naples Chamber was followed in 2016 with the offer to return to the Bonita Chamber as CEO. Full circle. "I've worked closely with Dr. Whitehouse," she said, "and I'm pleased to be representing businesses in our communities."

"A liberal arts education trains our students for a lifetime of work," added Gregerson, who pointed out that in today's world people work in multiple jobs and careers over a lifetime. "The ability to be adaptable and armed with a strong set of abilities to bear in lots of situations is critical."

In fact, key findings from a "2018 Employer Research" survey conducted by the AACU (Association of American Colleges and Universities) back up Gregerson's position:

90 percent of hiring managers valued oral communication; 87 percent, teamwork skills with diverse groups; 84 percent, critical thinking and analytic reasoning; 87 percent, ethical judgment and decision making; and 87 percent, applied knowledge in real-world settings.

In yet another study, "Liberal Arts Graduates and Employment: Setting the



Tiffany Esposito

Record Straight," the AACU found that "93 percent of employers agree that candidates' demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly and solve complex problems is more important than their undergraduate major."

Additionally, the report found that "4 out of 5 employers agree that all students should acquire broad knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences."

Indeed, liberal arts courses offer lots of creative opportunities to acquire these skills. Motley's Honors class, "The History of Rock and Roll," is just one example.

"The first thing I ask my students is, 'Why study rock and roll?'" Motley said.

“The answer is simple. There’s so much to learn about the 20th century through music – politics, economics, race, gender. Looking at how these subjects are represented in a popular musical genre and how this music fuels cultural changes stimulates debate and challenges students to think more deeply about their world.”

Motley points out that Elvis’ first record came out at the same time as Brown vs. the Board of Education. The year was 1954; the issue, Oliver Brown was denied admission into a white school and alleged, in a class action case, that laws allowing segregation in public schools were a violation of the 14th amendment. Today’s students were not even born in 1954 and the chances are good that they didn’t know about this case or its details. Chances are equally good that they didn’t understand how its successful resolution profoundly impacts education as we know it today.

“So, we talk about how that case reflected the culture back then, and we ask how it changed the culture,” said Motley. “A liberal arts education helps a person to better understand the world they live in. It invites debate ... If you just teach me to do a task or memorize facts, that’s fine. But learning how to live my life as a thinking person? That’s best.”

Kaliegh McFadden (’19, Psychology) is a

huge fan of her liberal arts education. It all started for McFadden during her freshman year when she discovered PAGES, a program for professional development and career advancement for liberal arts majors.

PAGES is an acronym for: **P**rofessional development & networking; **A**cademic achievement; **G**lobal sophistication; **E**ngaged living; **S**kills development – which just about says everything you need to know about the program.

Whitehouse, director of the program, explained: “Basically, PAGES is a career exploration program. We help students understand their professional options and learn how to be competitive.”

Student participation in the program is voluntary. PAGES uses a peer coaching model to help students clarify their professional goals, define steps to achieving those goals and hold one another accountable. This is accomplished through workshops, mentoring programs, study abroad opportunities and more.

“For example,” Whitehouse said, “there are probably 100 or more job options for a psychology major, but students probably only know about five of them.” PAGES opens their minds to future possibilities.

“The PAGES program is sponsored in large part through the generous donation of the Seidler family,” said Whitehouse, who credits the Seidler support as the

reason PAGES has managed the level of success it now enjoys.

Lee and Gene Seidler and Lee’s daughter, Laurie, created the Seidler Fund to benefit FGCU students. The fund enables FGCU to invest in a wide range of programs and learning opportunities for students in the College of Arts & Sciences through support for undergraduate scholarship, internships and mentoring, especially among students in the humanities disciplines. Lee Seidler has said, “There is no better foundation for success – by any measure – than a liberal arts education. Creativity, flexibility and reason allow us to shape the future.”

Once introduced to PAGES, McFadden participated in its workshops and programming throughout her college career. “Overall, what I’ve taken away from my experience is an expanded knowledge of the possibilities for me as a psychology major. It’s cool how my options broadened over time. I’m very proud of my liberal arts-ness.”

The bottom line, said President Martin: “A good dose of a liberal arts education is still necessary to advance well-rounded citizens. A college degree, more than any other thing, teaches students how to learn, and that’s the best roadmap and investment they can make for their future,” and, many would add, for the future of our communities and our world. ■

A liberal arts education **teaches students the necessary people skills**, the soft skills that employers look for but that are so difficult to teach. The path I took – a liberal arts foundation followed by an MBA – gave me the critical thinking skills and accounting and finance expertise, **enabling me to lead a successful organization.**

*Tiffany Esposito, (’09, Communication, ’12, MBA)
CEO of the Bonita Chamber of Commerce*

ALUMNI

RECOGNITION

Champion for people in need earns top Alumni Award

BY KEITH GIBSON

JESSICA GOODALL has spent her professional career trying to lift up people who are at the lowest points of their lives financially, emotionally and physically.

It's her unyielding dedication as a champion of the underserved and underappreciated in the Southwest Florida region she calls home that has made Goodall, founder of Eva's Closet & Foundation, the 2019 Alumna of Distinction at Florida Gulf Coast University. She was honored in February along with five other alumni named Soaring Eagles at the annual Alumni Awards, which recognize achievements by FGCU graduates in their communities and careers.

Goodall's organization works with no paid staff members – mostly interns and volunteers from FGCU. It's the perfect partnership, the way she sees it.

"I have received unconditional support from my social work professors and the Master of Social Work department from the onset," Goodall said. "The FGCU MSW program allowed me to strengthen my professional skills and aided in providing the building blocks for the establishment of Eva's Closet. In addition, Eva's Closet's success is due also to the wonderful FGCU social work and psychology interns, as well as FGCU volunteers, who assist in daily operations.



I am forever thankful for the amazing impact FGCU has played in my life."

In fact, it was while she was still working on her master's degree in social work with a clinical concentration at FGCU, which she earned in 2016, that Goodall brought together all of her knowledge and experience to start Eva's Closet & Foundation.

Eva's Closet has provided free assistance in every way imaginable to Southwest Florida's neediest residents and schools by addressing clients' needs with necessities such as food, clothing, housing, school supplies, utility bills and transportation. Eva's Closet assists more than 1,000 people each month with clients ranging from children and families living in poverty to domestic-violence survivors, foster children and those aging out of foster care,

homeless individuals and families, migrant farm workers, victims of natural disasters, low-income mothers and newborns in need.

Goodall started her career in 2004 as a child-welfare case manager, then spent time working with foster children. She has ministered to teens and adults struggling with substance abuse. She completed internships working with elderly clients, some with dementia; and with adults dealing with the dual diagnosis of substance-abuse and mental-health issues. She has reached out to grandparents who had become surrogate parents to their grandchildren as a group facilitator for a nonprofit grief-support agency.

Goodall also is a member of several local boards and committees, has been a Big Sister with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and has used her skills as a certified yoga instructor to teach that discipline to people with dementia and children diagnosed on the autism spectrum. She is a founding member of the Social Work Society, a networking group for social workers and mental-health professionals; and her efforts as a social worker were celebrated at the Social Work Recognition Ceremony at FGCU last year. She also has been honored by the Cape Coral Community Foundation, and was named to the Naples Herald's 40 under 40 list.

(continued on page 48)

“

I have received unconditional support from my social work professors and the Master of Social Work department from the onset.

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JESSICA GOODALL, ALUMNA OF DISTINCTION RECIPIENT



PHOTO BY BRIAN TIETZ

Jessica Goodall

(continued from page 46)

Besides Goodall, alumni from each of five FGCU colleges were honored as **Soaring Eagles** for their accomplishments. They are:

College of Arts and Sciences



▶ **Dr. Meghan Finley** first prepared for her veterinary career working as a certified assistant at Angel Animal Hospital in Bonita Springs while she was an Honors

student at FGCU earning her bachelor's degree in chemistry with minors in biology, interdisciplinary studies and music.

After graduating from FGCU in 2013, she studied veterinary medicine at Ross University in St. Kitts, West Indies, and served a clinical year at Texas A&M before returning to Angel Animal Hospital's Naples location in 2017 as an associate veterinarian. She is FGCU's first chemistry graduate to become a doctor of veterinary medicine.

Lutgert College of Business



▶ **Wally Crane** makes the best sandwiches of any alum in FGCU's 20-year history, and if you don't believe it, you haven't visited nearby Wally's Deli on Alico Road.

Armed with a degree in business management after his graduation from FGCU in 2012, Wally's entrepreneurial skills kicked into action when he couldn't find a decent breakfast sandwich. He gave up a promising career as a financial representative to open a mom-and-pop style deli in 2015, and has quickly built a devoted following. He is a loyal Eagle booster, and in the past year, he has expanded Wally's Deli sandwiches to Southwest Florida International Airport.

College of Education



▶ **Joseph Marro** has made a huge impact as a music instructor since he earned his master's degree in education in 2011 at FGCU, first in Southwest Florida school districts and most recently in New York.

He was a band, orchestra and choral director and instructor at Cypress Lake Middle School and High School Center for the Arts in Lee County, then Golden Gate Middle School and High School in Collier County. During that time, Marro also was strings director for elementary students with the Music Foundation of Southwest Florida. Since moving to New York in 2012, Marro has been an innovator and award-winning musical leader and educator, primarily with the New York City Department of Education and the Wyandanch Union Free School District, for which he currently serves as district music supervisor and administrative intern.

U.A. Whitaker College of Engineering



▶ **Dustin Chisum** graduated magna cum laude in 2012 with a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering from FGCU after a five-year tour in the Marine Corps and three years in the private sector.

He's now a project manager for AECOM Technology Corp. in Fort Myers, where he works on initiatives that focus on water and wastewater infrastructure. He has been selected for

that company's ELEVATE program, for employees considered to be in the top 1 percent of a workforce that numbers 90,000 globally. Chisum also leads the Southwest chapter of the Florida Water Environment Association (FWEA). He was heavily involved with activities while at FGCU, most notably as founding director of the Southwest Florida Solar Go-Kart Challenge and founding president of the FGCU Colony of Theta Tau, the national professional engineering fraternity.

Marieb College of Health & Human Services



▶ **Danielle Visone** holds two degrees from FGCU, earning a bachelor's in psychology in 2014 (with a minor in interdisciplinary studies) and a

master's in social work with a clinical concentration in 2016. She also has a passion for helping grieving children cope.

Since becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker last October, Visone has been program director of the Blue Butterfly Grief Center for Tidewell Hospice in Sarasota, where she develops and facilitates children's grief curriculum, recruits and conducts assessments on children and families, and networks with community stakeholders. Locally, she formerly was a program director for Valerie's House, growing the program from serving 20 children in one location to helping more than 150 in three locations during her two years there. Visone also worked with clients at Sunshine State Counseling Center, Eva's Closet & Foundation and with the Rainbow Trails Children's Grief Camp of Hope Hospice in Fort Myers.

CLASS OF 2004

Andrew French manages building projects, competes on court

BY LORI FERGUSON

AS A STUDENT AT FGCU, Andrew French played on the university's inaugural basketball team. "There's some debate between me and a couple of other guys as to who was the first to be signed by the university, but I know I'm among the first three," he says proudly.

French is still an avid supporter of the program, but these days you're as likely to find him in a construction zone as on a basketball court. The Sarasota native is a senior project manager for Blue Cord Design & Construction, an Orlando-based construction firm that's among the leading Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB) contractors in the country. A management major at FGCU, French has been with the company since 2013 and has managed some \$30 million in government healthcare projects from St. Petersburg to Jacksonville.

"I worked for an SDVOB construction company prior to joining Blue Cord and became very familiar with the ins and outs of building at federal facilities," he says. "Blue Cord has strong leadership, so when the project manager position opened up, I jumped at it. It was a perfect fit."

Most of the firm's work is in federal facilities – Army bases, Navy bases, veterans' hospitals, and the like – says French, but they also work in the private sector, particularly for universities. "The best part of my job is the satisfaction of taking a concept or set of construction documents and turning them into a final, finished, tangible product."

When French isn't poring over blueprints and change orders, he's running the boards for the St. Pete Tide, a semi-pro team in



the American Basketball Association. "I never thought I would be playing organized basketball at this level at my age," he admits. "Most of the players in the league are young guys, 22 to 28 years old, who are trying to gain access to overseas teams with the National Basketball Development League, so the level of competition is high. It keeps me in shape and allows me to do something I love in my spare time."

Ludmilla Wells, former FGCU associate professor of marketing, isn't surprised that French has found a way to continue pursuing his joint passions. "Andrew played for the university's basketball team and had a tremendous passion for the sport," she said. "It was a joy to watch him – he always put on a good show – and he brought that same spirit and energy into the marketing and advertising classes he took with me. It's gratifying to see what a successful businessman he's become."

French is equally proud of the success he's realized and credits FGCU with preparing him to compete in the workplace. "Unlike other schools, what the faculty teaches isn't cookie cutter – it's very actionable knowledge. I learned how to think outside the box and gained a lot of real-world experience that I continue to use daily." ■

“
Unlike other schools, what the faculty teaches isn't cookie cutter – it's very actionable knowledge.”

CLASS OF 2017

Education major finds most meaningful lessons take root in the garden

BY KATHY BECKER

CECELIA MORALES' career blooms from a seed planted freshman year.

A trip to the campus Food Forest to cheer up her visiting brother has grown into her position as the new organic garden manager at Shangri-La Springs in Bonita Springs, a 1921 hotel and spa being renovated as a destination for weddings, dining and fitness. The garden will support Harvest, a farm-to-table restaurant opening this year.

The Elementary Education major happened to visit the Food Forest, a student-run garden of edible plants available to all, during a meeting of the Food Foresters. "They gave us a tour and were so welcoming," she said, noting many impressionable moments of that visit, including one with the late John Herman, assistant professor of biology. "He stuck his whole arm into a snake hole and pulled out an indigo snake. It was a wild, 'wow' kind of place."

Morales found herself drawn back to the Food Forest to taste fruits and plants, attend meetings and try Meatless Mondays. Eventually, Jim Wohlpart, then dean of Undergraduate Studies and champion of the forest, asked Morales if she would like a job there as the service learning coordinator.

"It's a passion that grew," she says. "From the Food Forest to my personal

garden, I guess it was always there. I've always loved plants."

She continued her education classes but added courses for Permaculture certification as her role in the Food Forest thrived. Educational internships helped her realize that while she loved working with kids, she didn't love being inside. "Teaching inside is not my favorite place to teach," she says, adding she considered focusing on environmental education, but was worried only a small percentage of the curriculum would allow her to be outside.

As she cultivated her passion in the Food Forest, she added her own garden at home, and got a weekend job working with other Food Forest alumni at FruitScapes on Pine Island, where she still helps when needed.

Gardening keeps her a student. She is learning about working with the kitchen, and how the cycle of plant production will impact menus. The Food Forest is primarily perennial plants, and much of the Shangri-La Springs garden is annuals. She looks forward to sharing what she learns in her outdoor "classroom."

"I like working with children and the service aspect of giving back and helping children reach their full potential," she says. "I didn't feel like I was doing that. I do feel like I'm giving back with a job like this. I love getting people passionate about growing their own food. I love getting to share my experiences in the garden." ■

“
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A L U M N I



CLASS OF 2012

‘Slingin’ straws’ for sustainability

BY LORI FERGUSON

CHARLES VAUGHT plans to sell one million bamboo straws in the United States, and he'll be sleeping in his car until the job is done.

“Starting in March, I’m going to be driving all over Florida, slingin’ straws fulltime as the U.S. distributor for Bamboo Step,” he said with the passion of a true believer. “Bamboo straws are nature’s only sustainable straw – they’re much more durable than paper or corn or pasta straws and more practical than glass or metal. They’re already catching on in other parts of the world, and with states and municipalities here declaring war on plastic straws, it’s only a matter of time before Americans also understand that bamboo is the answer.”

Before dismissing Vaught’s goal as a wishful fantasy, know that he has never been one to shy away from a challenge. In 2012, still three months from his FGCU graduation, the resort and hospitality management major was offered a position as the general manager of Mekong Riverside Resort, a four-star property in Vietnam’s Mekong Delta. Convinced that the opportunity was too good to pass up, he petitioned FGCU Associate Professor Sherie Brezina – then the director of the School of Resort & Hospitality Management – to allow him to complete his remaining coursework and finals online.

Brezina agreed and that October, Vaught landed in Vietnam – and face-to-face with reality. “I was the only foreigner in a four-province area and one of only half-a-dozen English speakers at the resort. I was trying to finish my degree virtually while dealing with a 12-hour time difference and managing a resort for the first time ever. It was a total nightmare,” he said, “but I got

through it and graduated that December.”

Vaught spent the next five years managing eco-resorts in Vietnam – after Mekong Riverside, he joined Mango Bay Resort, followed by Bamboo Cottages, a family-owned, solar-powered, 22-room beach resort on Phu Quoc Island. He returned to the United States in July 2018.

“I needed to leave the island because I was losing perspective,” he said. “My plan was to come back to the States and give myself a week to reacclimate before making a decision on next steps.” Within days, however, Vaught was hearing news reports about America’s war on plastic straws and realized the time for bamboo straws in the U.S. had come.

Vaught is making the introduction with longtime friend Xavier Valmorin, the French founder of Bamboo Step, who perfected the company’s bamboo straw and tested the prototype at Bamboo Cottages.

Finding buyers hasn’t been easy, Vaught concedes, but he’s making inroads. The Tampa Bay Zoo is a client, as are a handful of boutique retailers including Naples-based Food & Thought and Oakes Farm Market. “Every company that’s tried our bamboo straws has reordered within 45 days,” he said proudly.

Vaught knows he’ll continue to face challenges, but he isn’t discouraged. “One of my greatest successes at FGCU was failing my accounting class. Professor (Ron) Albeit made me retake the course and the second time around, I got a ‘C’. It was tough, but I learned how to tackle a challenge and not give up.”

He’s taking the same approach with bamboo straws. “I don’t have any scientific evidence to back me up yet, but you can’t convince me that these straws are not amazing. Use them and you are literally helping the world!” ■

“
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FUTURE EAGLES CLUB

It's no secret that many children like to follow in their parents' footsteps along the path of life, including some who aspire to attend the alma maters of the older folks. Realizing that, the FGCU Alumni Association wants to ensure those little feet head toward the school entrances along Ben Hill Griffin Parkway when they are still in toddler shoe sizes.

The Alumni Association has introduced the Future Eagles Club, which was unveiled in February at the Breakfast With Azul event during Homecoming Weekend. For a \$20 membership fee, fledgling Eagles get exclusive birthday gifts and invitations to what Director of Alumni Relations Kim Wallace ('09, M.A. School Counseling; '06, B.A. Communication-Public Relations) calls "spirited events designed to educate children about university legacies and strengthen their bond to the place loved by Eagles everywhere."

Children up to age 17 can be enrolled at any time, after which they'll get a welcome card from Eagle mascot Azul, a special age-appropriate birthday gift, invitations to on-campus events and what Wallace calls "seasonal surprises."

"We are starting the program because our average alumni age is 33," Wallace said. "Our alumni are starting families, and we want to ensure that FGCU is with them every step of the way."

Although the Alumni Association is specifically targeting children of FGCU alums, Wallace said the Future Eagles Club is "open to all Eagles fans," meaning any child in the greater community can join.

Wallace confirmed that two charter members of the club are the children she shares with her husband, fellow FGCU alum Darrin Wallace ('05, Liberal Studies): Kailyn, 4, and Austin, 2. ■

Go to **fgcufutureeaglesclub.com** to learn how your own little twigs also can get entwined in The Nest.



A L U M N I



CLASS OF 2016

Little decisions help FGCU grad make big strides as scholastic art director

BY NINA BARBERO '16

NOT MANY PEOPLE become department heads in just their second year of teaching. For Felipe Maldonado ('16, Art), leading the art department at North Fort Myers High School just two years after graduation from Florida Gulf Coast University's art program has strengthened his belief in the importance of life's "little decisions."

It was a little decision that brought Maldonado to FGCU in the first place.

Born in California but raised in Broward County on Florida's east coast, Maldonado said he faced issues applying for in-state tuition at FGCU. He couldn't afford out-of-state fees, and although he was excited to be the first in his family to go to college, he thought his application for in-state tuition had not been filed in time.

The night he went online to withdraw his acceptance to FGCU, Maldonado checked his tuition payment page one last time.

"Out of nowhere, the number had changed," Maldonado said. "It had lowered to in-state tuition costs. I kind of freaked out. I woke up everyone in the house."

Maldonado, who keeps in touch with his FGCU mentors and will return in the fall to display work at an exhibition, says he fell in love with the university the minute he came to campus.

"Once I got here, this was home," he said. "FGCU was home."

Other little decisions helped Maldonado get to his current role.

When he saw a temporary teaching position open at Cape Coral High School, he called instead of filling out an online job application. They scheduled him for the next available job interview – the very next day at 8 a.m. Maldonado, who was at

an event on the other side of Florida, drove through the night to get to the interview and borrowed professional clothes from friends to wear because he didn't have time to go home and get his own.

He was offered the job later that day.

Maldonado made another seemingly small decision near the end of that school year to meet with his principal before applying for other jobs. The teacher he was filling in for would be returning soon, and Maldonado needed a new job. The principal appreciated the meeting, and when Maldonado interviewed to be the ceramics teacher at North Fort Myers High School, that principal personally called and recommended him for the position. For the second time in his life, Maldonado received a job the same day as his interview.

His energy and passion for art are now making big impressions on his colleagues and students.

Ellen Bianchi started in the North Fort Myers art department at the same time as Maldonado, and says he is part of the most collegial group she's worked with in 40 years of teaching.

"We get along famously," Bianchi said. "We look to him for leadership and guidance, but he looks to us for guidance as well. It's a very lateral kind of work relationship."

Maldonado and Bianchi also collaborate outside of school. When Bianchi opens her new location for DAAS Co-Op Art Gallery in Fort Myers this spring, it will display some of Maldonado's pottery.

Maldonado keeps his students interested in art by taking them to museums, on college tours, and giving them local opportunities to showcase their art. Several of his students had work featured at ArtFest 2019 in downtown Fort Myers,

both in the student showcase and the chalk-art competition.

At ArtFest, a local housing community representative asked Maldonado for student help creating a mural in the community. Now, Maldonado is working to make that a reality, and to get his students involved in mural projects throughout Fort Myers.

"It brings me joy to be able to teach them, help them find their voice and continue their love for art," Maldonado said. ■

“It brings me joy to be able to teach them, help them find their voice and continue their love for art.”

GIVING



Annual gala celebrates student success, scholarship and community involvement

BY KAREN FELDMAN

THE PRESIDENT'S Celebration became the Blue & Green Celebration this year, a move made to redirect the focus on the community.

The reason, said FGCU President Mike Martin, is that it's "a name that more accurately captures the essence of this special night. This evening we celebrate the university and the community that has helped make it the remarkable institution it is today.

"It is a name that encompasses the

community, our generous donors and sponsors, our faculty, staff and students, all of whom are critically important to the continued success of the university – all of whom are proudly part of the Green & Blue."

Some 350 people, dressed in their black-tie best, filled Alico Arena on Feb. 16 for a night of dining, dancing, fundraising and inspiration. The arena, normally the site of cheering basketball fans, had been elegantly transformed with white curtains and blue and green lights, musicians and tables with ornate centerpieces.

Much of the evening's inspiration came from a presentation by FGCU professors and cancer researchers Kerry Lee and Lyndsay Rhodes and their student researchers, Ivie Patino, Xylia Horgan, Mackenzie Grubb and Duneska Moran-Deleon, who gave a multimedia presentation about their research involving nanoparticles in treating breast cancer. Their presentation was excerpted from the university's new Research Roadshow (*see page 66 for details*).

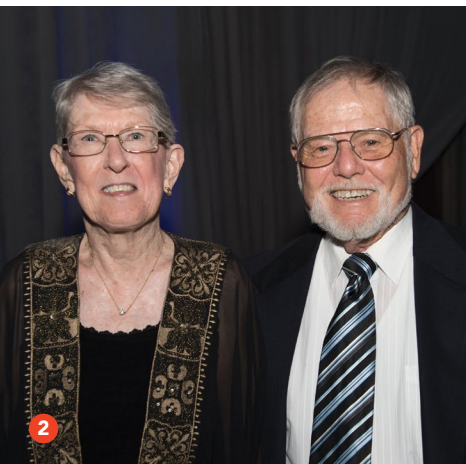
The event raised more than \$400,000 for scholarships and student success at FGCU. ■

“

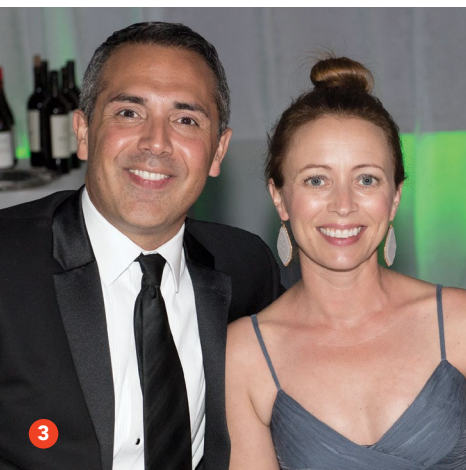
It is a name (The Blue & Green Celebration) that encompasses the community, our generous donors and sponsors, our faculty, staff and students, all of whom are critically important to the continued success of the university.

”

MIKE MARTIN, FGCU PRESIDENT



ON THE
WEB
FGCU360.com
PHOTO
GALLERY



1. Kerry Lee and Lyndsay Rhodes

2. Rebecca and George Fogg

3. Jeff and Amy Ospina

4. James and Glenda Llorens and
President Mike and Jan Martin

5. FGCU Board of Trustees Vice Chair
Robbie Roepstorff

6. David and Jackie Gerson

7. Hugo Myslicki, Mayela Rojas
and Andres Pas

Fueling economic growth and affecting social change

BY KAREN BOOTH

“LIGHTNING SPEED” best describes the meteoric growth of the Institute for Entrepreneurship at FGCU.

Sandra Kauanui, the institute’s director, reports that after introducing the Interdisciplinary Entrepreneurship degree program in fall 2017, enrollment in both entrepreneurship major and minor programs grew from 173 in the 2016-17 academic year to 515 in the current year. For the record, these numbers translate into 263 businesses launched, \$2.44 million raised and a whopping \$4.51 million in revenue realized. Pretty impressive.

“Pretty impressive,” however, creates its own set of challenges. In the case of the institute, classroom, incubator, event and office space is the issue. With soaring enrollment, the institute has outgrown its temporary quarters in the off-campus Emergent Technologies Institute.

The Institute for Entrepreneurship’s efforts complement those of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Regional Economic Research Institute (RERI), both currently housed in the Lutgert College of Business. Unfortunately Lutgert does not have the space to continue to house these programs.

The answer? Construct a new building – a Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation – bringing all three programs together under one roof. On campus. Serving all students. Thanks to an anonymous donor’s \$4 million challenge, the answer moves nicely into the “doable” column.

But let’s be clear. The center will be so much more than brick and mortar. The Institute for Entrepreneurship, SBDC and the RERI are, each in its own way, incubators, the engines driving economic and social change in Southwest Florida and beyond.

Bill Rice, interim vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the FGCU Foundation, said,



Sandra Kauanui, director of the Institute for Entrepreneurship, works one-on-one with her aspiring entrepreneurs.

“He (the anonymous donor) has been an investor in the university since before we built even one building. He has an abiding love for the university, and he knows and appreciates that our economy is driven by small business, and that a strong university translates into a strong community.”

The \$4-million gift comes with a challenge: FGCU must raise the additional \$4 million needed to build the center.

The Small Business Administration calls small business “the cornerstone of our communities. With regards to job creation ... [small business] creates two out of every three new jobs in the U.S. each year,” an extraordinary statistic that speaks to the impact of entrepreneurs on a region’s economic growth.

Kauanui said that the entrepreneurial spirit is the opposite of a “woe-is-me personality,” a mindset completely foreign to an entrepreneur.

Indeed, woe-is-me individuals tend to fixate on the problem, not the solution and wither at the very thought of change. On the other hand, Kauanui said, “Entrepreneurs see a problem as an opportunity, a change as a challenge to create something new and, in the process, fill an economic or social need and launch a business.”

Kauanui is well positioned to lead the entrepreneurial charge. She launched her own accounting/financial business, and operated it for 22 years before selling and joining the ranks of academia.

Recent figures from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor state: “The U.S. now has more than 27 million working-age Americans, or 14 percent of the population, currently starting or running their own business.”

Brian Luizzi ('13, Bioengineering) and his twin brother, Christopher Luizzi ('13, Bioengineering), founders of M3L Solutions, are two among the many students guided by the institute who are combining their knowledge of bioengineering into an innovative

entrepreneurial endeavor. Their abbreviated story begins with the brothers teaming up with Dr. Joseph Magnant, a vascular vein specialist, to find a solution to a medical need.

The challenge? Develop a reliable method to help surgeons in the operating room determine if or when to insert a stent into a patient's vein. The solution? Create a surgical measurement tool to convert anatomical data into quantifiable physiological data, thus assisting in this critical decision making.

The brothers enlisted their father, Philip Luizzi, an electrical engineer with the support of the Institute's Entrepreneur in

Residence, to accomplish the task – the three are now in the process of developing their first product.

HOW TO GIVE

An anonymous donor has pledged \$4 million to build a Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation on campus. This gift comes with a match challenge to raise the additional \$4 million to complete the project. For details, contact Bill Rice, interim vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the FGCU Foundation, at brice@fgcu.edu or call (239) 590-1077.

The Institute for Entrepreneurship is also home to the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program (VFEP), which offers qualifying veterans online and/or on-campus courses in entrepreneurship. With almost one in four active-duty service members and veterans wanting to open and operate their own business, this program is a practical hands-on way to say, "Thank you for your service."

James Hardenbrook served eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps and was honorably discharged in 2012. A couple of years ago, he learned of the VFEP program through the Department of Veterans Affairs. One thing led to another, and thanks to the support of the VFEP and FGCU's Institute for Entrepreneurship, Hardenbrook and his wife, Marie Hardenbrook, now operate an up-and-coming food truck serving Southwest Florida.

Their business is The Frozen Chosen; their product, liquid nitrogen ice cream, which Hardenbrook said is a "smoother, richer ice cream product which they make on demand."

Hardenbrook gives much credit for his growing success to the financial assistance he has received from individual donors. "It's hard to be a single individual trying to start up a business," he said, "but these individuals see capabilities person-to-person, whereas banks tend to focus only on the bottom line."

"I owe everything to FGCU's Institute for Entrepreneurship, the state of Florida, and private donors who believed in us. Every day, I'm so appreciative." ■

LONG-TIME ENTREPRENEUR FRANK DAVELER HELPS ASPIRING ONES GET THEIR START

Centenarian Frank Daveler appreciates the time and commitment it takes to be a successful entrepreneur. He's living proof, having launched and sold more than a dozen companies during his long and rewarding career. He understands from first-hand experience how one person can innovate solutions to complex challenges, which is one reason among many that he and his late wife, Ellen – who sat on the board of directors of all his companies – decided to partner with FGCU to support the next generation of innovators.

The Davelers were the first to support FGCU's now thriving Institute of Entrepreneurship and, since that time, have continued to generously fund scholarships and activities for the program.

Bill Rice, interim vice president for University Advancement, recently spoke with Daveler who, Rice said, offered the following advice to those students aspiring to start their own company: "Pick a product, explore its potential, and learn how to produce it. One of the most important things is who you hire or partner with ... You can't do everything. Hire the must-have skills that you are not strong in."

Not surprisingly, Frank Daveler's own journey was a long one. Born in 1918 when Woodrow Wilson was president, he experienced lots of changes in his 100-plus years of living – from the early days of indoor plumbing and the Model T. To highways and byways, and cell telephones, and airplanes. To a man on the moon. To advanced weaponry and the dawning of modern warfare. Indeed, the mid-1900s marked the beginnings of technological advances that continue to impact our lives today.

Daveler contributed his knowledge and expertise to the cause. He first received a scholarship to Drexel University, a top engineering school in the country at the time. He was top of his class for two-plus years, but a change in the university's programming led him to change direction. Ultimately, he was selected as one of 10 people to be trained in metallurgy, a field of science in which he excelled.

He was 21 when World War II broke out. He received an exemption because of his metallurgy training, and he went to work with a company designing armament for U.S. tanks and battleships because, at the time, they were defenseless against German projectiles.

After the war, the company folded as there was no longer a demand for armaments. It was then that Daveler launched his first company – an engineering group. Over the next 20 years, he started and sold close to a dozen companies. He then went to work for AMETEK as lead engineer and worked on ground-breaking technology in the aerospace industry.

On behalf of the students of FGCU, Rice said simply, "We can't thank Mr. Daveler enough for his support of our students and his confidence in the university."

– Karen Booth

Hillmyer-Tremont Foundation honored for continued commitment to student-athletes

BY KEITH GIBSON

MANY COLLEGE sports fans mistakenly are under the impression that athletic programs have an endless supply of scholarship money to disperse, but that certainly isn't the case. Beyond NCAA restrictions on the number of scholarships each athletic program can award by sport, there's the matter of raising the money to fund those scholarships.

For Florida Gulf Coast University Athletics, one Southwest Florida organization has stepped up from the beginning to answer that need.

The Hillmyer-Tremont Student-Athlete Foundation provides scholarships to student-athletes from schools in Lee and Collier counties who are unable to pursue their academic goals without financial assistance. The foundation committed to FGCU's first endowed scholarship for athletics in 2001, and including a recent \$250,000 gift to the university, it has dedicated almost \$800,000 to help FGCU student-athletes pursue degrees. That's a significant chunk of the more than \$2 million in scholarship money the Hillmyer-Tremont foundation has dispersed since its 1997 inception.

Named after former Lee County developer and business leader Maurice "Monk" Hillmyer and Elmer Tremont, a legendary scholastic basketball coach and teacher, the foundation rewards local students who live by the values leaders such as Hillmyer, who died at age 84 in 2008, and Tremont, now 89, stand for: team play, leadership, academic success and a commitment to community service

and sportsmanship.

It is thus fitting that FGCU, in recognition of the foundation's latest gift, is naming the hospitality suite in Alico Arena after Hillmyer and Tremont. The tribute will include a portrait of the two men along with a plaque to honor them



Elmer Tremont (left) and Maurice "Monk" Hillmyer

with engraved plates recognizing FGCU recipients of the scholarships since 2001-02.

Stanley "Butch" Perchan, FGCU's senior associate athletic director for external affairs emeritus, also pointed out that the Hillmyer-Tremont Foundation has sponsored the university's student-athlete Academic Honors Luncheon for the past decade.

"Many on the board are also donors

at FGCU, and many also have relatives that attend or attended FGCU," said Perchan, who joined FGCU in 2000 and coordinated the fundraising for FGCU's sports programs and state-of-the-art athletics facilities. "Board members have consistently carried a powerful message of support for FGCU, crediting us with playing a key role in higher education and growth in our Southwest Florida community."

The board includes Tremont himself, Monk's son Barry Hillmyer, Sam Crimaldi, Darin McMurray, Morgan Bowden, Mark Wiles and John Stroemer.

The foundation support for FGCU's mission that Perchan mentioned is reaffirmed by Crimaldi.

"We still provide a number of other direct scholarships to athletes that total up to \$100,000 a year," he said, "but since FGCU has come along, the university has provided an extraordinary opportunity to local young men and women who, for one reason or another, can't leave our area, but are capable of getting that first-rate college degree. The community truly appreciates what FGCU does for the youth of the Fort Myers area."

Noting that most of the board members are former college athletes themselves, Crimaldi said that "commitment to athletics can make a difference in your life, as it made a difference in ours.

"As business leaders and owners, education is what we depended on, but athletics is what gave us an advantage," Crimaldi said, speaking of his fellow board members. "If you carry the work and commitment it takes to be an athlete into the classroom, you'll be successful." ■

SPORTS

VOLLEYBALL

Set for long-term success

Botsford and his FGCU volleyball champions killing it in the ASUN / **BY KEITH GIBSON**

WHEN MATT Botsford took over as head of Florida Gulf Coast University's volleyball program in 2014, he brought along impressive assistant-coaching experience working on the staffs of some of the nation's top collegiate programs.

What he couldn't bring with him was the talent needed to compete not only in the ASUN Conference, but as a national NCAA Division I mid-major force. He had to recruit that himself.

"Coaches are 100-percent reliant on their personnel, and you need to attract the appropriate talent to go after the goals you have set. That takes time," said Botsford, who was an assistant coach with five programs before coming to FGCU, most recently at Colorado State.

Five seasons, 116 wins, and the program's first ASUN championship and NCAA regional victory later, it indeed appears Botsford's ability to recruit top talent to FGCU matches his ability to coach it. This past season signaled the program's true arrival — a 27-7 record and ASUN title that included the Eagles avenging their only conference loss in 16 games by beating Kennesaw State in the championship match, then following with an upset over Central Florida in a first-round NCAA pairing on the Knights' home court that erased two losses to UCF in the regular season.

"We've been able to attract some high-level student-athletes here, and it has put us in a good position," said Botsford, who



Coach Matt Botsford talks to his team during a match against Jacksonville last fall.

not surprisingly was named ASUN Coach of the Year.

The "high-level" roster starts with the two most recent ASUN Players of the Year: Cortney VanLiew, a sophomore outside hitter who in 2018 became FGCU's first American Volleyball Coaches Association Division I All-American; and outside hitter Amanda Carroll, the 2017 conference MVP whose senior season in 2018 was cut short by a knee injury the second week of play, but who has been granted a medical redshirt for 2019 as a graduate student.

"It's pretty nice when you have two players of the year on the floor," Botsford said.

VanLiew, a native of Seymour, Ind., said she's "really looking forward to the coming season. We have good players returning, and more coming in."

VanLiew was first attracted to FGCU because of Botsford's great reputation and

popularity among coaches in the Hoosier state. "It's an amazing opportunity to play for him," she said. "He understands the game and thinks about it in ways that are different than other coaches. He puts emphasis on statistics and percentages, which gives us immediate goals to work toward. He's also big on the mental aspect of the game, which I really appreciate."

VanLiew, a straight-A accounting major who's also on the CoSIDA Academic All-District First Team and ASUN All-Academic Team, is also motivated by the educational challenges she experiences here. "I love my professors in business and accounting in particular, and it's been great getting to know all the students I'll be taking classes with the next two years. I'm so glad to have found a major I really like, and professors who truly care about your success after college." ■

For a longer version of this story, visit **FGCU360.com**



BASKETBALL

Hard year for hoops

But basketball teams remain optimistic about chances for next season / **BY SETH SOFFIAN**

THE MID-MARCH scene in Alico Arena was so familiar as to look like a recording: thousands of FGCU basketball fans rising to their feet in heartfelt applause, players – and their self-effacing coach, Karl Smesko – dancing. Another ASUN Conference tournament trophy held aloft.

Once again, the women's basketball team and the program's only coach secured a third straight NCAA tournament berth – its sixth in the eight years since the school has been a full Division I member.

On the sidelines were two important FGCU figures from different eras whose expressions said everything about this season for both basketball programs – the women who reached the “Big Dance” again under their nationally revered coach; the men who didn't under a new but familiar face.

Kelsey Diemer, formerly Jacobson, a key player on the 2011-12 team, the first to reach the D-I NCAA tournament, said, “Every year I get asked, ‘How's the girls' team going to be?’ They could have 10 new players. But I know it is going to be top level. It's unbelievable what he does.”

Nearby, freshman Caleb Catto, who grew up in Southwest Florida admiring former FGCU stars such as Brett Comer and Bernard Thompson, looked on with envy.

“It's inspiring,” said Catto, standing with other members of the men's team that went 14-18 under first-year coach Michael Fly. “It's motivating.”

The final tally for the women was another sterling record (28-5) and then a 69-62 loss as the No. 13 seed at No. 4 Miami in the NCAA tournament first round.

Major roster turnover and injuries hamstrung the men's squad, which made

its earliest exit from the ASUN tournament since 2011-12.

Still, there is hope.

“I've been doing this awhile at this point, at some different places with really good teams and really good players,” said Fly, 35, named FGCU's fourth men's basketball coach after seven seasons as an Eagles assistant, including three that led to NCAA tournament berths.

“Never faced this much adversity in one season,” Fly said. “Ever.”

ABOVE: FGCU women's basketball Coach Karl Smesko celebrates with the team after their win over Liberty as they clinched the ASUN Championship in March.

Right: Men's basketball coach Michael Fly looks on as his team plays Liberty in January.

The setbacks started scarcely after FGCU Director of Athletics Ken Kavanagh quickly named Fly to succeed Joe Dooley as head coach last April when Dooley left after five seasons to become head coach at East Carolina.

Powerhouse guard Zach Johnson, expected to lead a team already losing fellow stalwarts Brandon Goodwin and Christian Terrell to graduation, transferred to his hometown Miami Hurricanes.

In December, senior guard Haanif Cheatham, a key transfer from Marquette, succumbed to a shoulder problem. Surgery ended his season and college career.

Weeks later, senior center Ricky Doyle, who battled multiple health problems after leaving Bishop Verot High School in Fort Myers but was counted on after finally getting healthy, also ended his college career because of chronic back woes.

In January, starting forward RaySean Scott Jr. was sidelined by a knee injury, and junior backup guard Decardo Day was dismissed for violating team rules.

The upside to losing so many players was the critical playing time Catto, fellow freshman guard Zach Scott and sophomore forwards Brian Thomas and Troy Baxter Jr. got, setting a foundation that reminded some of Fly's first season in Southwest Florida.

That was 2011-12, when Comer and Thompson were then-rookie coach Andy Enfield's first signees, returning players Chase

Fieler and Sherwood Brown were being reshaped into program pillars, and the arrival of Dunk City was only a season away.

FGCU in 2012-13 famously became what is still the only No. 15 seed in NCAA tournament history to reach the Sweet 16.

"There are certainly some similarities" to the 2011-12 season, said Kavanagh. "When that season ended, I think everybody was already excited for the next year. I think that's the way a lot of people feel."

From mid-January to March, FGCU went 9-4. Highlights included a win over then-reigning conference champion Lipscomb at home and narrow losses on the road to regular-season ASUN co-champions Liberty and Lipscomb.

When the league tournament arrived, an injury, to junior forward Brady Ernst, provided a perfect microcosm of the season.

The fourth-seeded Eagles started badly at home against No. 5 NJIT, falling behind by 20 points in both halves. They came roaring back both times behind their young players and seniors Dinero Mercurius and Schadrac Casimir, a one-year graduate transfer who finished as the team's season scoring leader.

FGCU ultimately lost 83-78 to bring an end to the Eagles' run of six seasons with at least 20 wins.

But many fans applauded in the end. Given the growth of the underclassmen, as well as an oversized signing class that FGCU is confident will bear fruit, many are keen on the future.

"I'm probably one of the most optimistic people you'll ever meet," said Catto, a Southwest Florida Christian Academy graduate who was in seventh grade when FGCU burst on to the national scene in 2013.

"I believe 100 percent in a tournament run. You've got to have big dreams and big

goals. I know Sweet 16 sounds crazy. But that's something in my heart I want to do. They left the imprint, so let's follow in their footsteps."

There's no question whose imprint is greatest in the women's program.

Despite losing five seniors, Smesko's squad reloaded to be nationally relevant again this season. Not even a late-season knee injury to senior guard Lisa Zderadicka could keep FGCU from maintaining its place alongside women's college basketball royalty UConn, Notre Dame and Baylor as the only D-I women's programs with at least 25 wins every year since 2010-11.

Zderadicka and returning junior starters Nasrin Ulel and Tytionia Adderly provided strong continuity to last year's team.

But with transfers Keri Jewett-Giles, Destiny Washington, Kerstie Phills and Davion Wingate all new to the lineup, it took the Eagles several months to develop the cohesion needed to make Smesko's intricate systems effective.

Central to that was a level of unity not all programs are lucky enough to have.

"I've been on two other teams, and I've always had my close friends," said Washington, who came to FGCU as a graduate transfer after stops at Ball State and Loyola-Chicago. "But the moment I got here ... it was just so easy. We just naturally wanted to be around each other."

In the NCAA tournament, a cold start for FGCU's prolific 3-point attack put the Eagles in an early hole. They trailed by 14 early in the third quarter.

Jewett-Giles, a product of Dunbar High School who transferred to FGCU after two seasons at Southern Miss, led a fierce comeback. Her 3-pointer early in the fourth quarter gave the Eagles their only lead of the game, 51-50. But it wasn't enough.

A lack of depth cost the Eagles, slowed down the stretch by fatigue.

"I thought we were capable of playing better, and I think everybody on our team thought we were capable of playing better," Smesko said. "But I'm proud of the effort our young ladies had. We feel like we have a good program that we're going to break through and get to the Sweet 16, or better, sometime soon. But (it) wasn't to be today." ■





Coaches Dave Deiros and Dave Tollett

COACHES

The Daves of the diamonds

Baseball's Tollett, softball's Deiros founding coaches with right approaches / **BY KEITH GIBSON**

JUST AS SCORES OF administrators, faculty and staff had signed on a few years before them with only dreams and visions of a future to use as blueprints, the two men who were hired in 2001 to lead Florida Gulf Coast University's then non-existent baseball and softball teams had taken similar paths to join founding Athletics Director Carl McAloose's new staff.

For starters, both are named Dave.

Both had enjoyed consistent success as Southwest Florida high school coaches, Dave Tollett for 10 years and 175 wins at Punta Gorda's Charlotte High School in Charlotte County to FGCU's north; David Deiros for six seasons and 116 wins at Lely and Gulf Coast high schools in Collier County to the university's south.

Both make their livings coaching young men and women in sports built around diamonds. And the actual diamonds themselves that both helped build on the northeast side of campus with the support of staff, students and especially generous donors – Swanson Stadium for baseball and the FGCU Softball Complex, along with their adjacent training facilities – truly sparkle in comparison to facilities of other universities not only in the state, but nationally.

Both were aboard for FGCU's rapid athletics-program ascension and transition from NAIA to NCAA Division II to NCAA Division I.

Both created programs that have lured players talented enough to win almost 1,200 games in 16 seasons, multiple ASUN regular-season and tournament championships, national rankings and a handful of NCAA Tournament games – including a 2012 softball upset over the University of Florida that was FGCU's first NCAA Division I postseason

triumph in any sport.

Both have earned multiple Coach of the Year honors at various levels, and mentored so many student-athletes who have earned national, regional and conference all-star accolades – both on the field and, most impressively, in the classroom – that you'll have to go to fgcu.edu/athletics with plenty of time to spare to look them all up.

And while the women who play softball have limited options for pursuing professional playing careers after college, that certainly isn't the case with baseball players. Tollett has coached more than 40 young men at FGCU who have been drafted by Major League Baseball organizations and/or signed by independent or international teams, with one, Boston Red Sox pitching ace Chris Sale, a perennial All-Star and potential Hall of Fame candidate.

But the stars don't tell the whole story.

Both Daves also produce graduates who come from a service-learning culture in their programs that often blossoms into commitment to lifelong volunteerism, and a dedication to teamwork and attention to detail that transcend sports to lay the foundation for career and life success.

In short, FGCU's Daves of the diamonds have been major growth catalysts in the university's 22-year history, with only founding women's basketball coach Karl Smesko in their rarified class as coaches who have been Eagles since Day One (women's soccer coach Jim Blankenship also is a program-founding coach, but his team didn't start play until 2007).

As they coach in their 17th spring of everything cobalt blue and emerald green, we asked the two guys named Dave to describe what it's like to create diamonds out of dreams.

For instance:

On recruiting in the beginning with no scholarship money to offer or facilities to show:

▶ “I would pack my lunch and dinner and get on the road,” Tollett said. “Several nights were spent at rest stops because we didn't have money for hotels. I think I stayed in my car 32 nights the first year.”

On the biggest changes they've seen at FGCU through the years:

▶ “Without question, for me it is how much Southwest Florida has adopted us as ‘their’ hometown university, even though the majority of our friends and donors attended or are from elsewhere,” Deiros said. “(Athletics Director) Ken Kavanagh likes to say that our Athletics programs are the front door of the university, and I'd like to think that our softball program and our other 14 sports have been fantastic ‘greeters.’”

On how they “sell” FGCU to a recruit and her or his family:

▶ “I can look them in the eye and tell them that I can promise them that the son will graduate, and that he has a chance to develop both as a player and a person,” Tollett said. “We have had the National Player of the Year (Sale) and the National Freshman of the Year (Jake Noll) and four All-Americans, but we also talk about our alumni from the academic side. We have produced doctors, engineers, MBAs, sports agents and many other successful young men.” ■

For the full question-and-answer interview with FGCU's Daves of the diamonds, visit fgcu360.com, where you'll also find more photos and the coaches' personal selections of their All-Time Eagles teams entering the 2019 season.



Research Roadshow takes campus to the community

Florida Gulf Coast University is known for its athletics, cultural offerings, community service and wide-ranging degree programs. Perhaps less well known is the wealth of research conducted by teams of faculty and students.

That was the goal of the Research Roadshow, a multimedia show recently performed in Estero, Bonita and Fort

Myers. The show explored three projects with their principal researchers, along with video and music to illustrate how the university's research addresses the region's concerns.

"The Potential of Nanotechnology in Cancer Research" explored the use of infinitesimal particles to treat breast cancer. The segment featured Kerry Lee and Lyndsay Rhodes, assistant professors of biological sciences, and students Xylia Horgan, MacKenzie Grubb, Duneshka Moran-Deleon and Ivie Patino. ¹

Next, Maria Colmer, associate

professor in occupational therapy, and Tara McKenna, PGA Golf Management Program director, along with golf student Thor Parrish, showed that a three-quarter golf swing is as effective, but less stressful, to the body, as a full swing. ²

Finally, Thomas Cimarusti, associate professor of music, and music therapy major Madeline Peterson explored "The Persuasive Power of Koreshan Hymns," the music of the religious community that once called Estero home. Additional choral members joined in for the grand finale. ³ ■

— Karen Feldman

PHOTOS BY JAMES GRECO





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FGCU President Mike Martin, flanked by faculty and students, announces the formation of The Water School at FGCU, which will take on the multi-faceted challenges the region and beyond faces when it comes to water.