

USF

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
MAGAZINE

The OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the
USF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
SPRING 2022

RHEA LAW

USF's eighth
president



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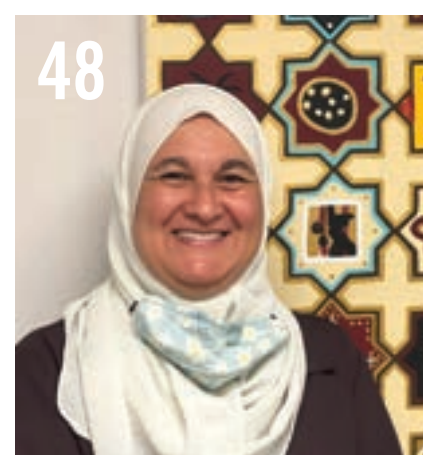
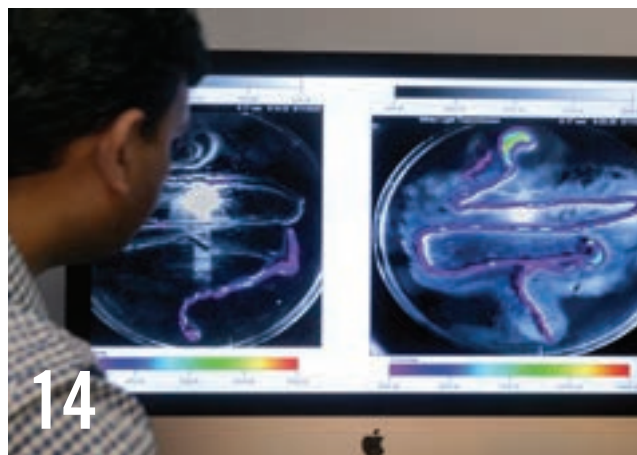


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Cover photo:
SANDRA C. ROA | USF News

From the President



Photo: ALISON LONG | USF Health Communications

Dear alumni, friends and supporters of USF:

I HOPE YOU and your families are well.

I am humbled, grateful and excited to be writing to you as USF's eighth president, a role that represents the honor of a lifetime. It is hard for me to put into words what it means to have the opportunity to continue leading this great university — one that I hold so close to my heart — on a trajectory filled with promise and possibilities for our students, faculty and staff.

I feel energized and a deep sense of commitment thinking about all that we can accomplish together, enriching the region, state and beyond as we go. And I look forward to continuing to engage with our valued alumni as USF continues soaring to bold, new heights.

This issue of USF magazine includes an update on a project that promises to be transformational for our university.

Many of you may recall the announcement last fall from the chair of the USF Board of Trustees, Will Weatherford, that we would pursue construction of an on-campus stadium. Since then, Michael Kelly, vice president of Athletics, and Jay Stroman, Life Member, CEO of the USF Foundation, have been leading a Campus Stadium Planning Committee. As the story on page 10 details, we are moving forward, with a recommended site identified.

The site the committee has recommended to the Board of Trustees is on the east side of the Tampa campus in a location known as Sycamore Fields, which is currently used for intramural sports. It's a great location — close to the USF Athletics district, student housing and

parking. And, we are extremely grateful to Frank and Carol Morsani, longtime supporters of USF, for their generous commitment of \$5 million to the project, inspiring steadfast supporters Jeff and Penny Vinik to make a \$5 million gift. Each couple hopes their contribution will be a catalyst for others to step forward to fund this important initiative.

Football is an important thread in the fabric of our university — that's true for all of our athletic endeavors. But the stadium will be more than that. It will be about engagement. It will enhance the overall campus experience by giving students, faculty, staff, alumni and the surrounding communities a place to come together, develop deeper relationships with the university and build memories across generations. We will keep you updated as planning continues.

An important research initiative, called the USF Metropolitan Food Project, is under way at our university. As the story on page 14 explains, this interdisciplinary effort is designed to develop new food growing systems that will improve human health, particularly for those who experience food insecurity.

If you haven't heard about the Stampede for Women, I encourage you to read the story on page 18. The Stampede is designed to generate funds, raise awareness and create focused opportunities to support our women student-athletes. More than \$150,000 has been raised since the initiative was introduced in February 2021. Contributions will support scholarships, career development and capital improvements. We also believe the Stampede can establish a fresh community of female leaders in the Tampa Bay region who could become professional mentors for USF student-athletes. You may not know this, but our women's teams have won 59 conference championships! We want to help our student-athletes succeed in the classroom, in competition and in all of their endeavors after they earn their degrees.

I also hope you will read the wonderful story about alumna Magda Elkadi Saleh on page 48. She is a mother, grandmother and wife — the founder of three Tampa Islamic schools and currently the administrator of one of them, Bayaan Academy. And she's president of Radiant Hands, a nonprofit created to support Muslim women and at-risk families, which has been resettling Afghan refugees in our area. Magda and her colleagues have been helping resettle refugees from Islamic and Arabic-speaking countries since 2015, and they have assisted more than 360 newcomers in recent months — including with jobs and housing. Her tireless efforts are truly inspiring.

Thank you for all that you do for our students and our university.

**RHEA LAW, '77, LIFE MEMBER
PRESIDENT**

Inclusive strategic planning for future prosperity

By Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman

USF REMAINS RESILIENT, even as we face impending leadership changes, budgetary challenges and similar uncertainties that are impacting all national institutions of higher education. It is precisely because of the unpredictability of this current context that we have been intentional about engaging in an inclusive strategic planning and implementation process, involving internal and external stakeholders. These inclusive deliberations, led by an initial Strategic Advisory Committee (co-chaired by Charles Stanish and Sylvia Thomas) and a Strategic Implementation Committee (co-chaired by Prithish Mukherjee and Theresa Chisolm), culminated in the USF Board of Trustees' approval of our new institutional strategic plan.

Of the priorities included in our institutional strategic plan, the fourth goal related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is most relevant to my role because it focuses on the need to: 1) recruit and retain diverse students, faculty and staff, 2) enhance academic programs and curricula, 3) create adaptable instructional and research workspace, 4) cultivate positive employee experience, and 5) foster community partnerships.

The power of this new USF strategic plan rests in its ability to codify the practices, policies and commitments that will ultimately empower leaders to promote diversity as our competitive advantage. In campus surveys, this goal was consistently ranked among the most important to stakeholders. This goal is not merely under the purview of one office but rather is the responsibility of all of us. Our newly formed DEI Council, which is composed of USF leaders across our campuses who have been appointed to formal and informal positions to advance diversity, will be further empowered to collaboratively implement our institutional commitment to DEI.

Though the specific metrics of the plan are not yet defined, USF leaders have not been idly waiting. For example, the USF Office of Admissions and Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity organized the second annual Admitted Student Calling campaign. Last year, the campaign targeted underrepresented Black undergraduate students and contributed to the 16% increase in the enrollment of first time-in-college Black students. This year, the calling campaign



has expanded to include Latina/o/x students and will enlist the assistance of Alianza Latina Faculty and Staff Association and the USF Status of Latinos Presidential Advisory Council. As an effort to address inclusive curricula, the USF Faculty Senate's Council on Racial Justice passed a resolution to ensure that faculty are empowered to teach in the diverse areas that are aligned with their expertise, including those areas that address systemic inequities.

As it relates to community partnerships, the Muma College of Business has had a tremendous impact in national and global communities with record-breaking participation in its award-winning Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace Certificate.

USF's upward trajectory reinforces the notion that our success is directly linked to our collective and inclusive approach to our future. By continuing to engage in institutional self-reflection, update long-standing policies and practices, and leverage partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, we will develop the institutional capacity and agility necessary to thrive in this changing context. In sum, the arc of our growth is evidence of the veracity of a proverb that notes: "If you want to go fast go alone, but if you want to go far go together."

Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman is an associate professor of sociology, interim vice president of institutional equity and senior advisor to the president and provost for diversity and inclusion.

USF is published quarterly by University Communications & Marketing and the USF Alumni Association for alumni, friends and members of the USF community.

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First Look



Photo: JOHN TIPSTON / USF Foundation



A touch of **MAGIC**

MORE THAN 500 BULLS AND FRIENDS attended the sold-out Green & Gold Gala, the Alumni Association's signature annual fundraiser. Held for the third year at The Florida Aquarium in downtown Tampa, the March event included live music by #NoFilter; a silent auction; food and beverages; and plenty of wild encounters. Here, Braulio Grajales, '07, Life Member, and Danielle Blasco, '03, and Grace Beck '16 and MSM '17, meet the friendly inhabitants of Stingray Beach.

"It was terrific to witness all the excitement and, even more, the pure joy of Bulls seeing one another again, some for the first time in two years," said Jay Hardwick, Life Member, the association's associate executive director, noting that the 2021 gala was a virtual event. "We receive a phenomenal amount of support – from sponsors and donors, special appearances by USF celebrities, and of course, all who purchase tickets. That helps make it a magical evening full of fun surprises and Bull pride."

Proceeds from the gala support the Alumni Association's many programs and activities for both students and alumni.

Presenting sponsor



Leading with our HEARTS

THE OVERSIZED LOVE SIGN at the University Area Community Complex in Tampa is much more than a photo opp for couples, kids and milestone celebrations. It's also a daily reminder for local residents that they have hope — and friends.

Members of the USF Patel College of Sustainability Alumni Society spent a morning repainting the iconic sign to ensure its vivid hues remain as bright as its promise. They were among two dozen USF alumni groups around the country who rolled up their sleeves for USF's 16th annual Stampede of Service in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

USF's stampede sends thousands of students, alumni and their friends out to food pantries, animal shelters and community gardens. They build houses, pick up trash, hold virtual clothing, food and toy drives. Students' service opportunities are now focused on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and include events to help them connect their service passions and experience with their future job marketability.

Patel College alumni joined other volunteers, including the USF DBA (Doctors of Business Administration) Network at the University Area Community Complex, a 50,000-square-foot community center that provides recreational, educational and cultural programs for surrounding neighborhoods. It's the work of the Community Area Development Corporation, uacdc.org, a public/private nonprofit organization.

For information about USF's Stampede of Service, visit usf.edu/student-affairs.

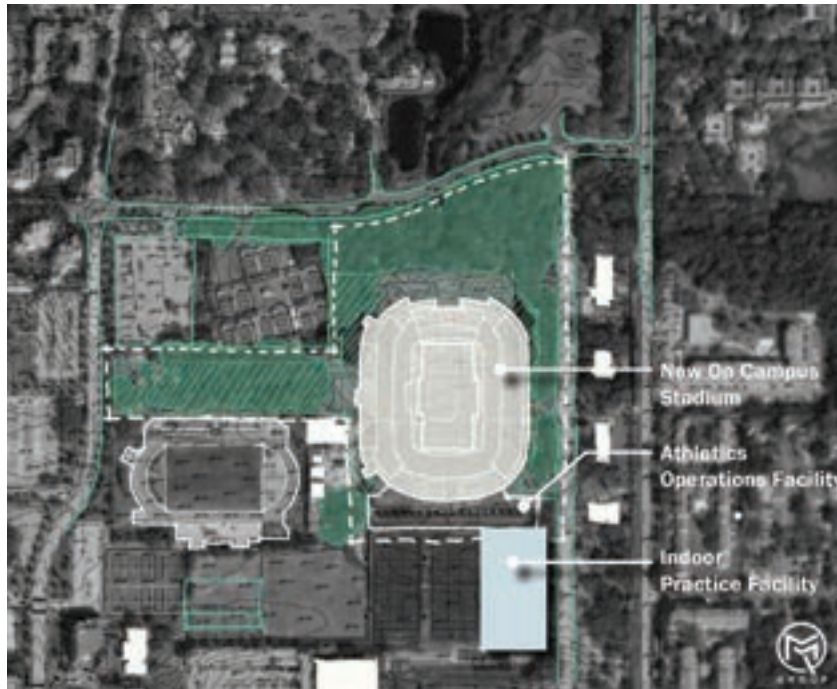
— Penny Carnathan '82, Life Member / USFAA



Photo: BRIAN CZIBAKY, '14, Life Member / USFAA

First Look





FOOTBALL'S FUTURE

Vision advances for an on-campus football stadium

USF IS MOVING FORWARD WITH PLANS to build a new football stadium on campus, with a recommended site identified and the first major gift for the project revealed.

Following Board of Trustees (BOT) Chair Will Weatherford's announcement in September 2021 that USF would pursue the transformational project, Michael Kelly from USF Athletics and Jay Stroman from the USF Foundation have led a Campus Stadium Planning Committee.

The site the committee has recommended to the BOT is on the east side of the Tampa campus in a location known as Sycamore Fields, which is currently used for intramural sports. The site is within the USF Athletics district and sits near its operations facility and new Indoor Performance Facility. There is also a historical connection, as USF football used the fields for practice when the program was first formed in the 1990s. The location allows for strong connectivity with other important parts of campus.

In addition to supporting football, USF leaders see the stadium enhancing the overall campus experience by giving students, faculty, staff, alumni and the surrounding communities a place to come together, develop deeper relationships with the university and build memories across generations.

USF has already announced a \$5 million gift for the stadium from longtime university supporters Frank and Carol Morsani, Life Members. They were key figures behind the formation of the USF football program and the Bulls football team trains at the Frank Morsani Football Practice Complex that opened in 2011. Also, USF announced a \$5 million gift from Jeff and Penny Vinik. They have been strong supporters of a variety of USF programs for many years and were instrumental in USF Health's expansion in Water Street Tampa. Jeff Vinik is the owner of the Tampa Bay Lightning and co-developer of Water Street Tampa.

While the full scope of the project is still being developed, the timeline for completion could be in time for the start of the 2026 or 2027 football seasons.

- ADAM FREEMAN | USF News

GLOBAL CITIZENS

New Global Networks expand international impact

BY CONNECTING ITS WORLDWIDE NETWORK of alumni, students and international partners, USF will showcase its global reach and impact.

In what amounts to a next-level iteration of traditional alumni chapters, USF launched its first four Global Networks for Brazil, Colombia, India and Saudi Arabia during International Education Week in November.

The networks connect not just USF graduates from a specific country but a diverse array of allies that includes international students, study abroad participants, visiting scholars, Peace Corps volunteers, alumni living abroad and individuals such as faculty, staff and alumni who are internationally engaged in research, business and humanitarian efforts.

The aim is to bring together USF's "global citizens" to share their experiences, networks, expertise and guidance with students, and to support international programs, research, students and global engagement.

"We are taking a fresh look at how we engage with alumni around the world. These networks are dynamic and designed to provide opportunities to connect transnationally around global themes," USF World Interim Vice President Kiki Caruson says. "We recognize that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to alumni outreach and see an opportunity to do something different. The Global Networks use a creative new approach designed to encourage meaningful engagement that is culturally relevant to their geographic locations and membership."

Each of the networks is structured similarly – with a network director collaborating with groups of coordinators, members and alumni to support student engagement opportunities and recruitment efforts and hold at least two events per year. Examples of network events may include cultural festivals, professional mixers, beach days, Q&As with incoming students or new member welcome gatherings.

The networks will provide opportunities for members to expand personal and professional contacts, access industry talent, engage with other Global Networks leaders and take an active role in advocating with and for USF on a global scale.

"Our focus on global alumni showcases the international reach and impact that USF can have as a state university," says Vanessa Martinez, '08 and MA '12, USF World assistant director for international community relations who is leading the Global Networks initiative. "We have highly successful alumni all over the world. By reconnecting them to the university, we create unique opportunities for global engagement, international business, research and internships, and international mobility for students and faculty."

The lineup of networks will eventually grow to include additional geographic regions. The launch was accom-

plished in a challenging environment complicated by the global pandemic, which limited options for mobility and meant much of the work had to be done virtually. The initial networks focused on four countries that represent some of USF's strongest global connections.

India is by far the top country of origin of USF international students at all levels with more than 1,000 current students and more than 3,000 prospective alumni members worldwide. Brazil provides the most undergraduate students, with more than 250 current students and about 300 prospective alumni members around the world. Saudi Arabia has emerged as a source of one of USF's fastest-growing international student populations, with more than 125 current students and some 500 prospective alumni members.

Meanwhile, Colombia is an example of a country with both an established pipeline of students who study at USF and a unique partnership among administrators and scholars who share common interests. The partnership has grown out of longstanding collaboration with Universidad del Norte, or Uninorte, a private university in Barranquilla that is the main academic center for higher education in northern Colombia.

Among Uninorte's faculty are at least 15 members who received postgraduate degrees in residence at USF through a faculty development program that has helped forge deep ties between the two institutions.

Humberto Gomez, an associate professor of mechanical engineering at Uninorte, earned a doctorate from USF in 2011 and recalls that there were at least 40 other stu-

dents from Barranquilla studying at all levels and living in Tampa at the time.

The tight-knit group often gathered on weekends for barbecues. Many remain close personally and professionally with one another and with graduates and colleagues from USF. USF's new Global Networks take such relationships a step further by adding structure and broader reach to what had previously been more informal arrangements.

"This is an opportunity to connect at a different level," Gomez says. "We can be very supportive and collaborative, regardless of where we are in terms of geography. We all have shared experiences, and this enables us to be like a big family with added value in terms of our professional expertise."

Gomez was part of a group that includes leaders from USF and Uninorte who, in 2011, began developing initiatives to strengthen ties between the institutions for students, alumni, faculty and other stakeholders. Among their early successes was the creation of a dual-degree program in engineering that has led to invaluable opportunities and cultivated lasting relationships.

Martinez said as the networks grow and new countries and regions are added, it's important to ensure they are inclusive while maintaining the unique identities of their members.

"Every network is different," Martinez says. "Each one has its own flavor, its own interests and its own priorities. We want to celebrate that diversity."

To learn more about USF's Global Networks, contact Vanessa Martinez at martine4@usf.edu or 813-974-6579.

- JOHN DUDLEY | USF News

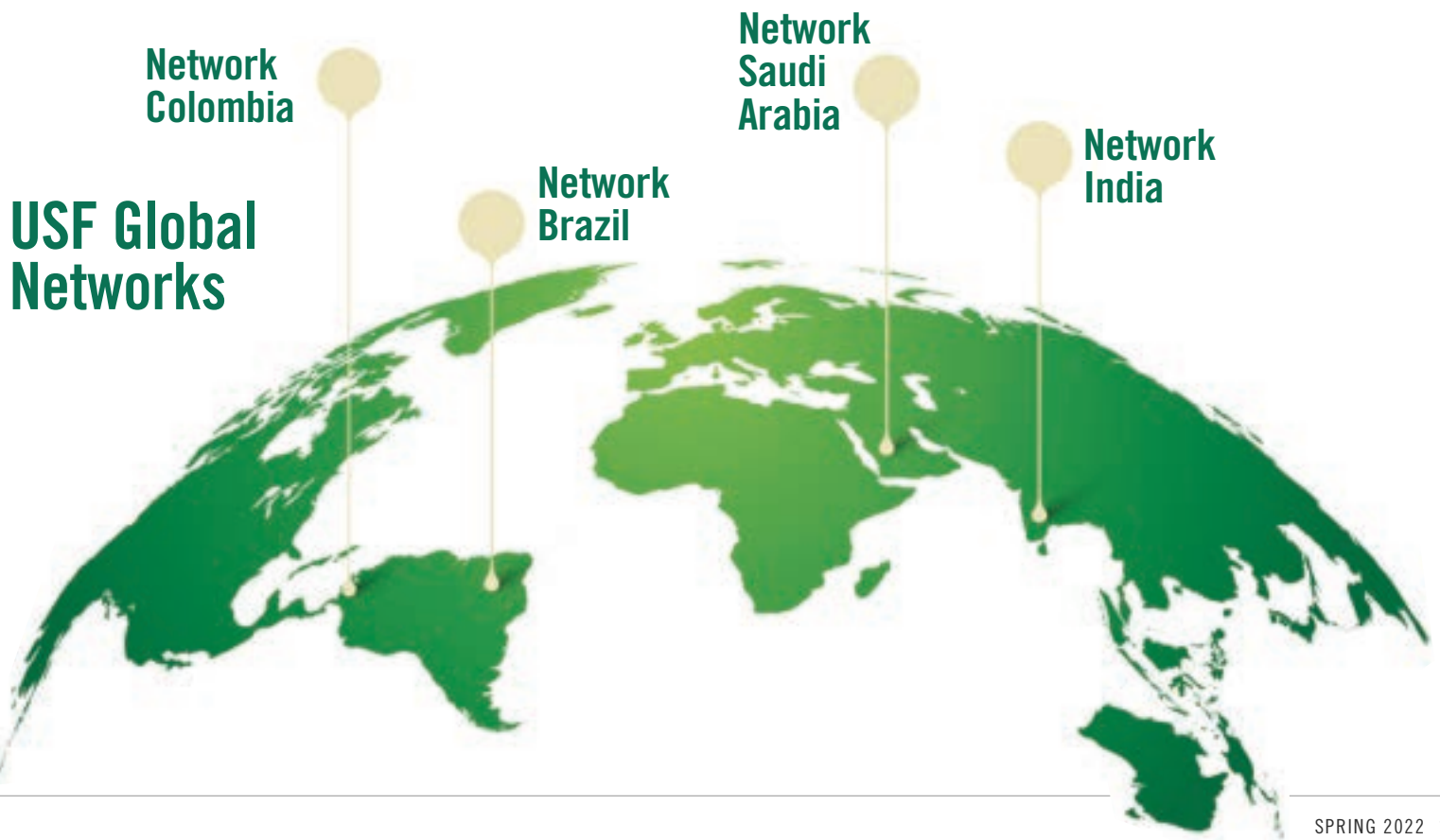


Illustration: MICHAEL BERSHIRE | USF World

CYBERSECURITY

Sarasota program combines business, cybersecurity skills

PROFESSOR GITI JAVIDI HAS BUILT a career on encouraging girls and young women to explore careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

As a young woman, she resolved to make information technology her life's work, despite few women entering STEM fields. Later, as she studied for a master's degree, she served as the only female member of the software engineering team at IBM.

Leaving the company to pursue a doctorate, Javidi discovered a passion for academia and soon was encouraging other young women to explore STEM fields as well.

Her trailblazing efforts have won her numerous accolades, including awards from Google, Microsoft, the National Science Foundation and NASA. Last semester, she received the campus's Outstanding Professor Award, the highest campus-level honor for faculty and presented on behalf of graduating seniors from the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus.

"I am so glad that our students recognized how much I care about them and their well-being, as well as their academic progress," says Javidi, MSCS '96 and PhD '05. "It means the world to me to be selected by students as an outstanding professor. It really tops any other award I've received in my academic career. I am truly honored."

“The job market is burgeoning in this field. Cybersecurity jobs are in high demand and the need for cybersecurity professionals is not going anywhere in the foreseeable future.”

— Giti Javidi

Now Javidi, a professor of information systems in the Muma College of Business, is tackling another new role. She's overseeing an academic program introduced last fall that bridges the gap between business and cybersecurity: the Information Assurance and Cybersecurity Management program (IACM).

While USF offers several academic programs in cybersecurity, IACM is the only one that provides students with necessary interdisciplinary skills in both cybersecurity and business.

"This particular program provides students with a comprehensive set of skills and crucial knowledge and capabilities from a business viewpoint by presenting them the overall organizational capabilities required to ensure and maintain the information assurance function," Javidi says. "Further, the program focuses on the management aspect of cyber-



Photo: USF Sarasota-Manatee campus

security, which is grossly underrepresented in the academic programs of most institutions."

Currently, 30 students are enrolled; a master's degree in IACM will be offered in the fall.

IACM emphasizes business processes and data analytics as applied to cybersecurity management. Students in the program gain skills in the business management of cybersecurity, including risk management; incident business response; using analytics to detect, isolate and prevent cybersecurity attacks; and overall management of cybersecurity functions in business enterprises.

Graduates have opportunities in a range of positions, such as cybersecurity analyst, information assurance compliance specialist, cybersecurity consultant, cybersecurity incident response analyst, cybersecurity specialist, cyber intelligence analyst and cybersecurity operations analyst.

"The job market is burgeoning in this field," Javidi says. "Cybersecurity jobs are in high demand and the need for cybersecurity professionals is not going anywhere in the foreseeable future. Therefore, there won't be a shortage of jobs for our students upon graduation. To better prepare our students, we will help them secure summer internships to gain practical skills."

Many organizations continue to struggle with a communication disconnect between senior management and technical cybersecurity personnel, she says. The IACM degree began with the notion that organizations need cybersecurity experts who have technical and non-technical skills to bridge that gap in communication.

"The degree assumes that cybersecurity management is a business function," she says. "As a result, graduates with an IACM degree are equipped with vast knowledge and skills rooted in both business and cybersecurity to serve on the front line of support for governments and business organizations. They will gain familiarity with the various metrics to convert a threat into an estimated loss and thus speak the senior management language."

— RICH SHOPES | USF Sarasota-Manatee campus

Above: Giti Javidi, a champion for women in STEM, now leads a new cybersecurity study program.

AGING STUDIES

Gift to CBCS supports positive aging research, programs

A \$400,000 GIFT TO the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences (CBCS) will support programs and research focused on promoting optimal aging, including sleep and mental health, and protecting against mild cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

The Reliance Medical Centers Positive Aging Support Operating Fund, which was created through the gift, will enable CBCS to continue its focus on risk reduction, early identification and effective treatments in relation to older adults' holistic health.

The fund will support several student internships within the positive aging programs at Reliance Medical Centers and will include graduate students from a wide range of disciplines, such as social work, aging studies and communication disorders. Students will deliver clinical care geared toward optimal aging.

"There is a sharp focus on prevention and early detection," says Aryn L. Harrison Bush, CBCS research assistant professor and Reliance Medical Centers vice president of applied science and translation and director of brain health and cognition. "A proactive approach at the primary care level is essential to reducing risk or delaying the onset of myriad conditions that span older adults' physical and mental health, while also considering and addressing social determinants."

In addition to identifying at-risk individuals early, the partnership will provide an opportunity to expand knowledge concerning positive aging. Students and faculty will be part of a research team focused on

identifying early indicators of decline, which will inform risk reduction and treatment innovation. The fund will also expand programs to Polk County, where Reliance is headquartered, with research facilities housed within their medical clinics in Lakeland and Winter Haven.

"I look forward to seeing the great work that will be accomplished," says CBCS Dean Julie Serovich. "This gift will help us continue to advance the crucial research of our faculty and students and improve the lives of those in our community."

The positive aging fund builds upon an affiliation between USF and Reliance Medical Centers geared toward gaining a better understanding of early-stage cognitive impairment and creating a closer partnership between academia and primary care. In 2019, Reliance Medical Centers founded the USF Optimal Aging and Brain Health Research Fund within CBCS and donated space and resources to build a local research presence.

"Cognitive impairment is the most devastating and feared condition that older adults face," says Jennifer Lister, CBCS associate dean of undergraduate studies and professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. "This disease takes a heavy toll on patients and caregivers. The best defense is early identification and prevention, which is the primary focus of our work."

This most recent collaboration with Reliance Medical Centers extends across multiple schools and departments. The \$400,000 gift to CBCS is part of a \$1 million gift from Reliance Medical Centers that also includes the College of Nursing, Morsani College of Medicine, and the Taneja College of Pharmacy to accelerate developments throughout every component of senior care.

- PATTY HARRISON | College of Behavioral and Community Sciences

THIS IS MY BRAVE

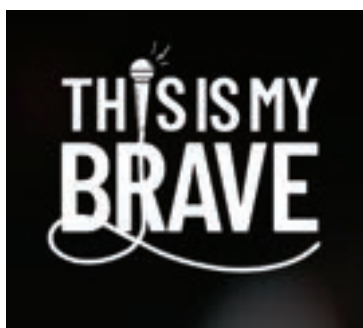
Program offers students opportunity to combat mental health stigma

IF THE LAST TWO YEARS HAVE reminded us of anything, it's that human connection is truly vital.

"Now, more than ever before, we need to feel connected," says Kristin Kosyluk, associate professor in the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences Department of Mental Health Law and Policy (MHLP).

Kosyluk is also the lead evaluator of This Is My Brave, a stigma reduction program that creates connection by showcasing real people sharing their lived experiences to humanize mental health issues. The program came to USF in late April for "This Is My Brave: College Edition, A OneUSF Production" to shine a light on students' lived experiences with mental illness and/or addiction.

Initiated through a Kickstarter in 2013, this program has grown across the United States, allowing those who experience mental health issues to tell their stories and combat stigma through live shows. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the program moved shows online where it reached a wider audience, and in 2021, Kyaien Conner, also of MHLP, co-produced Stories from the Black Community.



"The stigma surrounding mental illness causes many people to feel alone and to hide their experiences," Kosyluk says. "On average, people go 10 years between the onset of their symptoms and receiving treatment. This delay has many damaging effects such as increased rates of hospitalization, substance use, social isolation, poorer

academic performance and increased risk for suicide."

Breaking down the stigma around seeking mental health care is vital to saving lives. This Is My Brave is poised to tackle that barrier at a critical time.

"Due to COVID, many people are experiencing new and exacerbated mental distress, Kosyluk says. "I have worked for the past six years as the lead program evaluator of This Is My Brave. We have begun to build a strong evidence base for the program, with two research studies showing that This Is My Brave is effective for reducing stigma surrounding mental illness and improving attitudes toward treatment seeking.

"Every person has a story to tell," Kosyluk says.

- THERESA L. WOODS '82 | College of Behavioral and Community Sciences

THE HUMAN ECOSYSTEM

Physicians, anthropologists and marine biologists start at the soil to address health

LINKING HUMAN HEALTH to the environment, a growing team of scientists is working together to enhance the impact of microbiomes in a new multifaceted venture called the USF Metropolitan Food Project (MFP). The goal of the project is to address how environmental changes impact food nutrition, and in turn, human health and the risk of viral pandemics. In particular, the project investigates how microbiomes — in humans, soil and oceans — are key drivers of such changes. Their interdisciplinary research will lead to developing new food growing systems that improve human health, particularly for people who experience food insecurity at USF and in the Tampa Bay region.

“We connect very basic research, not only with the human microbiome, but also the soil and the oceans with very practical aspects of the problem in order to translate the research to healthier communities,” says Dr. Christian Brechot, director of the USF Institute on Microbiomes. He also serves as president of the Global Virus Network, associate dean for Research on Global Affairs, associate vice president for International Partnerships and Innovation at USF and professor in the Department of Internal Medicine in the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine. “Also, we are developing international collaborations to help solve these challenges in very different environmental and nutritional contexts.”

The gut microbiome and the microbiomes of animals, plants, soil and oceans are reflections of the environment. With increased changes in climate, pollution and the use of chemicals in agriculture, scientists have noted a degradation of biodiversity in microbiome ecosystems. These

microorganisms, which play an integral role in the health of oceans and soil, are also vital to human health.

“It’s a whole cycle,” says Hariom Yadav, associate professor of neurosurgery and brain repair at the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and director of the USF Center for Microbiome Research. “There’s a lack of organic diversity in soil and water, which impacts growth and nutrient enrichment in animals and plants.”

Furthermore, when humans consume fish, meats and produce farmed in degraded ecosystems, they are not receiving adequate micronutrients to maintain a balanced and healthy gut. The solution that scientists are striving for is to regenerate the source of food and diversify the microbiomes in the environment.

But first, microbiomes need to be identified and cultivated in order to harness their benefits, which has been Yadav’s main focus. Yadav isolates microbial DNA and sequences them to understand microbiota genetics and the different ecosystems that they inhabit. His studies have led to the development of a new probiotic yogurt that helps rebalance the gut microbiome and deter disease.

Probiotics can promote the health of gut bacteria, particularly for people who lack food diversity or who struggle with access to nutrition-rich foods. MFP researchers are acutely aware that food insecurity plays a major role in the health of lower-income and even middle-income communities, which is why the project also includes advocacy and education programs.

“In addition to wanting to educate families about where food comes from and how to grow it on your own, more must be done to increase access to nutrient-dense foods in communities where food insecurity has been a longstanding problem,” says David Himmelgreen, anthropology professor and director of the Center for the Advancement of Food Security and Healthy Communities.

Himmelgreen conducts research and designs intervention programs to address food insecurity in vulnerable communities. Last year, he and a team of colleagues and students helped develop the Food Prescription (Rx) program, which is being administered by Feeding Tampa Bay and takes place at Evara Health Care clinics in Pinellas County. This program provides patients prescriptions for food vouchers that they can use to redeem fresh produce and shelf-stable food from on-site and mobile food pantries. Himmelgreen is studying the effects of the program and preliminary results show improvement in food security status and health benefits for participants.

Himmelgreen works closely with fellow MFP member, Emmanuel Roux, director of the 15th Street Farm in downtown St. Petersburg and consultant at the Urban Farm Consultants, to share knowledge with people on urban farming methods, eating healthy and the importance of a healthy gut microbiome. Endearingly referred to

Photo: The 15th St. Farm is an educational urban farm and food center in downtown St. Petersburg that hosts volunteers and tours. A commercial kitchen is planned to host cooking classes and farm dinners.



Photo: Courtesy 15th Street Farm



Photos: Hariom Yadav, (far left) was recently recruited to lead the USF Microbiome Research Center. His research focuses on the gut-brain connection (gut-brain axis) in relation to cognitive function.

as The Farmer by the team of researchers, Roux promotes regenerative agricultural methods, moving beyond the idea of organics. He focuses on soil and plant biodiversity mimicking natural systems, minimizing the use of outside fertilizers in favor of balanced and dense soil microbiology.

“Everything we do is to try to increase the fungal content of the soil. We feed the microorganisms in the soil (bacterial and fungal), to feed the plants, animals and people,” Roux says.

Roux is also working with Brechot to make the 15th Street Farm model scalable. They want to build a research and education regenerative agriculture farm with an event space at USF, where students and communities can reconnect with the natural environment while also promoting local and sustainable sources of nutrient-dense foods.

“If the pandemic taught us anything, it taught us that our supply chains are in trouble,” says Brooke Hansen ’88, associate professor at the Patel College of Global Sustainability, director of the MA Concentration in Sustainable Tourism and of the SDG Action Alliance, a United Nations partnership at USF. “We need to be thinking about shortening supply chains and promoting local food production.”

Hansen brings a broad perspective to MFP and works to connect the team with other communities and global initiatives promoting the growth of soil naturally through sustainable agricultural practices that support healthy microbiome ecosystems.

According to Hansen, foods grown with conventional farming methods instead of regenerative soils and practices don’t provide the same micronutrients or benefits.



Photos: ALLISON LONG | USF Health

“Some of the fruits and vegetables have such low nutrient levels that we might as well be eating cardboard,” she says.

The MPF committee continues to pursue grants, research opportunities and search locations to launch USF regenerative agriculture stations that will highlight the importance of biodiversity to human and ecosystem health.

- SANDRA C. ROA | USF News



Photo: HIXON MOTOR SPORTS

Left: Dante Tornello with Hixon Motor Sports Crew Chief Nick Chorley at the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg.

HOMETOWN RACER

Dream comes true during Firestone Grand Prix

DRIVERS COME FROM AROUND THE WORLD to compete in the annual Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. This year, one came from right next door.

During the Mazda MX-5 Cup race held in February, alum Dante Tornello got his first opportunity to race in his hometown. Tornello was born and grew up in St. Petersburg and attended USF's St. Petersburg campus, which is next to where the race takes place.

One week a year, he would hear the IndyCar Series race cars zoom by campus, leaving a lasting impression.

"Being so close to the track had a major impact on my ever-building desire to drive there," Tornello says. "I remember sitting outside by the University Student Center with my laptop for one of my classes, just enjoying the sounds of the race cars as they went lap by lap."

We talked with Tornello, a 2018 graduate who finished 24th in the race, about his journey to becoming a race car driver, how the campus shaped his trajectory and what all fans should know about the exciting world of car racing. This interview has been edited for length.

What was the experience like racing in your hometown during the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg?

For me, it was the moment I realized my lifelong dream

to race here, in the place I call home. When I was a kid, I watched the yearly IndyCar races. During my undergraduate studies at USF St Pete, I had the pleasure of being right next to the track, but not yet on it. I'm just grateful to finally have experienced many incredible moments here trackside!

How did you get involved in racing in the first place and where did your passion for the sport come from?

I started out in vintage racing in a series called Historic Sportscar Racing (HSR) in 2019, which gave me opportunities to drive a few different race cars to build experience and learn some of the basics as a driver.

My love for racing first began as a small child watching my father race in HSR back in the 2000s. I was around that environment for years, so getting to race in my own car was honestly the first time I was able to understand what my dad felt when he drove years prior.

What's it like preparing for such a race? What practice and conditioning are you doing leading up to the competition?

Since this year's season started in Daytona for the Mazda MX-5 Cup series, I've focused my training regimen to consist of cardio (high-intensity stairmaster training),

muscle building exercises for handling sustained G-forces and mental training to develop my mind into a well-honed system for progress. I also spend time studying video and notes to ensure I have the best understanding of the track before I hop in the car.

Did going to the USF St. Petersburg campus play a part in your interest in the sport?

Indeed, being so close to the track — Albert Whitted Airport next door is the main straightaway — had a major impact on my ever-building desire to drive there. I remember sitting outside by the University Student Center with my laptop for one of my classes, just enjoying the sounds of the race cars as they went lap by lap. The St. Petersburg Grand Prix race weekend has always been a time I enjoyed while in college.

Did going to the St. Pete campus prepare you in any way for what you are doing today?

In many ways, I got into racing after first getting an education. It's always important to have a fallback in order to grow and survive in the world of motorsports. In racing, concepts like sponsors, branding, public speaking and much more have been tied back to my time at the St. Pete campus. To have that fallback has been a blessing.

What is the most surprising thing you found out about car racing now that you are a driver? Or what is something that

people should know about the sport?

There are a few things that now looking back on I hadn't fully understood about racing when I started. The first was the mental focus required of top drivers to push themselves and their equipment to the limit for long periods of time. Experiencing that gave me a new perspective on what to hone in on as a driver while developing my skill set. The second was how important personal branding and sponsorship development is to financially supporting one's self in this sport. Often in the higher levels of the sport, the cost of entry and cost of running are high. Being able to understand best business practices makes a significant difference. Lastly, the level of competition in many forms of racing is often within very small performance margins among top drivers. Being able to build the necessary skills to compete at that level takes time. With that in mind, building your own sense of confidence is absolutely key to succeeding in the sport.

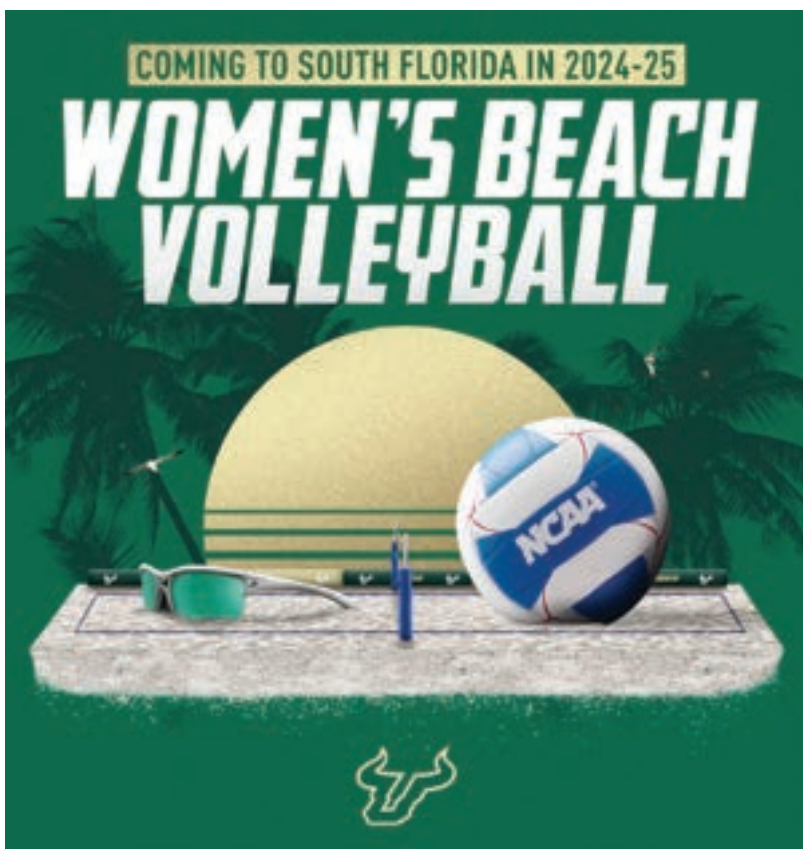
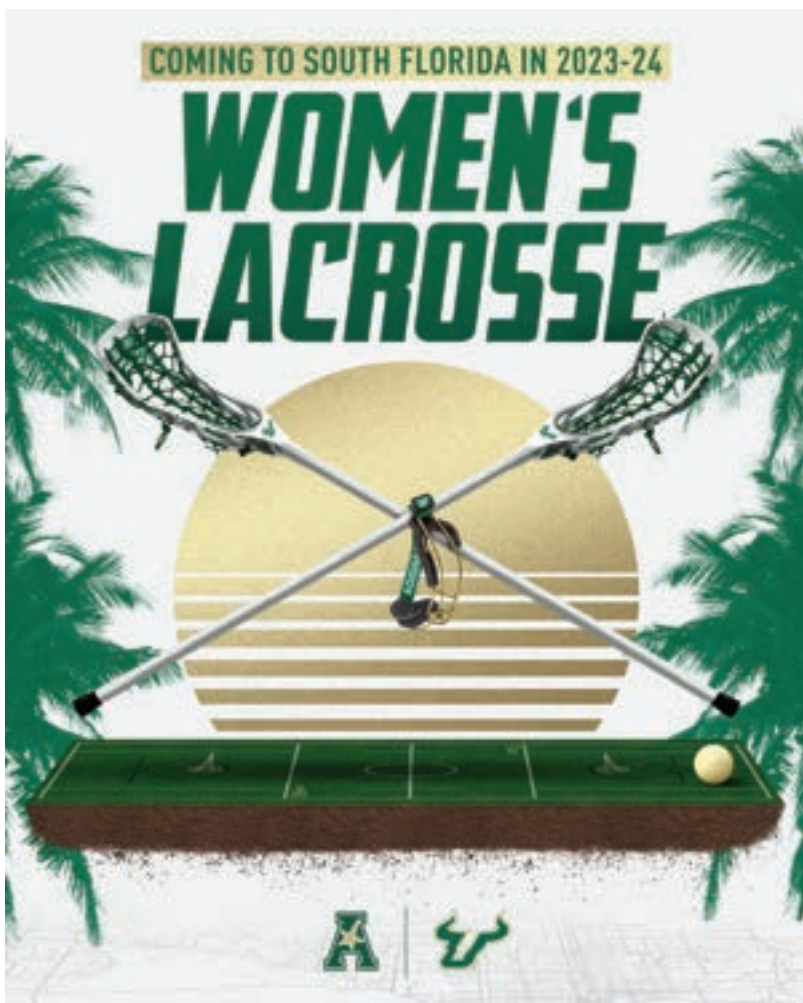
Anything else you would like to add?

I want to say a personal thank you for everyone who has been a part of this journey to do what I love. It's a privilege and honor to compete and grow as a driver. So many people have had an effect on my path, and the USF St. Petersburg campus has always been a metaphorical home to me.

- MATT CIMITILE | USF St. Petersburg campus



Left: The car that Tornello raced during the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg.



NEW SPORTS

Athletics to add women's lacrosse and beach volleyball

USF ATHLETICS ANNOUNCED THE ADDITION of two women's sport programs in a three-month span: women's lacrosse, starting in 2022-23, and beach volleyball, beginning in 2024-25.

They will bring the total number of Bulls' women's athletics teams to 12 and USF's total varsity sports program count to 21.

"Adding two new sports represents a great step forward for women's athletics at the University of South Florida," says USF President Rhea Law, '77, Life Member. "Lacrosse and beach volleyball have proven to be highly competitive, immensely popular sports at the intercollegiate and Olympic level. And the participation of our female student-athletes makes all of us better at USF — their hard work, talent and impressive achievements are part of the fabric of this university."

The Bulls' teams will play home games for lacrosse at Corbett Stadium and beach volleyball at a new facility to be constructed on the USF campus.

"We are very excited to add lacrosse and beach volleyball to a strong lineup of women's sports programs and opportunities for female student-athletes to compete at a very high level and win championships at USF," says Mike Kelly, vice president of USF Athletics. "Our current women's programs have garnered 59 conference championships and we are making USF a destination for successful female collegiate athletes. I think our fans and the community will enjoy the addition of these highly entertaining and growing women's sports and we will invest the necessary resources to be very competitive."

Women's varsity athletics began at USF in 1972 with the start of the women's basketball program. USF's conference titles in women's athletics have come from eight different sports, including tennis (13), volleyball (12), softball (eight), soccer (seven), golf (six), track and field (six), cross country (five) and basketball (two).

- BRIAN SIEGRIST | USF Athletics

STAMPEDE FOR WOMEN

Sold-out luncheon kicks off initiative

THE STAMPEDE FOR WOMEN — an initiative focused on generating funds, raising awareness and creating opportunities to support USF women student-athletes — is picking up steam.

It sold out its kickoff luncheon, coinciding with National Girls and Women in Sports Day in February, at the Pam and Les Muma Basketball Center. The gathering provided an up-close look at the initiative's progress and goals while



Photo and Illustrations: Courtesy USF Athletics

charting a course for its future.

More than \$150,000 has been raised since the Stampede was introduced in February 2021. Last summer, Bulls football coach Jeff Scott made a \$10,000 donation following an event with his football team and Denise Schilte-Brown's AAC champion women's soccer team.

Fundraising will generate money for scholarships, career development and capital improvements, while seeking dedicated donors for the growth of USF women's athletics. And it provides momentum for an athletics department that already has major projects under way, such as construction of the Indoor Performance Facility, renovations to the outdoor track and baseball and softball facilities, and planning for a proposed on-campus stadium.

Supporters of the Stampede also hope to establish a fresh community of female leaders in the Bay area who could become professional mentors for USF student-athletes. The program appeals to males who see the benefit of expanded women's athletics, particularly if they are fathers of sports-loving daughters.

"We want to grow our resources and support for women's athletics," says Michael Kelly, USF vice president of athletics, who announced the addition of beach volleyball as the school's 12th women's sport after previously announcing plans for women's lacrosse in the 2023-24 school year. "There's an opportunity to build mutually beneficial relationships between community members

and our women student-athletes. We want people to know about the great accomplishments happening with our women's teams because they are doing big, big things."

There have been 59 conference championships, top-25 rankings, NCAA Tournament bids, national television appearances and All-America honorees. Clearly, women's athletics at USF have established a winning brand. For signs of progress, you could point to a stunning three-week juncture last summer.

Former USF women's basketball player Courtney Williams, '16, was named to the WNBA All-Star Team and scored 15 points in the game. USF coach Ken Eriksen, '84, earned a silver medal with his U.S. softball team at the Olympic Games in Tokyo. Former USF student-athlete Evelyne Viens, '19, earned an Olympic gold medal as a member of Team Canada, which defeated Sweden in the women's soccer championship match.

"I'm so proud of all of our current athletes, but also the former female athletes, who continue to put USF on the map," says public-relations executive and former USF golfer Sally Dee, '94 and MBA '11, Life Member, a member of the Stampede for Women's steering committee. "We don't have professional sports that are very sustainable in women's athletics, but our athletes go on to success in the corporate world and they become winners in life. Just imagine the ripple effect in our community."

- JOEY JOHNSTON '81 | USF Athletics

Above: The Stampede held a sold-out, public kickoff luncheon — coinciding with National Girls and Women in Sports Day — at the Pam and Les Muma Basketball Center.

Orchestrating a legacy for WUSF's Classical Station

Donor quietly remembers the station that brought him joy

DURING THE FINAL FEW WEEKS OF HIS LIFE, Bob Euwema passed the time playing computer solitaire and listening to the radio inside his sparsely furnished, assisted-living home in Sarasota. But the image of a man cut off from the world, sadly playing out the final hand of his life, couldn't be further from the truth.

He was a loner yet far from alone — connected by the classical music of WUSF playing over the airwaves to a soothing soundscape that brought him constant joy.

His desktop computer was more than simply a way to play a solo card game as leukemia took its toll on his 88-year-old body. It was a symbol of his shining career legacy as an expert in the burgeoning computer industry dating back to the early 1960s, and the generous help he later gave as a retiree to Sarasota nonprofits in setting up their databases — sometimes even buying them new computers.



And it was a link to his beloved sister in Brooklyn, N.Y., Carol Wolf, to whom he sent an email greeting before 6 a.m. every day for some 30 years.

But more than anything, it was the music of WUSF's classical station, WSMR — the masterpieces of Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms and countless others — that enriched him and fueled his resolve to honor the station.

The man known for his quiet, low-key manner did so with a surprising crescendo in his final act, leaving a \$1 million gift to benefit WSMR to keep its music flowing.

"Bob was very shy, but he was open and friendly once you got to know him," Wolf recalled. "Toward the end, he was looking for meaningful ways to leave his money. He loved music, and WSMR meant a great deal to him. So that's what he did."

His generous gesture came as a surprise to leadership at the USF Foundation and WUSF Public Media. Discussions about some type of gift had taken place with Euwema's attorney, Cathryn Girard, but nobody — other than her and Euwema — was aware of the magnitude of the sum he bequeathed in his will upon his passing on March 27, 2021.

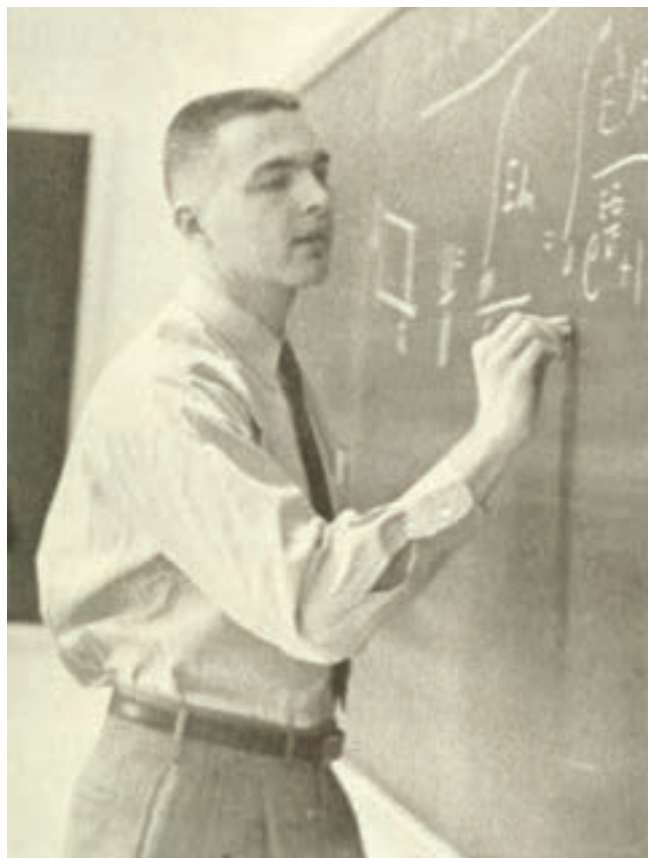


We are gladdened to know that WSMR was a companion and a solace to Bob ... His commitment to support us through his estate touches us all deeply."

— JoAnn Urofsky

When the gift came to light in the months that followed, WUSF General Manager JoAnn Urofsky wrote to his sister: "We are gladdened to know that WSMR was a companion and a solace to Bob, especially during his final weeks. His commitment to support us through his estate touches us all deeply."

WUSF gift officers, management and talent were well aware of Euwema prior to the stunning bequest. According to Scott Nolan, WUSF senior director of development,



Philanthropy



Opposite page: After finishing his doctorate, Euwema taught physics at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania for five years in the early 1960s.

Above: Pepe Romero gives a live on-air performance on WSMR hosted by Bethany Cagle.



he donated to WSMR on 23 occasions over eight years — sometimes during on-air campaigns, sometimes in response to mailed requests, sometimes for reasons known only to himself. True to his reticent nature, he never wanted to meet in person or attend a station event, so the station's major gifts team stayed in touch with cards and calls of appreciation, always reaching out on his birthday.

He was born on March 25, 1933, and raised in State College, Pennsylvania, where his father, a self-taught pianist and music lover, served as a dean at Penn State

University. Euwema played baritone in the high school band but focused mostly on his studies. He went on to attend Penn State, graduating in 1954 as the valedictorian in a class of 3,000.

With a passion for science and technology, Euwema earned his doctorate in physics from Princeton University in 1959. He went on to teach five years at Swarthmore College, leaving to do research at Batelle Memorial Institute in Ohio, where his work involved large computer programs. After several years working with various computer companies, he took a job with a Seattle firm that analyzed seismic data for oil exploration. All the while, he lived simply, scrupu-

lously saved his money and decided to retire at age 57 in 1990, after moving to Sarasota to help care for his elderly mother.

According to his sister, Euwema was married briefly, after which he built a small fortune in the stock market. He spent little on personal amenities, preferring a bare-bones apartment containing a bookcase of CDs and DVDs, and filled with music. During that period in the early 1990s, as email became commonplace, he and Wolf began communicating every day electronically — first about their elderly aunt Marian, who in the winter lived near Euwema in Sarasota. When Aunt Marian died in 2017, the email tradition continued, with Euwema sending his updates like clockwork every morning before 6.

In 2019, he did something else. Wanting to update his will, he reached out to Sarasota-based attorney Girard. “His mother had been gone for some time, and he was now living in an assisted-living home,” she recalled. “I was glad to come meet him at his facility in town.”

It was an eventful meeting to say the least. Euwema had told her to look for a tall man — he stood 6-foot-4 — and she recognized him right away. Unfortunately, on the way to his apartment, Euwema passed out in the elevator. Girard frantically pressed the emergency button, and he regained consciousness as help arrived. She insisted that he get a walker, or she wouldn't take him on as a client. He obliged.

“I don't know how much he actually used it, but he did listen because he really wanted this work done,” she said. “Bob was a very focused, determined person. He knew exactly what he wanted and how to set things up. And he was very generous with me, saying, ‘If you have to work overtime, I'll pay it.’ ”

“ Bob was a very focused, determined person. He knew exactly what he wanted and how to set things up.”

— Cathryn Girard

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From left: WSMR hosts Bethany Cagle, Classical Music Director Russell Gant and Tyler Kline serve as guides and stewards of music that spans 800 years.

Euwema's generosity extended in many directions. After retiring, he volunteered to update the computer records of local entities including the Sarasota Symphony, the Circus Arts Conservatory, Mote Marine Laboratory, Children's Haven, the Sarasota NAACP and a domestic abuse refuge for women called Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center Inc. In the end, he wanted to update his will to provide money for Wolf and her family, a Sarasota-based education foundation, a food bank — and WSMR. Girard contacted Marion T. Yongue '91, Life Member, USF's associate vice president of development, to lay the groundwork. "Bob was adamant that it not be a general gift but for the radio station," Girard explained.

Yongue made sure of that, though he had no idea of the size or origin of the gift. "Ms. Girard had reached out to us just to get some tax ID number and that sort of thing," he said. "But nothing was revealed about the donor's identity or the amount. It wasn't until after Mr. Euwema passed that we learned his identity and the magnitude of the gift. I couldn't believe it. And for the station, which has to make it on its own, his generosity will make a huge difference in helping it move forward into the future."

The pandemic was difficult for Euwema; he was unable to have visitors in 2020 due to COVID-19. Meanwhile, he had declined a second round of chemotherapy, and his health deteriorated. Wolf knew something was seriously wrong when she didn't find an email waiting for her the day after his birthday in March, the morning of the 26th.

Euwema was gone, but there was one last stirring movement to his life — a gift that would come to life months later. And it will help the music of WSMR live on.

- DAVE SCHEIBER | Advancement

About WSMR

As a listener-supported service of the University of South Florida, Classical WSMR serves the largest classical music audience in Florida. Between broadcasts, online content and live events, no other organization does more to make classical music accessible to all music lovers, regardless of background or income. And all of this is accomplished through donor support. Listen online at WSMR.org or on air in Tampa at 103.9 and Sarasota on 89.1.





EXPERTISE on a MISSION

THE WORDS “MY FORMER STUDENT” are a common refrain when talking to James Mihelcic about his work. Over his more than three decades in academia, he has built an extensive network of contacts around the world, a USF family of sorts, many of whom are his former students who have become professors themselves or work in nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations across the globe.

“It’s kind of like planting a seed and then watching the seed grow,” says Mihelcic, who is the Samuel L. and Julia M. Flom Endowed Professor in Civil Engineering and director of the Center for Reinventing Aging Infrastructure for Nutrient Management at USF.

One such student called in 2009 to tell Mihelcic about a water sanitation project he was working on in Madagascar, an island country off the southeastern coast of Africa, and ask if the university could do some research for him.

Just under a year later, Mihelcic and colleague Maya Trotz, professor of civil and environmental engineering, found themselves in eastern Madagascar, watching a local technician build a hand pump to provide potable water from one of the shallow wells common in the area.

The man made a little depression in the soil, then melted a car battery over a charcoal fire. He poured the molten lead in the depression in the soil, creating a lead weight that would be used as part of the well’s hand pump.

After witnessing this, Mihelcic and Trotz decided they should check the water samples they’d been collecting for not just arsenic, as planned, but also lead.

“Good thing was, we didn’t find arsenic — but we did find lead,” he says. The concentration was well above World Health Organization guidelines — no more than 10 micrograms per liter or parts per billion. “We measured some pumps that were over 100 micrograms per liter or parts per billion.”

Not only were people consuming lead through drinking the well water, but since a staple of the diet in this part of Madagascar is starchy food, like rice or yuca, cooked in the water and thus absorbing lead, they were also ingesting it that way.

Looking for a solution, the team replaced the two lead components of the hand pump with ones made of iron. When they again sampled the water, the lead content had dropped to a level within WHO guidelines. While there is still some lead in the well screen underground in most wells, this simple fix made a significant difference.

Mihelcic estimates there are 9,000 or so of these

Above: In 2010, USF researchers traveled to Madagascar to sample well water and test for arsenic. Instead they found high levels of lead.

“It’s kind of like planting a seed and watching the seed grow.”

— James Mihelcic

pumps on the east coast of Madagascar, most shared by several families, including children.

“Every day I’d go to bed thinking, ‘These kids are being poisoned with lead, and we know about it, and we’re not doing anything,’” says Mihelcic. “At that point, I said, ‘I don’t care if my wife and I have to pay for this, we’re doing it.’”

In the intervening years, he has received grants and even paid out of his own pocket to remediate wells to remove the lead components, once stopping at a bank in Casper, Wyoming, while on vacation to transfer money from his personal account to pay people working on the project.

One of the organizations that gave Mihelcic a grant asked the team working on the project to actually measure blood lead levels in children, not just estimate them as they’d been doing previously.

He partnered with Mahmooda Pasha, PhD '16, an assistant professor in the College of Public Health, to help train medical personnel at local clinics in Madagascar to collect blood samples from children ages 6 months to 6 years. Over 2020 and 2021, they collected more than 400 blood lead level measurements.

“We’ve scientifically shown that replacing the two lead valve components does result in a statistically good improvement of blood lead levels,” says Mihelcic. The work has been supported, in part, by funds he receives from the Flom endowment.

One of the nuances of the project is not disrupting the work of the pump makers, a vital source of income in the community, by manufacturing and shipping pumps from elsewhere, for instance.

“The idea is how do you get homeowners to request a hand pump and all the well material without lead, and how do you get the manufacturers to stop using lead?” he says.

That’s where Pasha’s expertise came in.

“I identified that we needed to change the behavior of technicians in Madagascar, because they seemed to be the gatekeepers in the whole cycle,” says Pasha.

She received a research grant from the College of Public Health that allowed her to hire and train staff in Madagascar. They speak with and survey the technicians to better understand the extent of their knowledge regarding lead, water quality and water safety, and learn how they go about doing their jobs.

From this research they concluded the technicians felt they were playing a vital role in the community and wanted to be seen as professionals and innovators. She then developed a social marketing strategy that included skill-based training and raising awareness.

“Our campaign really focused on providing the technicians skills and making them aware of the dangers of using lead in the pumps, but also creating an exclusive community that other technicians may want to join,” she says.

Based on models, the behavior changes could eliminate this source of lead exposure in 15 years.

On a personal level as a junior faculty member, Pasha has found Mihelcic to be “an ideal mentor,” providing the nudges she needs to publish research papers and apply for grants and including her on his own grants to engage with a community of researchers.



“Most of the people I’m working with right now in the field are his former students,” she says. “They’re his colleagues now. It’s like he’s sent his children out into the world, but now these children are his equals.”

This type of interdisciplinary work is what attracted Mihelcic to USF in 2008. He was named the Flom Professor in 2015.

“The gift from the Flom family, it’s really allowed me to build a larger network. I could have an impact by myself, but the Flom funds allowed us to initiate some of the blood testing in Madagascar,” he says. “Flom has supported many graduate students in my program who have gone on to be great contributors to Florida and the world.”

One of his current students who is supported in part by the endowment, Addie Buerck, decided to pursue her doctorate at USF to work with Mihelcic on the Madagascar project, which is the focus of her dissertation.

Her first connection to Mihelcic was using one of his books in a master’s degree course. Her professor, who went to school with Mihelcic, told her about the work he was doing and encouraged her to apply.

While her concentration is civil engineering with a focus on environmental engineering, she’s also completed a social marketing certificate and is co-mentored by Mihelcic and Pasha.

“I think people are starting to realize how everything’s intertwined and how important it is to have that common language,” says Buerck.

For Mihelcic, the work is its own reward, seeing his family of USF students and professors bettering the lives of families in Madagascar.

“It’s a wonderful project. It’s been wonderful. We’re graduating students. We’re publishing in really high-impact journals,” he says. “But we’re also doing something that’s improving health for children in Madagascar.”

Above: As part of the project in 2020 and 2021, staff in Madagascar checked blood lead levels in more than 400 children and conducted surveys to find other sources of lead exposure.

- KILEY MALLARD | Advancement



Black Leadership NETWORK

Left: Each year, the Black Leadership Network celebrates its scholars and recognizes its donors at the BLN Scholarship Soiree.

Right: Engineering student Vladimir Leonard, member of the inaugural BLN class in 2017.

INSIDE THE GIBBONS ALUMNI CENTER'S Traditions Hall four years ago, an air of excitement filled the packed room as members of the fledgling Black Leadership Network gathered with USF and community leaders for a landmark event. It was the ceremonial check presentation from Helios Education Foundation — an investment of \$2.1 million — to support the future success of an under-represented population of USF students. That moment continues to ripple today with broad, life-changing impact.

The Helios gift was transformative in the network's development not only because of the substantial support it provided, but because it served as an important catalyst. It has inspired other donors to create scholarships — some 35 to date — that continue to open doors for Black Leadership Network (BLN) scholars.

One such student is Vladimir Leonard, a USF senior and engineering major who watched eagerly from the crowd in 2018. His story is representative of so many BLN scholarship recipients. "I'll never forget that day," he says now.

Leonard posed for photos holding a huge replica of the check with BLN founders Jerry Bell, former tight end for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers who later founded his own information technology company; Anddrikk Frazier, '01, Life Member, who made his name as captain of USF's bas-

ketball team in the late 1990s and became an entrepreneur in the energy field; Ashley Butler, '12, Life Member, who founded Butler Automotive; and Edwin Narain, Life Member, a former USF student body president who served in Florida's House of Representatives and today is an assistant vice president with AT&T.

Not long after, Leonard attended a Bulls football game at Raymond James Stadium and posed on the field with that group and others, including then-USF President Judy Genshaft, Life Member — and even mascot Rocky the Bull — all beamed onto the Jumbotron.

But those festive scenes are only part of why the memory of Helios' gift remains embedded in Leonard's mind. The more significant reason is the impact Helios' support has had. "Thanks to Helios, BLN has expanded and provided more resources to serve scholars and enhance our experience," Leonard says.

As a member of the inaugural BLN class in 2017, he knows firsthand the power of giving as the organization celebrates its fifth year.

"I remember applying for a BLN scholarship as a freshman with one of my friends," he recalls. "That spring I received an email that I'd been accepted, even though I really didn't know what it was all about. But pretty soon it became such an eye-opening experience — something that I dreamed of coming into the university, and wanting to be part of a community such as BLN, and the excellence surrounding it from community leaders, entrepreneurs and established professionals."

The Helios gift was divided into two parts, a \$2 million scholarship endowment providing support for up to 40 students per year in perpetuity, and \$100,000 immediately for scholarships, mentoring and leadership skills programming designed to help students graduate with less debt and needed skills for the job market. In Leonard's case, that support — especially mentoring he received — infused him with confidence and a sense of direction.

Philanthropy



Above: From left, Jerry Bell, Anddrikk Frazier, Ashley Butler, and Edwin Narain, founders of the Black Leadership Network.

“I had the pleasure of being mentored by Mr. Narain, and his knowledge and wisdom definitely helped me out a lot,” Leonard says. “It was everything from advice on how to move around campus to what leadership looks like. I could also speak to him just as a young man and he’d provide helpful guidance. His mentorship not only gave me information I needed to succeed, but having someone like him in my corner has also challenged me to always strive to succeed in whatever I do.”

To date, 26 scholars have graduated since the first year, and an additional 15 are slated to graduate this semester. The program has been coordinated since 2019 by Walter Jennings, USF’s assistant director of diversity initiatives, serving as BLN program director with a primary focus on mentoring and professional development.

“We’ve decided to make professional development a collaborative effort, where our BLN scholars are learning once a month along with students supported by USF Women in Leadership & Philanthropy, and scholars from the Latino Scholarship Program,” Jennings explains. “We started a few years ago with traditional professional development — how to dress, resumé support, preparing elevator pitches and doing interviews. Now we’re doing a series, for last semester, for instance, on financial literacy.”

It’s worth pointing out that the class was taught by Jorge Soriano, ’11, a former Latino Scholarship Program student at USF who became a financial expert and now has established a scholarship in the program to support Latino students at USF (see related story). Leonard, like Soriano, sees himself coming back to help BLN students through a scholarship one day — and offering mentoring and outreach as well.

“I know that I and others want to give back to the organization, and lend a helping hand to the next group of students coming up,” he says. “I want to share what BLN is — community, professionalism, and most of all, family.”

- DAVE SCHEIBER | Advancement



Below: Imani Cofield, current BLN Scholar.

'We must lift as WE CLIMB'

ONCE A MONTH LAST SEMESTER, Jorge Soriano stood before students in the Latino Scholarship Program, the Black Leadership Network and USF Women in Leadership & Philanthropy. His mission was to teach financial literacy to students who receive scholarships. But in the bigger picture, Soriano's goal mirrors the mantra of the Latino Scholarship Program (LSP) that made such a difference in his life as a USF student — the guiding phrase, "We must lift as we climb."

Soriano's personal story is like so many built upon the foundation of the 30-year-old Latino Scholarship Program, reflecting perseverance, gratitude and deep desire to give back to the program that made such a difference in his own life. It is a program supported by grateful donors like Soriano, but also by major gifts such as the \$1.25 million gift made by Helios Education Foundation in 2008.

In Soriano's case, the LSP afforded him an educational lifeline. His mother, Raquel Fernandez, brought him to Florida from Cuba in 1998, after dispatching her older son to live with his father in Puerto Rico to avoid Cuba's compulsory military draft. Once in the United States, Soriano made the most of his new start, eventually reuniting with his brother and graduating from USF in 2011 as a finance major from the Muma College of Business.

He wanted to find a way to honor his mother for her sacrifices. And that ultimately came in the form of a scholarship established in her name, made with his then-fiancé and now wife, Hilary Wedner.

"My mom didn't have the same opportunities I had, and she sacrificed so much to get us into this country," Soriano said at the time of the gift. "It was very important for my brother and I to get our education, because she never had that. When Hilary and I told her about naming the scholarship for her, she just broke down crying."

The LSP has enriched more than 600 scholars over its three decades of impact, and recently the USF Foundation expanded its staff to further support the program. Many, like Soriano, continue to give back. The program's roots extend back to 1992, when the Latin Community Advisory Council, led by the late Dr. Braulio Alonso, established LSP to support students from low-income families without the funds to send a child to college. Alonso was joined in creating the program by three women: the late Adela Gonzmart, Dr. Adrienne Garcia, '68, and the late Dr. Remember Maceo-Gomez.

For the record, the program's first recipient was a Brandon High School valedictorian, Paola Sequeira, '96 and MSPH '98, who faced deportation after graduation. An extension for a student visa was granted, and aided by the inaugural Latino Scholarship, Sequeira enrolled at USF, graduated with honors, and earned both her medical degree and U.S. citizenship. She now practices internal medicine at the University of Southern California Medical Center in Los Angeles, as well as a community clinic serving low-income patients.

Sequeira's story is just one of many hundreds that reflect the program's spirit of compassion for those in need of helping hands — and commitment to changing lives. The Columbia Restaurant's Richard Gonzmart, Adela's son, understands the power of the program as well as anyone. He established the Adela and Cesar Gonzmart Endowed



Memorial Scholarship in 2002, and in 2005, to mark the Columbia's 100th anniversary, created the Columbia Centenario Award. Those two scholarships total more than \$300,000. Then in 2017, came the Richard and Melanie Gonzmart Latino Scholarships totaling another \$300,000. The Gonzmart family currently supports 21 USF students.

"My mother stressed to me the need to help students who weren't so fortunate — students who were academically talented but financially challenged," he says. "She felt strongly that it was our responsibility to help."

Among those helped: two siblings, Julio and Elsi Rodriguez, whose father died while picking crops. They graduated USF in 2000 and became successes in technology and finance. Following the lead Gonzmart had set for them years earlier, Julio created the Rodriguez Nambo Endowed Scholarship, honoring their mother, Esther Rodriguez Nambo.

"Before the (Gonzmart) scholarship, I thought my only decision was going to be which crops I would be picking," says Julio. "At that time, Elsi and I were both working in the fields, and trying to figure out if one of us one might be able to go to college and the other continue in the fields. His generosity allowed us both to go to USF — and that made all the difference in opening doors for me and both my sisters."

Jose Valiente, '73, Life Member, USF Foundation board chair, presided over the 30th anniversary Latino Scholarship Program awards ceremony in September. He has been part of the Latin Community Advisory Committee for 31 years; he and wife, Lourdes, Life Member, have also been donors to the program, sponsoring seven students. Valiente and his family made a dramatic exit from Cuba in 1962 just before the Cuban Missile Crisis erupted. Overcoming many hardships, he and cousin Jorge, '83, were propelled by USF to highly successful financial careers in Tampa.

"Without a doubt, no matter what year, no matter what degree, no matter what field, our students and graduates are making valuable contributions and serving as role models for new generations of students," Valiente told the celebratory gathering. "They are, in fact, making a difference locally and globally. They represent USF and the Latino Scholarship Program with great pride."

- DAVE SCHEIBER | Advancement

Philanthropy



Above left: Brulio Alonso, in 1962, when principal of Jefferson High School.

Above right: A graduate of the Latino Scholarship program himself, Jorge Soriano, '11, and his then-fiancé and now wife, Hilary Wedner, '17, established an LSP scholarship in honor of his mother, Raquel Fernandez, in 2018.

Below: Owner of the Columbia restaurant Richard Gonzmart established a scholarship in his parents' name. His mother, Adela, is pictured.

Opposite page: Jose Valiente poses for a photo with the program's first recipient, Paola Sequeira, '96 and MSPH '98, at an LSP event in 2018. Sequeira currently practices medicine at USC Medical Center in Los Angeles.



Photos: Courtesy USF Advancement

BELLINI Center opens for business

USF'S MUMA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS has opened the Bellini Center for Talent Development, an innovative career-development program housed in a state-of-the-art "business hub" adjacent to WUSF public media.

The center was made possible by a \$10.6 million gift from philanthropists Arnold F. "Arnie" and Lauren Bellini, both USF alumni. It will bring together Tampa Bay-area business leaders and students for a 3-year-plus credentialing program to create a "talent pipeline" for employers and increase job placement for students.

"The Bellinis' vision will provide our business students with a professional development program unlike any in existence, one that can serve as a national model," USF President Rhea Law said. "We are grateful for this very generous gift, which will benefit our students, business partners and the entire USF community for generations to come."

More than 200 USF dignitaries, business leaders, faculty and students attended a ribbon-cutting at the new center in March.

The Bellinis are longtime supporters of USF and the Muma College of Business. Arnie Bellini co-founded ConnectWise Inc., a Tampa technology and software development company, in 1982. He sold the company in 2019 after revolutionizing the managed service segment of the IT industry and turned his focus to philanthropy, specifically, growing Tampa Bay's IT business economy. His goal: Create 70,000 jobs by 2026.

He described his \$10.6 million gift as "responsible capitalism."

"I feel responsible capitalism is truly acknowledging the true nature of your success and if you're thinking holistically, you have to give back," he said. "Everything that you learned in academia and everything that the business community wants — that gap in between is this, the Bellini Center, right behind me. We're going to fill that gap. If you've had success, you have to give back."

Moez Limayem, the Lynn Pippenger Dean of the Muma College of Business, reminded the crowd that they were witnessing a historic event.

"The Bellini Center is timely, relevant, and transformational — a space and program dedicated to both student and business success," he said. "From the first day students set foot on our campus, they will get a jump-start on landing their dream job after graduation."

"We want to get each Muma College of Business student an internship and the skills they need to succeed in any business environment. With the help of the Bellinis and this remarkable gift, that goal will soon become a reality," he added.

The Bellini Center for Talent Development will be a one-stop shop for professional career development, job placement, advising, internships and experiential learning opportunities for business students. Beginning in the second semester of their freshman year and continuing through senior year, students will attend workshops led by local business leaders and learn the soft skills employers seek. They'll become adept at networking, interviewing and displaying professionalism while developing relationships with potential future employers.

"The whole idea of the Bellini Center is to prepare students



and to give them the tools for success early on," said Cyndy Sanberg, executive director of the Bellini Center.

The center will open with 19 students, adding another 50 in the summer and 50 more in the fall. It will focus on internships early in a student's academic journey and track placement and promotions.

"We know that internships can increase job placement two-fold," Sanberg said. "But students are waiting until their junior or senior year to get an internship, and we need to change that. We will give them the tools they need to succeed."

The center will also rely heavily on partnerships within the Tampa Bay business community.

"Employers are teaching the skills they want to hire students for. That's huge. That's what sets us apart," Sanberg said. They'll also introduce students to a variety of company cultures, beginning with a setting that feels more business than collegiate."

The vibrant 9,000-square-foot center is designed to stimulate creativity and innovation, with a layout geared toward facilitating student-employer interactions.

It includes a state-of-the-art 32-person seminar room, the main conference room, four "teaming" rooms where small groups can meet to collaborate, lounge areas, four employer interview rooms, and student workspaces that seat up to 24 people.

Hiring interns from USF for ConnectWise was tremendously successful for his company, Bellini said. The Bellini Center reimagines those valuable, traditional internship programs by expanding and formalizing opportunities for both business leaders and students.

Arnie Bellini earned an MBA from USF in 1982 and serves on the Muma College of Business Executive Advisory Council. Lauren Bellini is a 1991 USF marketing graduate. Their son, Peter Bellini, is a current USF MBA student.

Through their gift, the Bellinis help USF take its commitment to students and the Tampa Bay business community to the next level, said Jay Stroman, USF Foundation CEO.

"The Bellini Center will be a game-changer; the whole region will benefit for years to come. We're grateful to Arnie and Lauren, two exceptionally dedicated and visionary USF alumni."

- ELIZABETH L. BROWN | Muma College of Business

Above:

From left, Lauren, Arnie, Arnold and Peter Bellini at the grand opening in March.

Right: The 9,000-square-foot center is designed to connect students with the business community, including a seminar room, employer interview rooms and student workspaces.

Philanthropy



From student to PRESIDENT

Rhea Law's relationship with USF has come full circle

By TOM WOOLF | USF News

THE CURIO CABINET IN USF President Rhea Law's Tampa campus office displays a few of the dozens of honors she's received throughout a career filled with professional accomplishments and service to the university, the region and the state.

Among them is the 2021 Governor's Business Leader of the Year Award from the Florida Council of 100. There is the 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award from the USF Alumni Association. There are mementos from various USF colleges.

And then there's the small black microscope, a gift from her mother when she was a little girl, fascinated by chemistry and biology. She dreamed of being a doctor.

"I would carry the microscope around and I kept slides in my pocket, and I would just examine whatever I could find," Law says.

In addition to the fond memories of childhood and family that it evokes, the microscope is symbolic of her approach to life.

"I wake up every morning and ask, 'What can I explore today? What am I going to learn?'"

A fifth-generation Floridian and Tampa native, Law was appointed USF's interim president last August. She was appointed as the eighth president by the USF Board of Trustees in March and was confirmed by the Florida Board of Governors a week later.

She brings unique perspectives to the position.

Law is the first alum to serve as USF's president. She is one of the founding members of the USF Board of Trustees, where she spent five years as vice chair and four years as the first and only female chair. In addition, Law is a founding member of the board of directors of the USF Law Alumni Society, served as a member of the USF Research Foundation Board and chaired the Health Professions Conferencing Corp./USF Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulations for eight years. She also was a member of the search committees for USF's two previous presidents.

Law's affiliation with the university started in 1968.

After graduating from Tampa's Chamberlain High School, Law went to work for General Telephone and was taking classes at Florida College. She completed a year at the col-

lege, but then learned USF employees could take six credit hours per semester tuition-free.

"That was like a light bulb going off."

She quit General Telephone, got a job as the university research project administrator for USF's Office of Sponsored Research and began taking classes at night.

"I loved what I was doing here," she says. "I loved the fact that I was working with faculty from all around the university and had such diverse learning opportunities."

She still dreamed of becoming a doctor. But when she consulted with staff at USF's medical school, they advised against continuing to work if she wanted to pursue a medical degree.

"I was going to school on my own and really couldn't afford to do that," she says. "So, I just kept working and taking classes, and because I was negotiating contracts for research projects, it occurred to me that maybe business administration was a good place for me."

Courses in business law became life changing.

"I was inspired to think about how you can be an advocate, so the only difference from medicine was the science aspect," she says. "It was still about fixing a wrong, similar to fixing an injury or an illness, and I just loved the idea of that."

Law remained in her research project administrator job and continued taking six credit hours each semester at night. She earned her bachelor's degree in management in 1977.

"It takes you a long time to get through school at six hours a crack," she says with a laugh.

Realizing that after working at the university for 10 years she was fully vested in the retirement plan, she cashed that in to pay for law school at Stetson University. Law earned her juris doctorate with honors in 1979.

She met her future husband, Wayne Williams, over the citizens band radio she relied on during her daily commutes to Stetson.

"I have a very heavy right foot and I didn't want to get myself in trouble because I surely could not afford a ticket," Law says.

She enjoyed listening to the chatter on the CB radio — "I never talked because I didn't want to talk in that language, 'breaker, breaker, one-nine,' that was not me." One day, a

President Law and husband Wayne Williams at their Tampa home.



Photo: SANDRA C. FODA / USF News



One person doesn't run a university. If we link arms and we are focused on the next steps that can propel us forward, we can't be stopped. It starts with listening, and it ends up with empowerment."

— Rhea Law, USF President

man's voice says, "The girl in the little white Toyota, come back to me." Law wouldn't respond, even though the driver persisted for several weeks.

"It turned out this guy worked for Wayne and that driver told him about trying to talk to me every morning and that I wouldn't respond," Law says. "Wayne told him, 'She'll talk to me.'"

He was right – sort of. She says she was "really taken" with his voice, but initially refused to respond. After a few weeks of hearing him on the CB radio, however, Law accepted his invitation to join him for breakfast — a granola bar and a cup of coffee — at a scenic overlook.

"I parked behind him and stayed in my car," Law says. "He looked OK outside the car, but I didn't open the door. I would only roll my window down. And we agreed we'd meet again."

As their relationship developed, she learned that Williams had been racing cars for a number of years, which paired neatly with Law's own need for speed.

"Whether it's a boat or an airplane or a car or a go-kart, I just love it," says Law, a former motocross racer who also has flown in an F-16. "I like things that are exhilarating, that really get your heart pumping."

The first gift she received from Williams was a three-day course at the Sebring, Florida, International Raceway.

"Those three days were physically exhausting," she says.

Each day started at 8 a.m. with an hour of classroom instruction on such subjects as the geometry of racing, followed by an hour on the track. Then it was back to the classroom for an hour, followed by an hour on the track. The routine continued until 5 p.m.

"It was so much fun," she says.

When she returned home, Law told her husband they needed a race car. Considering his own racing background, he was quick to agree. Over the course of the next year, they built one from the ground up and proceeded to enter races all over the Southeast.

Throughout their 37-year marriage, Law says her husband has been pivotal to all that she has accomplished.

"He was there as I was getting my start as a lawyer," she says. "He has encouraged me every day."



Above: Law with the microscope her mother gave her as a child.

Below: Law is one of the founding members of the USF Board of Trustees, where she spent five years as vice chair and four years as the first and only female chair. Her election as chair was highlighted in the fall 2006 issue of USF Magazine.



They came to a crossroads very early in her law career. When Williams' business was purchased by a larger company, he took advantage of an early retirement package.

"We talked a lot about what to do," Law recalls. "I was a brand-new lawyer. I didn't know what my career would be like. Wayne knew we could move where he would have new opportunities and could do very well. Most amazingly, we decided we would stay here and follow my career."

She was prepared to focus on tax law. But on her first day with her new law firm, the senior partner asked if she knew anything about chemistry.

"I told him I actually knew quite a bit about chemistry, and he then asked a second question that set me on a different focus for my whole practice," Law says. "He asked if I knew anything about phosphate companies. Most people would say 'no'. But when I worked at USF, my boss was a geologist and he had a research grant to study phosphate mines. I used to go out and help him with the sampling because it was fun."

Her firm had just taken on a phosphate company as a client.

"The senior partner said, 'Nobody really understands the science, so you're it,'" she says. "This is day one and I'm suddenly the expert in an area that nobody else understood. That got me started on environmental law, an area I never would have thought about. Tax law wasn't exciting, but if that was the only way I could get a job, I was willing to do it. This was so much better. It let me get out in the field, it let me explore, it let me help to make the environment better."

Eventually, changes in state regulations led Law to also develop land use expertise. After two years with the small firm, she joined the Tampa firm of Fowler White Boggs in 1981. From 2002 to 2014, she served as president, CEO and chair of the board. In 2014, Law led the merger of Fowler White Boggs with a national firm, Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, and served as chair of the firm's Florida offices from 2014 to 2018. She remained with the firm in an "of counsel" role, continuing to represent clients, until her appointment as USF's interim president.



Photos: ALISON LONG, USF Health; TORRIE DOLL, USF News; Courtesy, USF Alumni Association

She learned valuable lessons as she developed her leadership style.

“I’m very collaborative, with a really heavy dose of communication,” Law says. “That comes from leading my law firm. You’re dealing with people – just like here at USF – who are very accomplished, very smart, very focused on their areas of expertise. There has to be a lot of communication to understand what we’re trying to accomplish, how that benefits everyone, how we can move forward together.”

Those qualities — collaboration and communication — also are essential in community service. And Law has made it a point to be involved. Among her many roles, she has served as chair of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, the Tampa Bay Partnership and the Tampa Hillsborough Economic Development Corp. She has volunteered with the American Heart Association, served on the board of directors of the Lions Eye Institute, was a member of the 2008 NCAA Women’s Final Four Host Committee and was the inaugural honorary wing commander for the 6th Air Mobility Wing at MacDill Air Force Base.

“Volunteer organizations are extraordinarily important to our community,” Law says. “I really liked getting involved in different things. Sometimes it was something I knew nothing about, but I wanted to learn. Sometimes it was something that I knew a lot about and I felt I could help the organization. If you believe in the mission, then you’ve got to get everybody to move together so you can accomplish the organization’s goals.”

Law also puts a premium on listening, something she considers to be essential in a large, complex organization such as USF.

“I spent the first couple of months as interim president going to all of the colleges, all of the units, speaking to faculty, staff and students,” she says. “I wanted to learn from them, I wanted to learn where there were problems that we needed to solve. Then, I created groups around me that I could empower to solve those problems. One person doesn’t run a university. If we link arms and we are focused on the next steps that can propel us forward, we can’t be stopped. It starts with listening, and it ends up with empowerment.”



Top left: Auto and motorcycle racing has been a lifelong hobby with Law.

Center: Law with USF Health staff at the Synapse Summit.

Top right: From left, Will Weatherford, chair of the USF Board of Trustees; Law, Brian Lamb, Life Member, chair of the Florida Board of Governors; and Mike Griffin, Life Member, vice chair of the USF Board of Trustees, at the Board of Governors meeting where Law was confirmed as president.

Bottom: Law preparing to zipline at the Recreation & Wellness high ropes course.

In pursuit of excellence

TOPPING THE LIST of USF President Rhea Law's priorities — and there are many — is the implementation of the new five-year strategic plan, In Pursuit of Excellence, on July 1, the start of the new fiscal year.

"It is what will propel us forward," she says. "The power of the strategic plan is not the words on a page. It's each college, each unit, each individual understanding what their part is and being empowered to execute."

The strategic plan builds on USF's momentum as America's fastest-rising university and charts a course toward the pursuit of becoming a top-25 public university, and it strengthens USF's profile consistent with membership in the Association of American Universities. The plan details USF's institutional mission, vision, aspirations and values, and leverages the distinctive qualities of USF's campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee to focus on five strategic goals centered on: student success at USF and beyond; faculty excellence in research and innovation; partnerships and engagement with local, national and global impact; a diverse and inclusive community for learning; and a strong, sustainable and adaptable financial base.

The strategic plan includes seven Strategic Areas of Focus that reflect current institutional areas of academic and interdisciplinary excellence: Analytics and Data Science — Integrating USF Digitally; Biology by Design; Design, Arts and Performance; Global and National Security; Health, Society and Biomedical Science; Social Justice and Human Rights; and Sustainability, Environmental and Oceanographic Sciences.

"Having a strong financial base is crucial," Law says. "We cannot move forward being uncertain with our budget or be concerned that we might start to invest in something and then suddenly have to pull back. We need to prioritize and make sure that the areas we are investing in are the ones that will take us where we need to be, take our students where they need to be."

A transparent budget model will be implemented at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

"We will use that as a springboard to look at alternative funding sources," Law says. "We can't always rely on our traditional sources of funding. We're going to be creative and we're going to look at different ways to accomplish our goals."

Those include "really looking at taking care of our faculty, staff and students," she says.

"It's more than the paycheck or the kind of raise or bonus you might be able to come up with. It's about how do we really care for our community? How do we give them the tools to be successful? How do we excite them about our mission?"

Achieving a top-25 ranking and positioning for AAU membership are important, Law says, because they are markers of excellence.

"That is what propels others to want to come here," she says. "It is what attracts researchers, because they know they will be able to collaborate with other distinguished faculty, that they will be able to bring their research to a higher level. It's not just more research, it's better research. Our research can change the world. Our students can change the world. We just need to give them the tools."

- TOM WOOLF | USF News

Bulls REACT

USF alumni applaud the selection of Rhea Law, '77, as the Board of Trustees' unanimous choice and the Florida Board of Governors' confirmation of her as president.



Given the current needs of the university, there is no better choice than alumna Rhea Law. I have had the honor of working with President Law on several committees and projects, so I know she can deliver on moving USF forward, including in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. I'm looking forward to watching President Law carry out her vision of increased Black student enrollment and sustained success for all students.

ANDDRIKK FRAZIER '01, LIFE MEMBER
PRESIDENT AND CEO, BEST SOURCE CONSULTING

When it was announced that Rhea Law would be our interim president, the USF community was jubilant. When it was announced that she would be our president, that joy grew exponentially. President Law is highly respected and beloved by the Tampa Bay area community, students, faculty and our legislators in Tallahassee. The trajectory USF has experienced under her leadership is nothing short of spectacular. The future of #OneUSF is brighter than ever before. Go Bulls!

JOSE VALIENTE '73, LIFE MEMBER
2016 USF DONALD A. GIFFORD ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD
USF FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIR; CLIFTON LARSON ALLEN,
LLP, PARTNER, RETIRED

I have known President Law for more than 40 years. Her work ethic, knowledge of Florida and outstanding people skills make her uniquely qualified to be president of USF.

LEE MOFFITT '64, LIFE MEMBER
1976 USF DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS
FORMER FLORIDA LEGISLATOR; FOUNDER,
H. LEE MOFFITT CANCER & RESEARCH INSTITUTE



Frazier



Valiente



Moffitt



Hayes

With the selection of Rhea Law as its eighth president, USF continues its tradition of excellence. Her skill, acumen and experience have already yielded significant dividends, including a record-breaking budget year, local and national strategic partnerships, and renewed commitment to campus development for both academics and athletics. I have no doubt that during her tenure, USF will achieve its ambition of becoming a top 25 U.S. public university.

MONIQUE HAYES '01, LIFE MEMBER
2014 USF OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNA
USF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD CHAIR;
PARTNER AT GOLDSTEIN & McCLINTOCK, LLP

Gravitas: The tradition continues. Castor, Genshaft, and now, Law!
As an all-in Bull and advocate of our ever-rising university, I'm pleased, proud and reassured to see a woman of President Rhea Law's caliber take the helm, and I can't wait to see the new heights she'll bring us to.

CATHERINE PEEK McEWEN '79, LIFE MEMBER
2016 USF DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA
JUDGE, U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA



McEwen

BOUNDLESS BULLS

Shining a light on our university community

BOUNDLESS BULLS is a collection of stories about what makes USF great — our faculty, staff, students and alumni.

A series created by USF's news team, Boundless Bulls profiles some of the individuals whose talent, drive and courage continue to elevate our university.

For more Boundless Bulls' stories, visit USF News at usf.edu/news.

Brian Kornfeld

IN THE SPRING OF 2016, Brian Kornfeld attended an Executive MBA program event at USF where he had earned an MBA two years earlier. The guest speaker that day was Tampa Bay Lightning owner Jeff Vinik, a driving force behind Tampa's downtown redevelopment.

Kornfeld, a Clearwater native, had returned to the Tampa Bay region several years earlier and was trying to gain his footing in the startup economy. His first venture: a personalized recommendation engine he launched in 2013 that he says "failed miserably."

Applying lessons from that experience, Kornfeld launched a second company that was more successful, but had plateaued. By the time he attended Vinik's talk, Kornfeld was searching for reasons behind the challenges facing company founders in a stagnant innovation market.

Vinik wrapped up his presentation by discussing the need for an innovation hub in the Tampa region. For Kornfeld, it was a career-changing moment.

"It really caught me off guard," Kornfeld says of Vinik's closing remarks. "I went up to him afterward and asked how I could help. I wrote him a carefully crafted email, and he answered within an hour and said, 'Let's have a meeting.'"

Six weeks later, Kornfeld shared with Vinik his research into what was happening in other emerging innovation markets such as Nashville, Tennessee; Austin, Texas; and Boulder, Colorado as well as actions and potential solutions. They discussed what was working and what wasn't, and how that applied to the Tampa Bay region.

The conclusion?

"It came down to the fact that people weren't connecting here, at least not at scale," Kornfeld says. "The larger companies were not getting involved with the local ecosystem. The news coverage wasn't celebrating startup successes. And there were some gaps in educating entrepreneurs about things like blockchain and how to invest in tech if you invest in real estate. Those concepts were foreign here."

After meeting with Vinik, Kornfeld made connections with two other USF alumni — Marc Blumenthal, '86, and Andy Hafer, '88 and MBA '90, Life Member. The two shared his interest in creating a neutral nonprofit entity that would bring together aspiring entrepreneurs and help them launch successful startups.

Together they founded Tampa-based Synapse, of which Kornfeld serves as CEO, and provides the framework for connecting Florida's innovation communities. A centerpiece of that work is the annual Synapse Summit, which began in 2018 and serves as a platform for attendees to network and share ideas.

"This innovation community looks nothing like it did five years ago," Kornfeld says. "The quality of founders has gone up tremendously. We've had more companies dubbed unicorns in the last 24 months than probably ever before. It's amazing to think about how fast the region has grown, and I'm greatly looking forward to what will come in these next five years and how the region will continue to transform and grow. USF plays a very active role in all of that with its partnerships and community support infrastructure, and with the top-notch talent and research that it produces."

ALUMNI

“ We’ve had more companies dubbed unicorns in the last 24 months than probably ever before. It’s amazing to think about how fast the region has grown.”

– Brian Kornfeld



- John Dudley, Sandra Roa, Aaron Hilf and Laura Lyon, USF News; Penny Carnathan, USF Alumni Association; and USF St. Petersburg news staff contributed to this series

BOUNDLES
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BULLS



Geraldine McKinnon Twine

GERALDINE MCKINNON TWINE DIDN'T SET OUT to be a trailblazer.

She and her husband, John, just wanted to earn a good living, she says, so their three children could be safe and successful in school and life.

So, although she's honored, Twine, a retired advanced registered nurse practitioner, says she's also a little embarrassed by the attention she received for breaking down barriers at a time when much of the South was still segregated. In 2021, Twine received the League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County's Lifetime Achievement Award for her efforts to provide proper health care to the disadvantaged and to foster opportunities for minorities. She received USF's 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award and in 2017, she was inducted into Hillsborough County's Women's Hall of Fame.

"I wasn't thinking about it," she says of the years she spent working as a nurse, taking care of her kids, and going to college in the 1960s and '70s. (She holds three degrees from USF.) "I still don't think about it. I thought everybody was doing the same thing to feed their children."

Growing up in tiny Milton, a city in Florida's western Panhandle, Twine knew early on that she was meant to take care of

others. Her mom was a beautician, her dad a mechanic, but nursing was her calling, starting with tending to the babies born to poor and rural mothers in her community. In school, she joined the Red Cross club, the homemaking club, the health club and Girl Scouts.

She married young ("Which may not have been the best thing to do," she says with a smile), and soon had three children of her own: Barbara, Dirk and baby Debra. Even so, she managed to take a licensed practical nursing course in Tallahassee to improve her skills. She was six weeks from graduating when John, a teacher, got a job in Tampa, and the family moved south.

Nursing classes were segregated in Tampa, as were the hospitals, and the closest LPN course was for whites only, Twine says. So she and three other women carpooled to Gibbs Junior College in St. Petersburg, which served African-American students.

Twine finished her coursework and in 1961 got a job at Clara Frye Memorial Hospital in Tampa — for many years the only hospital in Tampa that treated Black patients.

In 1967, Twine became the first black nurse to transfer from Clara Frye to Tampa General Hospital when it officially integrated. Of course she was tested, she says, mostly by patients who were "astonished" by some of things she could do.

ALUMNI



“They didn’t know that when you’re trained and educated, you could do anything a white person could do. I was aiming to please, and it worked.”

She also noticed that when she walked into the hospital cafeteria and sat down for lunch, some Black workers – housekeepers and others – would follow. Before she came, they told her, they ate in the boiler room.

People today might not realize the indignities that were “hurting to the soul” for minorities back then, she says. “You just say ‘it is what it is’ to yourself and work to make things better. You support those things that can propel you forward.”

And so she did.

She found time to mentor other ambitious nurses, tutoring them for their board exams. And she continued to pursue her own education. After graduating from a three-year program at Hillsborough Community College and receiving her registered nurse’s license, she learned that new standards were being put in place requiring RNs to hold a bachelor’s degree. So when USF started its nursing program in 1973, she was among the first to enroll.

Twine received her bachelor’s degree in nursing in 1978 and just kept going, earning her master’s in technology education in 1981 and a master’s in nursing in 1988.

STUDENTS

Ryan Shargo

RYAN SHARGO HAS TAKEN ADVANTAGE of many opportunities at USF. As a freshman, he started his academic journey through the summer Academic and Cultural Engagement Program, in which he traveled to Costa Rica. Shargo later travelled to the Dominican Republic thanks to his Genshaft Global Presidential Scholarship.

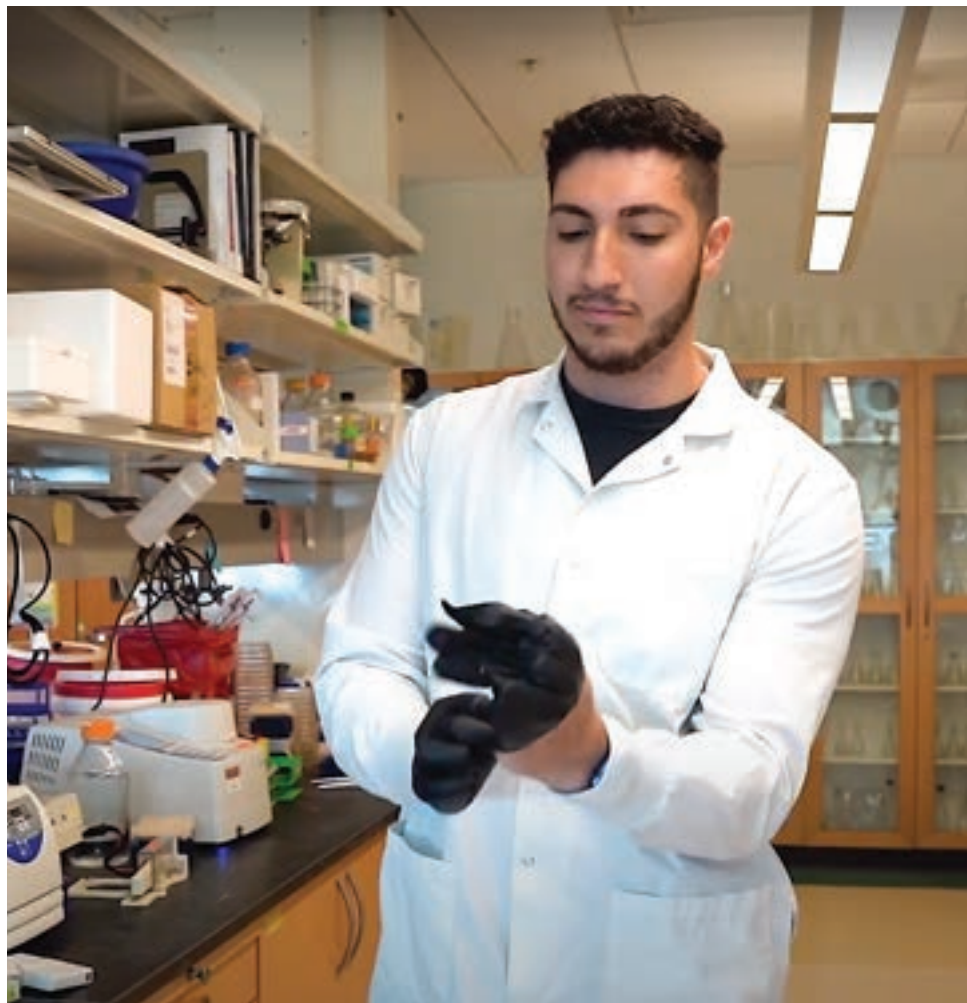
These trips led to an internship with the Kerolle Initiative for Community Health, run by Dr. Reginald Kerolle and based in the Dominican Republic. Kerolle and his team operate a free community outreach health program in rural towns, serving more than 1,500 people each year. Shargo’s internship experience expanded into his thesis research.

His experience in the Dominican Republic also inspired him to build a community garden at USF.

“We participated in planting a plantain garden to help make the communities more self-sufficient. I thought that would be kind of cool if we could have a little garden on campus to possibly support the food halls or the food pantry.”

Shargo’s experiences have enriched his worldview and inspired his goal of becoming a doctor. Once he takes his MCAT this spring, Shargo plans to apply to the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine.

“I really never imagined that I would be doing the things that I’ve done. I really built connections along the way that I think are super-valuable.”





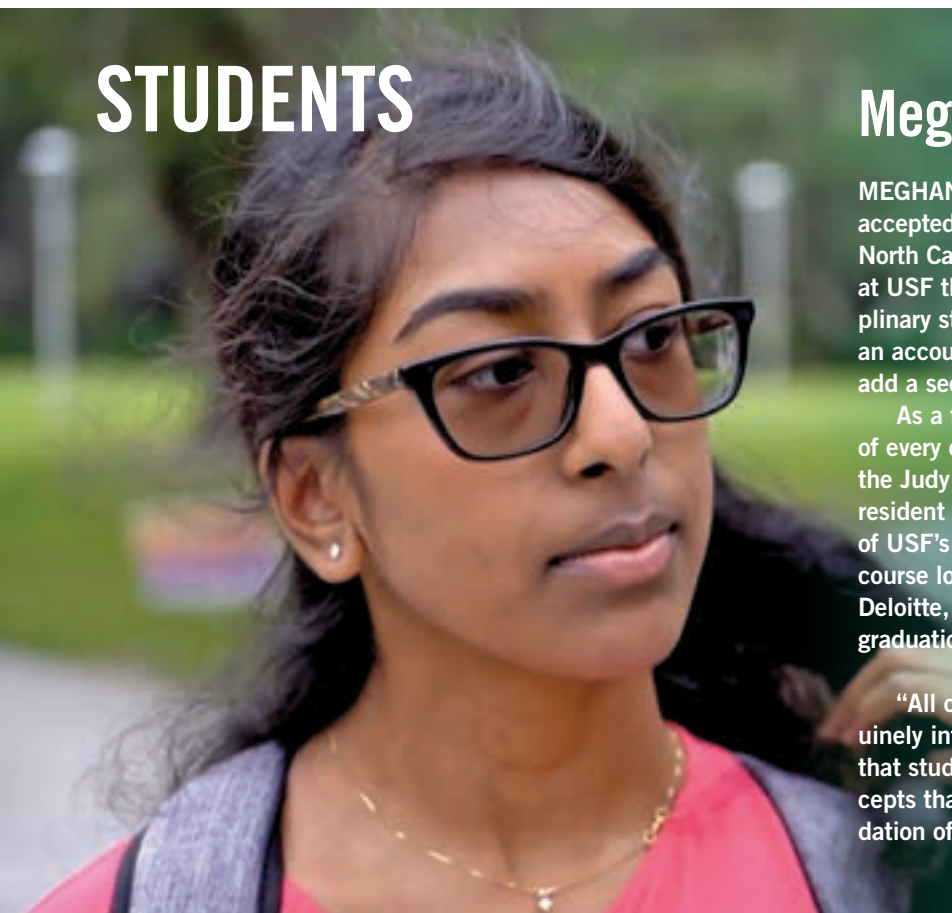
ALUMNI

Yasmeen Armoush

YASMEEN ARMOUSH HAS ALWAYS had a strong connection to her Colombian heritage. Born and raised in Tampa, her mother is originally from Barranquilla, Colombia, and has always tried to instill a sense of pride in where their family came from. It's an identity that Armoush has celebrated; so much so that she was named Tampa Bay's Carnival Queen representing Barranquilla for 2022.

Since the announcement, Armoush has worked to promote Colombian folklore and diversity both on and off campus. As a USF senior, she participated in USF's Latin Fest, performing cultural dances, and educating fellow Bulls on Colombian history. She has also met with USF President Rhea Law to discuss her outreach and education efforts and was a guest at the City of Tampa's Hispanic Heritage event.

And while she's enjoyed the opportunities it has presented, she says that to her the title is a daily reminder of her connection to Colombia. Armoush graduated in December with a bachelor's degree in psychology and plans to pursue a master's degree in the future.



STUDENTS

Meghana Nelluri

MEGHANA NELLURI HAD HER PICK OF UNIVERSITIES. She was accepted to the University of Florida, NYU and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, to name a few. She ended up enrolling at USF thanks, in part, to the university's emphasis on interdisciplinary study, a focus that has allowed her to not only work toward an accounting degree through the Muma College of Business but add a second major and two minors.

As a first-generation American, Nelluri tried to take advantage of every opportunity. She has served in leadership roles within the Judy Genshaft Honors College Student Council, worked as a resident assistant and is on track to graduate in three years as part of USF's Provost's Scholar program. While juggling an intensive course load, Nelluri also completed a competitive internship with Deloitte, a position that will lead to a full-time job following her graduation this year.

"All of the Muma faculty have been so supportive and so genuinely interested in what they're teaching as well as making sure that students understand the real-world application of the concepts that they teach. It's really helped to have such a solid foundation of knowledge and I feel confident entering the workplace."

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Ruthmae Sears

AS A MATHEMATICS EDUCATOR, Ruthmae Sears has a true flair for problem solving. Her work extends far beyond using formulas and finding solutions to abstract mathematical problems. Using mathematical reasoning to examine social disparities such as poverty, literacy and structural racism, Sears develops community-centric solutions. Her work emphasizes inclusivity in all spaces, stemming from her belief that schools are microcosms of a community.

“I’ve always looked at education from a holistic viewpoint,” says Sears, associate professor of mathematics education in the USF College of Education and associate director of the Coalition for Science Literacy. “We have to be committed to the whole person because it’s the whole person we’re trying to develop so that way they can appreciate the beauty of mathematics but also be positive agents of change within their community.”

Sears’s collaborative projects are thriving. Her research has had such a profound impact that the American Association for the Advancement of Science has recognized Sears as an AAAS Fellow – one of the world’s most prestigious honors for academic research. She is co-chair of the Accelerating Systemic Change in STEM Higher Education working group focusing on equity, inclusion and social justice. Additionally, Sears works with the National Science Foundation-funded Systemic Transformation of Education through Evidence-Based Reforms leadership team, the Center for PAInT on the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus to support arts integration in STEM, and facilitates Mathemat-

ics Power Hour, a collaboration between USF, Hillsborough County Public Schools and Texas Instruments. Through her involvement in the community, Sears promotes hope and inspires her community to develop solutions together.

At USF, Sears works with colleagues to address disparities and has a knack for galvanizing the community across the three campuses. In 2020, she helped design various faculty and staff training opportunities, such as the Enlightenment Workshop Series, which fosters cultural competence with more than 700 members of the university community.

“It was so important that we had the voices of faculty and staff across this institution who were willing to engage in courageous conversations and participate. It highlighted that our community has people who have a zeal for knowledge and a strong desire to make USF better and promote inclusive excellence,” Sears says.

In 2021, Sears and her colleagues were commissioned by the city of St. Petersburg to develop recommendations on how it can address systemic racism. Sears also facilitated the NFL Huddle for Change, a six-part discussion series on racial inequalities in physical and mental health, which was hosted by a partnership between the Super Bowl LV Host Committee, NFL Inspire Change, Community Tampa Bay and USF. Sears also co-led the Muma College of Business’s I’m Speaking Series, which explored how anti-racism and gender equity intersect in the workplace.

“We need to find solutions that can really improve the quality of life within our communities, such that everyone can thrive,” Sears says.

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Les Shaw

HIP SURGERY AT THE AGE OF 13 gave Professor Lindsey (Les) Shaw his professional purpose in life.

During the procedure, surgeons unknowingly implanted two metal pins carrying *Staphylococcus aureus*, commonly known as “staph,” a unique bacterial pathogen that is among the tiniest and deadliest germs. It can cause infection in every part of the body and is responsible for medical conditions ranging from benign abscesses to systemic and life-threatening illnesses, such as pneumonia and septicemia.

The surgeons could not remove the pins.

“The problem with the infection on the pin is that it will never go away. You can take antibiotics, which will temper the infection, but the minute you take that away, it comes back,” says Shaw, professor and associate chair of USF’s Department of Cell Biology, Microbiology and Molecular Biology. “I’m trying to understand how something that is theoretically very simple – this tiny organism that we have to use microscopy to even see – can outsmart us and kill millions of people.”

For the past 20 years, it’s been Shaw’s mission to unravel its mysterious nature.

Shaw, who began his investigations as a patient, completed his undergraduate and graduate studies in England. He was later invited to the U.S. by a team of scientists he had worked with in Poland. Upon completing his fellowship, Shaw chose USF as his academic home.

“I just saw opportunities and collaborations being so organic here at USF. Even now, I talk to my colleagues at universities with more prestige. They can’t get their chemists or other colleagues to talk to them. I just walk across the street,” Shaw says.

Since Shaw joined USF as a researcher in 2007, he’s discovered several systems within bacteria cells that have led to significant therapeutic developments for treating drug-resistant bacteria. He attributes his success to USF’s interdisciplinary and collegial community of scientists.

Shaw’s collaborative work with chemistry researchers has led to significant findings. One example is discovering Darwinolide, a compound extracted from a sea sponge from Antarctica by Bill Baker, a professor in the department of chemistry. Shaw tested the compound in one of his biofilm assays and discovered it successfully attacked the biofilm, the microorganism’s protective coat.

Mentoring and training the next generation of scientists is essential for Shaw. He fosters a family-like environment to support students throughout their growth. Also, he gives them the freedom to pursue their individual interests. As they develop their ideas, Shaw either cheers his students on or challenges them to keep looking. In the 14 years since the opening of his lab, Shaw now has a “family tree of scientists” with graduates working as senior members of the CDC, the microbiology industry or in their own academic tenures.

Kemesha Gabbidon

AS A YOUNG GIRL PLAYING DOCTOR in her hometown of Kingston, Jamaica, Kemesha Gabbidon's patients only ever seemed to come down with two specific ailments: asthma, which Gabbidon herself suffered from as a child, and bronchitis.

"I used to call it brown-chitis," Gabbidon says, laughing. "My mom bought me this fake stethoscope and I carried around a little notepad, diagnosing my friends with asthma and brown-chitis."

Today, Gabbidon is a real doctor of a different variety. Rather than diagnose patients, she helps prevent the spread of infectious disease as a community health advocate and postdoctoral research fellow in the department of psychology at USF's St. Petersburg campus. Gabbidon's research focuses on such topics as reproductive health and health equity. Through a recent initiative, she works closely with local individuals and communities most affected by HIV in order to reduce the spread of the disease.

"My goal in public health is to help with prevention efforts," Gabbidon says. She has a special interest in reaching at-risk youth, instilling in them the knowledge they need to lead safer and healthier lives.

Gabbidon's passion for public health stems from her experiences growing up in two countries with distinct cultures. When Gabbidon was 10 years old, she moved to the United States, living with her father's family in Miami until her maternal grandmother arrived from Jamaica. Although at the time Gabbidon thought the move was temporary, she remained in the States, where she encountered stark differences from her home country.

"Living in Jamaica, I never really realized I was Black," she says. "But in America I was an immigrant and had an accent. I



was clearly different." The chasm between Americans who are financially secure and those who aren't struck Gabbidon as particularly troubling.

Over the years, Gabbidon's growing interest in social justice drew her towards addressing the structural root causes of health risks for disadvantaged Americans. After receiving her bachelor's degree from Florida State University, she earned a master's in public health from USF, focusing on communicable global diseases. She subsequently earned a doctoral degree in health promotion and disease prevention from Florida International University, where she studied the dynamics of sexuality conversations between Haitian and Jamaican parents and their adolescents.

As a postdoctoral research fellow at USF's St. Petersburg campus, Gabbidon was honored with the University's Outstanding Black Staff/Faculty Award in 2020 for her teaching and research excellence.



David Connelly

DAVID CONNELLY CREDITS HIS EDUCATION with broadening his perspective and opening the door to a series of adventures. An adjunct instructor of humanities at USF's St. Petersburg campus, he wanted USF students to have similar opportunities.

"In my own life, education has played such a huge role," says Connelly, who spent more than 20 years as the public relations director at the Museum of Fine Arts in downtown St. Petersburg. "It transformed my life. That's really where I want to give – to help students complete their education."

Working with the USF Foundation, he created a planned gift to establish the David Connelly and Joe P. Pérez First Generation

Scholarship, an endowed scholarship for students of any major on USF's St. Petersburg campus.

Pérez was Connelly's partner of 32 years and the person who introduced him to the St. Petersburg campus. Pérez worked as an office manager in the Academic Advising Center, a position he held until shortly before his death from lung cancer in 2010.

"He loved that job," Connelly says. "He was right there on the front lines with students. He really liked helping students navigate the process."

Connelly was a first-generation college student and grew up in a working-class family in the small town of Waynesburg, Ohio. His father never finished high school but was determined to send his son to college.

Connelly attended Mount Union College, now called the University of Mount Union. He majored in English but had the opportunity to study a variety of subjects, and he graduated summa cum laude.

Connelly enjoyed his college experience so much, he considered a career in higher education and earned a graduate degree in college student development from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He later earned a master's degree in Latin American studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

A series of twists and turns led him to Texas, where he met Pérez, and then to Shreveport, Louisiana, and a job as a reporter and editor for the Shreveport Journal. After the newspaper fell on hard times, Connelly applied to be a grants writer at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. And so, his career in the museum world began.

Connelly and Pérez moved to St. Petersburg in 1996, and Connelly retired from the museum in 2017 at age 65.

Now he teaches one course each semester at USF's St. Petersburg campus. He says his job is to connect the humanities to his students' personal lives. Connelly also hopes to impart his appreciation for higher education.

"I tell them, right now, you have career goals and that's great," Connelly says. "But you don't know how those will change over time. Your education will give you more opportunities. It certainly did that for me."

5 minutes with Monique



My fellow Bulls,

WHAT A WILD AND WONDERFUL SPRING it's been for the USF community! After two years, we've been in person again for so many of our favorite events. Seeing all of you has felt like a VERY long overdue family reunion.

You sold out the Alumni Association's signature annual fundraiser, the Green & Gold Gala, which returned to The Florida Aquarium in March. More than 500 of you came out to reconnect and celebrate our great university. A big Horns Up to all who attended and those who helped make it a tremendous success by donating their time, talents and exciting auction items. When Bulls come together, we are a force!

We'd hardly hung up our green and gold evening wear when it was time to pull out our Bulls ball caps for our Life Member Appreciation Baseball Game. After a two-year pandemic hiatus, this popular get-together received an enthusiastic welcome back with lots of new faces; the

Alumni Association's Life Member roster has grown by a whopping 35% since last year.

In July 2021, we instituted changes to better accommodate our rapidly growing alumni family. We began phasing out paid annual memberships and made every Bull a General Member upon graduation. We hope this free membership ensures all alumni feel included as they enjoy the support and engagement the Alumni Association has been providing since 1969.

The Life Membership program remains an enduring gift to USF. A large portion of Life Members' one-time association dues benefits student and alumni programming forever because it's deposited into an endowed fund. The association works to help all Bulls succeed individually while supporting our great university. Our activities range from prestigious recognition awards for grads to professional development for students to rallying support for legislative initiatives. Life Members are crucial to USF's success on so many levels.

If you're not already a Life Member, I hope you'll join me in becoming one; visit usfalumni.org/membership.

Here's another way to make a difference. Our new mentorship program connects alumni and students online, matching individuals with shared professional interests. It provides a blueprint, so no one has to figure it out on their own, and it helps create lasting, rewarding relationships. You'll soon be able to connect with a student online and make a difference with the next generation of community leaders.

If you're a planner like me, mark your calendar for Oct. 9-15, Homecoming! We'll celebrate our 2022 USF Alumni Award recipients on Oct. 13, and enjoy the biggest USF reunion ever Oct. 14 at our alumni Welcome Home Party and parade watch. The big game is Oct. 15.

Thank you for supporting USF and your Alumni Association through these tumultuous two years. I'm so proud to say that, in 2022, we're stronger than ever. What a testament that is to the character of our incredible Bulls family and friends.

Together. Forever. We make a difference.

Go Bulls!

Monique Hayes, '01

*Chair, USF Alumni Association Board of Directors
Life Member No. 3536*

Your Alumni Association Board

The USF Alumni Association's board of directors includes Bulls who've demonstrated a firm commitment to USF's success and are association Life Members and Circle of Excellence donors. It also includes a USF presidential designee; a USF Board of Trustees representative; a USF Foundation representative; a USF Athletics representative; a faculty/staff representative; and two students — the student government vice president and the USF Ambassadors president. Ex-officio directors are the senior vice president for USF Advancement, and the association executive director.

The board sets policy and guides the direction of the association as it builds mutually beneficial relationships between USF and USF alumni.



Officers

Clockwise from above

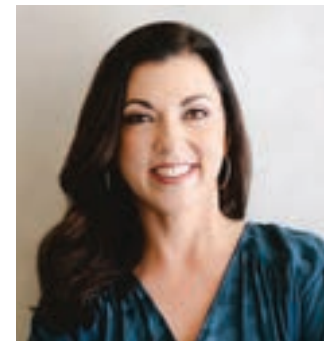
Chair: Monique Hayes, '01

Vice chair: Braulio Colon, '03 and MPA '10

Past chair: Randy Norris, '79

Secretary: Christine Turner, '97

Treasurer: Bill Mariotti, '15



Directors

Kerine Black, '00 and '01

Maya Brown, '15

Ashley Butler, '12

Jennifer Condon

Sally Dee, '94 and MBA '11

Matt Diaz, '13

Troy Dunmire, '00

Andrew Jones, '11

Andrew Ketchel, '10 and MPA '12

Maja Lacevic, '09

Andy Mayts, '93

Will Perez, '14

Chris Reyes, '93

Carla Saavedra, '97

Juan Soltero, '10

Todd St. John-Fulton, '19

Liz Wooten-Reschke, '01 and MPA '06

Student representatives:

Mario McPherson, USF Ambassadors president

Jillian Wilson, Student Government vice president

Ex-officio directors:

Jay Stroman, senior vice president for USF Advancement and Alumni Affairs; CEO USF Foundation

Bill McCausland, MBA '96, vice president and USF Alumni Association executive director



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‘We rise by LIFTING OTHERS’

Radiant Hands’ president helps Afghan refugees start new lives

By JOEY JOHNSTON, '81

DURING A LEADERSHIP SEMINAR a couple years ago, Magda Elkadi Saleh had to answer the question, “What do you do?”

She struggled.

The founder of two Tampa Islamic schools and current administrator of one, she’s also president of Radiant Hands, a nonprofit created to support Muslim women and at-risk families now tasked with resettling Afghan newcomers.

She’s a mother of four, grandmother of eight, and wife to Mohamad, a Tampa neurologist.

She drew up a list.

“But they said, ‘We’re not asking what’s your job. We want to know this: What do you do?’” says Saleh, MPH '95, Life Member. “It took me about 90 minutes to think about it. In the end, my motivation is just to help people realize their greatest potential. It’s sad to see all the resources we have and know there are people suffering. I believe in the quote that says we rise by lifting others.”

In recent months, that has required muscle. Radiant Hands is Tampa’s go-to for Afghan families fleeing their country following the U.S. military withdrawal in August 2021; the City of Tampa dubbed it the official welcoming agency for evacuees. Saleh and her team, who’ve been helping resettle refugees from Islamic and Arabic-speaking countries since 2015, have welcomed more than 360 people in the most recent wave, coordinating everything from airport arrivals to jobs and housing.

The latter has proved a major challenge in what may finish this year as the nation’s No. 1 hottest real estate market, predicts online marketplace Zillow.

Rental rates shot up a record 24 percent in 2021, fueled by an influx of new residents seeking a lower cost of living, warmer climate and fewer pandemic restrictions, says real estate data firm CoStar Group. Meanwhile, construction industry challenges, some of them pandemic-related, have resulted in fewer new single-family homes.

Radiant Hands works with Airbnb, hotels and real

estate professionals to find housing that does not require a credit check, because many Afghan refugees have no credit history. They receive a one-time U.S. government payout of \$1,300 per family member. In Tampa, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is more than \$1,800 a month.

“Our goal is to identify a place and make sure it is furnished [with donated items], so when they walk in, they feel like they are at home,” Saleh says.

Radiant Hands helps meet families’ religious, cultural and language needs while also finding rental assistance, job-placement services or resources to start a business.

“I’m doing my best to start my life from zero,” evacuee Malalai Rostami, 24, told the Tampa Bay Times. “I’m here in Florida now. I feel safe, I feel secure.”

That’s largely due to Saleh.

“I have not seen anyone who is as sincere and dedicated and pure as her,” says Radiant Hands’ executive director Ghadir Kassab. “With this type of business, you must have a big heart or you couldn’t do it. It requires a lot of sacrifices, empathy and thoughtfulness.”

That includes the small stuff, like gift baskets suggested by the first family Radiant Hands helped back in 2015. The baskets include a copy of the Muslim holy book, the Quran; a prayer rug; teapot and coffee pot; hygiene products; and traditional cookies.

The accompanying note, written in Arabic, says: “Wishing you ease; you’re among family.”

Family always has been important to Saleh and USF remains an important part of hers. She came to the United States in 1967 as a baby, the Austrian-born daughter of Egyptian parents. When USF’s medical school brought her husband to Tampa in 1990, she saw few hijabs, the veil worn by Muslim women.

“I think there were just four of us — myself, my sister and two friends,” Saleh says. “Now there are many Muslim

Right: Magda Saleh poses with a collaborative art project created at a refugee welcoming event in 2016.



We are a USF family and we have always encouraged all the kids in our schools to strongly consider USF. It has everything you need. There's nothing you can't study there as an undergraduate."

– Magda Saleh

Photos by AMEER EL SWED

FOREVER BULLS



Above: Radiant Hands ensures the families it assists get out for fun; this picnic a few years ago brought together several resettled families.

student organizations at USF.”

All told, seven other family members have USF degrees.

“We are a USF family and we have always encouraged all the kids in our schools to strongly consider USF,” Saleh says. “It has everything you need. There’s nothing you can’t study there as an undergraduate. It gives you a strong foundation and you can stay close to home.”

Saleh earned an undergraduate degree in biology at East Tennessee State University and planned to work in public health until a USF professor told her, “Education is the most public of all health fields.”

In 1992, she co-founded Universal Academy of Florida. She later became the first principal at American Youth Academy, and went on to found Bayaan Academy, where she’s served as head of school since 2015.

The children at all three schools learn Arabic and English fluency. The schools offer three recesses a day, so physical energy can be spent and academic achievement emphasized during classroom time. There’s focus on respect, values, leadership and accountability, along with zero tolerance for bullying.

“We have a strong culture, something that is harder to maintain at a larger school,” Saleh says.

The backbone of that culture is helping — helping each other, helping yourself to a better life. It’s also seen at Radiant Hands’ fundraising subsidiaries, including Radiant Kitchens and Radiant Tailors, where refugees receive job training.

Saleh generally doesn’t use the word “refugees.” Her new Afghan friends are “newcomers,” and she seeks to include them in beach outings, picnics and social affairs, anything to make them feel more at home.

“We don’t want them to feel like they’ve just been plucked out of their country and have nothing,” she says. “We want them to feel empowered. That’s what we try to do every day.”

People interested in volunteering or donating, or those with rental properties available to refugees, can contact Sabahat Khan, housing team lead for Radiant Hands, at 813-545-5554 or khanrealtorfl@gmail.com.



Above: Members of the Radiant Hands team include, left to right, Ghadir Kassab, director; Magda Saleh, president; Marwa ElBadry, clients assistant; Athena Cartaya, project manager/accounting; and Muatabar Saleh, Radiant Tailors member.



Left: Radiant Hands welcomes refugees with gift baskets that include a touch of home, including a teapot, traditional sweets, and a prayer rug.

USF Alumni Association 2021 Annual Report Summary

Fiscal year July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021

Your Alumni Association membership supports activities that provide Bulls with meaningful ways to help USF, its students and alumni succeed. Thanks to all the association

members — alumni, students, staff, faculty and friends — who made a direct impact on USF's success through their support of the USF Alumni Association in 2020-21.



Association members – 24,469

That's 15,747 annual members
6,137 Life Members
3,585 student members



Scholarships – \$136,412



Net position (assets) – \$8,403,939

Revenue – \$4,778,982

Percentages attributed to:

Membership	11%
Budget support	8%
License plates	8%
Affinity partnerships	8%
Endowment return	48%
Investment income	6%
Contributions	7%
Event revenue and other	4%

Expenses – \$2,374,878

Percentages attributed to:

Administration costs	14%
Membership	18%
Programs and events	15%
Student programs	13%
Alumni groups	13%
Communications	16%
Development	11%

Social media followers – 238,757

Facebook	215,687 followers
LinkedIn	10,944 followers
Twitter	8,923 followers
Instagram	3,203 followers



Fiscal year 2021 encompassed the world's first full year facing the many challenges of the COVID-19 global pandemic and, still, support for our university remained strong. Alumni and friends generously gave their time, talent and treasure via the Alumni Association and the results speak for themselves: In September 2021, USF was named the nation's fastest-rising university."

Bill McCausland, MBA '96

Vice President and Executive Director, USF Alumni Association
Life Member No. 2331

2021 CIRCLE OF
EXCELLENCE AND
JAN.-AUG. LIFE MEMBER

Honor Roll

THANK YOU TO ALL who support USF as Alumni Association U Club donors; 2021 Circle of Excellence donors; and Alumni Association Life Members. Listed in this issue of USF magazine are new Life Members from January through August 2021. The list will continue in subsequent 2022 issues.

USF Alumni Association Life Members are among our university's most dedicated supporters. A large portion of their dues is deposited into an endowed fund that supports programs and activities for students and alumni now and for generations to come. As Life Members, these Bulls and friends continuously and actively support USF.

Due to space considerations, this Life Member Honor Roll includes only a partial list. Please watch USF magazine throughout the year as we publish the names of all the Bulls and friends who became Life Members in 2021.

We gratefully acknowledge all of our Life Members with a tribute page at usfalumni.org/LMhonor.

Many Life Members provide additional gifts that support USF's success via the Alumni Association.

The Circle of Excellence recognizes Life Members who made additional unrestricted annual gifts in 2021, as well as all 29 donors in the prestigious University Club. U Club alumni and friends have made a significant impact on USF through endowments of \$25,000 or more.

Your generosity allows the Alumni Association to provide programs that benefit both students and alumni, and make it easy for anyone to support USF in the manner they choose.

Life Member Circle of Excellence Donors UNIVERSITY CLUB – U CLUB Endowment of \$25,000+

The following Life Members are part of a unique and prestigious group of alumni and friends who have made a significant impact on USF through a generous endowment of \$25,000 or more.

Timmer Ahrens, #2140
Jean Amuso, #3112
Philip Amuso, #3111
Angela Brewer, #594
James Brewer, #850
Anne Craft, #3985
Wilson Craft, #608
Daniel Dennison, #1935
Nancy Dennison, #1934
April Grajales, #1422
Braulio Grajales, #4440
Daniel Harper, #1954
Mary Harper, #1953
Ben Heugel, #1421
Lisa Provenzano Heugel, #1420
Anila Jain, #132
Kailash Jain, #1060
Mona Jain, #631
Roy Jewell, #755
Glen Nickerson, #1795
Betty Otter-Nickerson, #1796
Michael Peppers, #1774
Michael Perry, #2718
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Life Member Circle of Excellence Donors

DIAMOND LEVEL

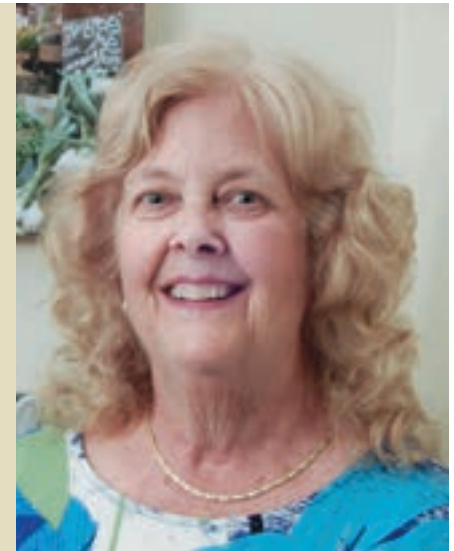
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- Linda Simmons, #386
- Randy Simmons, #3819



As a graduate from two very different eras, 1976 and 2002, and USF campuses, my continued support keeps me close to these special places. The growth of USF makes me a proud Life Member alumna.”

— Denise Hawkins Thomas
MS Speech Pathology '76 and MEd '02



- Mike Sinclair, #4275
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Life Member Circle of Excellence Donors

EMERALD LEVEL

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GOLD LEVEL

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USF Alumni Association



Giving back is one way I live up to my commitment to helping USF inspire and mold the future leaders, entrepreneurs, and thinkers around the world.”

— Juan Soltero
Political Science '10



Life Member Circle of Excellence Donors

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New Life Members for January-August 2021

Thanks to unprecedented support from USF alumni and friends, the USF Alumni Association added more than 2,000 Life Members in 2021. Thank you! Due to space limitations, we will publish the list in segments throughout the year.

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 Jennifer Bruty, #5938
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 Judith Buckner, #6226



I became a Life Member to stay connected to the university I still call home, and to be able to share my support and unwavering pride for USF with those I encounter in my post-collegiate career.”

– Emily Cardella
 Computer Engineering '20





Although I was an annual Alumni Association member, an Order of the Golden Brahman member and involved on a USF advisory board, I didn't make the leap to Life Member until this year. I wanted to give back even more because I continue to serve the university and this was another small way to give back."

– Mike Suarez
Political Science '86 and MPA '90



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- Troy Collier, #5932
- Heidi Colom, #5927
- Ann Conley, #6086
- L. Fred Conley Jr., #6085
- Gwen Cooper, #5925
- Kathleen Cormier, #6124
- Robert Cormier, #6125
- Bobbi Cortez, #5814
- Jordyn Counts, #5812
- David Cratem, #5733
- Kristopher Crawford, #5958
- Grace Crompton, #5923
- Mary Cross, #6048

- Jennifer Dahl, #5792
- Joshua Dale, #5760
- Ethan Daniel, #5820
- Naomi Daniel, #5845
- Noelle Daniel, #5980
- Zachary Daniel, #5822
- Jane Darling, #6035
- Susan Dattilo, #5995
- Anna Davidson Abella, #6204
- Janice Davis, #5933
- Jeffrey P. Davis, #6117
- Leslie Davis Jr., #6136
- Phillip Davis, #6155
- William De Chabert, #6177
- Amy DeCew, #6084
- Matthew Deihl, #5762
- Alexander Delgado, #5832
- Annabel Delgado, #5791
- D. William Detwiler, #6097
- John Devaux, #6119
- Jodi DeVries, #5943
- Josie Diaz, #5778
- Andrew Doane, #5811
- John Dobson, #6120
- Joseph Donnelly, #6043
- Kelly Donnelly, #6044
- Stephen Douglas, #7855
- Steven Drasdis, #5831
- Dawn Duet, #6104
- Monte Duet, #6103
- Jennifer Dunatov, #5817
- Rebekah Dunmire, #5788
- Joseph Dunn, #6122
- Susan Eckstein, #5996
- Cislyn Edwards, #5844
- Carol Einstein, #5864
- Michael Einstein, #5863
- Linda Ellis, #5960
- Melissa Ems, #5735
- Lee Epstein, #6131
- Miriam Escobar, #5728
- Samantha Esposito, #6015
- Jeffrey Fecko, #5936
- Harold Feininger, #6110

- Tyler Fenlon-Abousy, #5847
- Corey Ferguson, #5862
- Joseph Ferguson, #6123
- David Fimiani, #6101
- Joseph Finocchiaro, #5727
- Stephanie Fitzsimmons, #5819
- Kathryn Flaherty, #5951
- Michael Flanagan, #6073
- Lee Florea, #6132
- Carli Flynn, #6072
- Kristina Flynn, #6014
- Elaine Folger, #5821
- Kyle Frankman, #5782
- Michelle Frankman, #5783
- Deirdre Franzese, #5914
- John Fraser, #6121
- Jennifer Fredericks, #5801
- Kris Fredericks, #5802
- Theodore Freeman, #6169
- Anna Frei, #5797
- Chad Fugere, #5748
- Brendan Galella, #6019
- Joseph Galuppi, #5768
- Leslie Garcia, #6135
- Mario Garcia Jr., #6134
- Patricia Gates, #6055
- Debra Genereux, #6106
- Glenn Genereux, #6107
- Emery Gibson, #6013
- Mark Giddarie, #5813
- Cecilia Gill, #5903
- Brian Gilliam, #5850
- Charles Girsch, #5884
- Natalie Givens, #5848
- David Glaser, #6215
- Florence Glatt, #6109
- Ralph Glatt, #6108
- William Glauser, #5761
- Matthew Glover, #5790
- Alvaro Gonzalez, #5775
- Matthew Gratz, #5771
- Mariah Green, #5781
- Phyllis Greenstein, #5849
- Edward Griffin, #5869

- Kathy Griffin, #5870
- Matthew Grisham, #5970
- Madison Grode, #5839
- Gregory Guarino, #5818
- Linda Guevarez, #6138
- Bryan Gunn, #5998
- Suzanne Gunn, #5999
- Lakecia Gunter, #5731
- William Gunther III, #6178
- Desmond Haigler, #6017
- Celia Hall, #5881
- Christopher Hall, #5908
- Elizabeth Hallenbake, #5763
- Steven Hanken, #5994
- Theresa Hanson, #6003
- Cheryl Harrell, #6071
- Gregory Harvey, #5873
- Jean Hebert-Martin, #6114
- Gerald Hefley, #5922
- David Helsing, #5917
- Diana Helsing, #5918
- Steven Hendrix, #6060
- Carter Henne, #5976
- Michelle Henne, #5975
- Richard Hill, #5987
- Mary Holcombe, #6148
- Robert Holland, #6157
- Winifred Holland, #6062
- Daniel Holley, #6254
- Charles Hollis Jr., #5904
- Maria Howell, #6047
- Margaret Huffman, #5852
- John Huggins, #6225
- Erin Huligan, #6070
- Helen Huntley, #5929
- Rose Huro, #6158
- Janice Hurst, #6223
- Rhea Hurwitz, #6237
- Arthur Hushen, #6088
- Joelle Hushen, #6904
- Sharon Impemba, #5886
- Ronald Ingram Jr., #6057
- Manuel Ippolito, #5824
- Dwayne Isaacs, #5743

Michael Macaluso Sr., #6115
 Miranda Maldonado, #7101
 Christopher Males, #6027
 Deborah Mallory, #5913
 Steven Marcus, #6243
 Theresa Marks, #6004
 Carla Marshall, #5750
 James Marshall, #5749
 David Martin, #6113
 Thomas Martin, #6051
 Sherri Mastin, #6251
 Lawrence Mathews, #6233
 David Matthies, #6102
 Mark Maxwell, #6145
 Bruce McArthur, #6093
 Agnes McCarthy, #6068
 Nicole McCarthy, #6235
 Cheryl McCoy, #6210
 Stephen McDonald, #5992
 Jason McDowell, #5858
 Khalilah McDuffie, #5871
 Jared McHugh, #6252
 Connor McIntyre, #5808
 Michael McNaughton, #5974
 Angela McNealy-Simmons, #5825
 William Mead, #6010
 Virginia Meador, #5880
 Susan Mease, #6165
 Jerald Mefferd, #5939
 Thomas Meloche, #6248
 Beverly Menard, #6092
 Annette Mendoza, #5764
 Thomas Menke, #6171
 Eric Michiels, #6220
 Margaret Mikelonis, #5963
 Gail Miklic, #6221
 Deborah Miller, #5912
 Hugh Miller, #5911
 Jeanette Miller, #6037
 Michael J. Miller, #6036
 Michael T. Miller, #5780
 Nathan Miller, #5893
 Craig Minsky, #6213
 Jeanne Mitchell, #6038
 Joseph Mitchell, #6041
 Deborah Moltisanti, #6216
 Jordan Moore, #5842
 Kathleen Moore, #6229
 Ann Morris, #6021
 Kendall Morris, #6020
 William Moskowitz, #6067
 Sidney Moss, #6242
 Dennis Murdock, #5916
 Elizabeth Murphy, #6218
 Richard Murphy, #6239
 Gail Nagy, #5744
 Dorothy Nales, #6031
 Lespy Nelson II, #5836
 Altren Neumann IV, #5857
 Eugenie Newby-Stephan, #5874

Tamara Newkirk, #6260
 Christina Nichols, #5905
 James M. Nichols, #5906
 Joseph Niewierski, #6167
 Sydney Niewierski, #6166
 Randall Nunley, #5704
 Daniel Nurkala, #6098
 Beth Nusman, #6091
 Aaron Oberlin, #5747
 Jessica O'Bryan, #5851
 Lawrence O'Gara, #6012
 Patricia Ogden, #6151
 Michael O'Keefe, #6198
 Susan O'Keefe, #6199
 Denise Okolovitch, #6030
 John Oroukin, #6153
 Paulette Oroukin, #6154
 Elizabeth Owens, #6032
 Philip Pace Jr., #5985
 Walter Packard, #6009
 Joaquin Padilla, #6078
 Peter Pagnott, #5984
 Pradnya Parasher, #5759
 Mary Ann Paris, #5789
 Woodrow Parker, #5765
 Andres Garcia Parra, #5809
 Aarti Patel, #5800
 Shawanna Patterson, #6241
 Caralyn Paul, #5901
 Joseph Peda, #6042
 Joaquin Pereda, #5942
 Jesus Perez Jr., #5940
 Noel Perez, #5894
 Robert Iannucci Perez, #5837
 Hannah Picot, #5772
 Amy Polen, #6255
 Rebecca Post, #6236
 Charles Pruett Jr., #6195
 Mary Pruett, #6194
 Pamela Puroil, #6053
 Thomas Pynn, #6006
 Jamie Quolas, #5774
 Khamchand Ramkissoon, #5784
 Rekha Ramkissoon, #5785
 Jordan Ramsey, #5856
 Lawrence Ramsey, #6045
 Aaron Raschke, #5855
 Mark Raynor, #5854
 Jennifer Hale Reichart, #6118
 Jacob Remus, #5823
 Jenay Rhoads, #5828
 Victor Ricchezza, #5773
 Arthur Richardson, #5835
 Louis Richardson, #5888
 Timothy Ristorcelli, #6172
 Tonya Rivera, #6175
 Sally Robbins, #5990
 Tammy Roberts, #6061
 Marggie Robles, #6261

Carlos Rodriguez, #6207
 Susanne Roessler, #5997
 Tyler Rogers, #5843
 Anthony Romer III, #5803
 Brian Ronayne, #5972
 Meghan Ronayne, #5973
 Paul Roosa, #5877
 Angela Rosario, #5827
 Albert Rosati, #6080
 Thomas Rowe, #6007
 Matthew Rozier, #5971
 Terry Rusch, #6002
 Marymartha Ruscoe, #5967
 Peter Ruscoe, #5966
 Wendy Ryzner, #6249
 Alfred Sapp, #6147
 Mary Sapp, #6146
 Barry Sarkell, #5898
 Annamarie Saunders, #5798
 Paula Schelling, #5983
 Lawrence Schonfeld, #5956
 Barbara Schwaid, #6022
 John Scott, #6040
 Miles Scott, #5766
 Luis Segura, #5834
 Althea Seivwright-Lue, #5885
 Joel Sereno, #6039
 Tari Sexton, #6001
 Stephen Sharrock, #5928
 Dianne Shipley, #5920
 G. Glen Shipley, #5919
 Vidarshana Siddharthan, #5846
 Christopher Silver, #6028
 Robert Silverman, #6240
 Allyson Smith, #5895
 Charles W. Smith, #6096
 Adam Snyder, #5799
 Amy Sobzak, #6265
 Thomas Sohlberg, #5795
 Janis Sorensen, #5934
 Kathleen Spaulding, #6230
 Carlyne St. Louis, #5876
 Thomas Stambaugh, #5930
 Cody Staples, #6179
 Constance Starkovs, #5875
 Marilee Steele, #5964
 Christine Stenger, #6026
 Nicole Stokes, #5979
 Steven Stroh, #6163
 Jay Stroman, #6173
 Tonya Stroman, #6174
 Charles Stuart, #6190
 Judy Stuart, #6191
 Monique Stylos, #5977
 Margaret Sudduth, #5742
 Amanda Summa, #5777
 Marc Summa, #5776
 Lindsey Susick, #5826
 Alan Swift, #5887
 K. Tanner, #6227

Linda Thanasides, #5961
 Kristi Theurer, #5957
 Randolph Thomas, #5986
 Linda Thorpe, #6046
 Tori Thrower, #6176
 Kevin Torrey, #6129
 Belinda Toth, #6089
 Carl Toth, #6090
 Charity Toth, #7756
 Ryan Toth, #7755
 Laura Townley, #5866
 Kathleen Trautwein, #6126
 Jerry Tribble, #5948
 Joyce Tribble, #5947
 Anthony Truschel, #6087
 Bruce Turley, #5900
 Hafsah Ullah, #5833
 Nathan Van Bibber, #6052
 Zoe Van Story, #6250
 Luis Vargas Jr., #5962
 Alejandro Vega, #5878
 Carol Vincenti, #5902
 Christina Vogel, #5907
 Ross Wacaser, #6159
 Cody Waldrop, #5740
 Susan Walker, #6245
 Christopher Ward, #7048
 Nicole Ward, #7049
 Robert Warden, #5989
 Elizabeth Washington, #5830
 David Weber, #5910
 Jessica Wehinger, #5853
 Susan Weiskopf, #6246
 Gina Wells, #6187
 Joseph Wells, #6186
 Scott Wells, #5796
 Keith Westbrook, #5952
 Lisa Wharton, #6140
 Ashlie Wheat, #5897
 Ronald Wheat, #5896
 Dawn Whitacre, #6105
 Daniel White, #5729

Keri Wickham, #6232
 Kayona Williams, #6066
 Kirk Williams, #6130
 Thomas Williams, #6008
 Robert Wilson, #7852
 Matthew Wiseman, #6196
 Stefanie Wiseman, #6197
 Adam Wish, #5879
 Matthew Wissler, #6065
 Patricia Wolfe, #5982
 Paul Woodarek, #6152
 Shaina Wright, #5991
 Jessica Young, #5745
 Karyn Yudice, #5950
 Luis Yudice, #5949
 Mallory Zimmerman, #6180
 Theresa Zonia, #5770

Circle of Excellence donations are placed in the Executive Director's Fund for Excellence. Recognition is based on giving to the Executive Director's Fund for Excellence and the Alumni Endowment.

The Honor Roll reflects each Life Member's Circle of Excellence donor designation as well as his or her individual ordinal Life Member number. This number serves as a source of pride in commemorating a Life Member's unique place in this prestigious group.

We have made every attempt to ensure the accuracy of our Honor Roll. Please accept our sincere apologies for any omissions or errors.

Interested in information about including a gift to USF in your will or living trust? Contact Bill McCausland, mccausland@usf.edu or (813) 974-1868.

ALUMNI Roundup

NEWS FROM USF'S
VOLUNTEER-LED
ALUMNI GROUPS



From left:
Kathy Kupczyk, '96, Life Member; Phil Kupczyk; Andy Taylor, '09, Life Member; and Matt Powers, '99 and MBA '02, Life Member, share their new greeting at a Pasco Alumni Chapter hockey outing.

Photo: Provided by PHIL KUPCZYK

'Just gimme five'

WHEN BULLS IN PASCO COUNTY shout a cheery, "Gimme five!," they likely want more than a hand slap.

They want \$5.

Because if each of the 22,000-plus USF alumni in Pasco County gave just \$5, they could help send four local kids to USF every year. Forever.

"I want every kid to know they have the opportunity to go to college," says Phil Kupczyk, '97 and MEd '02, Life Member, volunteer chair of USF's Pasco Alumni Chapter.

The need is great. In Pasco, just north of USF's Tampa campus, 42% of public schoolchildren qualify for free or reduced lunches. Nearly half the public schools are designated Title 1 — eligible for federal benefits due to high poverty.

One of those schools is Hudson Academy, where Kupczyk serves as assistant principal.

"Obviously, being an educator, it's more personal to me," he says. "I worked my way through college, jobs and student loans, and it changed my stars. I loved college so much, I went twice!"

He and five fellow volunteer leaders launched Gimme

Five in August. To date, it has raised nearly \$500. With money from other fundraisers, they're about \$2,000 toward their first goal — a \$25,000 endowed fund, which would guarantee two \$500 scholarship awards annually in perpetuity.

"I've been blown away with the donations some people have given," Kupczyk says, recalling an alumna who stopped by the chapter's table during the Alumni Association's Homecoming Welcome Home Party.

"She said, 'I'm going to do it right now. How's \$100 sound?' And she wasn't from Pasco County. She wasn't even from Florida!"

To donate to the Pasco Alumni Chapter scholarship fund, visit <https://giving.usf.edu/online/gift/f/900028/> or mail a check to USFAA, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., ALC100, Tampa, FL 33620, Attn: Pasco Alumni Chapter Scholarship Fund.

To join Pasco Bulls for watch parties and other events, visit usfalumni.org/events; follow the group on Facebook at @USFPasco.

Volunteer spotlight



Alumni group volunteer

Shayra Marie Rosario, '10
USF Latino Alumni Society

Major: Political science

Career: Executive assistant to the regional CEO of Central Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands for the American Red Cross

Hometown: Ponce, Puerto Rico

Favorite USF event: Homecoming concert at the Tampa campus; headliner was Thirty Seconds to Mars

Favorite volunteer activity: USF Stampede of Service to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Years of Alumni Association volunteerism: 3

Favorite musician: Faydee



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No matter where you live, you'll always be a Bull!

The USF Alumni Association's chapters and societies connect Bulls with one another – across the country and around the world. Through social events, professional networking, fundraising and community service, among other activities, alumni groups help USF grads and friends support one another, our university, and current students. They play an important part in the Alumni Association's mission to provide meaningful ways for Bulls to make an impact; protect USF through advocacy; share pride in our great university; and stick together.

It's easy to get involved! Just email the contact person of the group you'd like to visit.

Interest-Based Groups

Black Alumni

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@usfalumnigroup.org

Dance Alumni Network

Sadie Lehmkar
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DBA Alumni Network

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Geology Alumni

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Kosove Scholarship Alumni

Justin Geisler
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Latino Alumni

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Michelle Valencia
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LGBTQ+ Alumni

Todd St. John-Fulton
Robert Wallace
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Medicine Alumni

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Music Alumni

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Tanya Bruce
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Nurse Alumni

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Patel College of Global Sustainability

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@usfalumnigroup.org

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Sean Masse
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Veteran Alumni

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Tampa (Greater Tampa)

Chloe Lipking
usftampaalumni@gmail.com



Left: Students and alumni celebrated the club's 50th anniversary in 2019.

Below: Members of the 1973 USF men's rugby club pose for a team shot.

Love rugby? Join the club!

RUGBY PLAYERS THE WORLD OVER forge a bond that transcends generations and geography.

"If you move overseas and call the local rugby team looking for a job or some other help, they're there for you. It's like a global fraternity," says Sean Masse, '10 and MPA '13, president of the USF Rugby Alumni Society and a volunteer coach of the men's student club. "I don't know if there's another sport like that, that bonds players like that."

The closer to home, the tighter knit those relationships. Each year, USF men's club alumni play the students in an epic match. In 2018, Masse and James Callihan, '09, Life Member, made the group an official Alumni Association interest society and increased activities. In 2019, players of all ages turned out for a 50th anniversary celebration, and students and alumni have teamed up for tailgates and USF's Stampede of Service.

Alumni have endowed two scholarships, meaning each has \$25,000 or more and the interest funds scholarship awards annually. The Tampa Rugby Football Club scholarship was a gift from "the old guys," who cashed out a long idle club account, raised money to fatten the coffers, and donated \$43,000.

The USF Rugby Elite Scholarship IHO Joshua Faile, created by Cody Beers, '13, memorializes fellow team star Faile, '13, who died in a 2014 accident.



"Rugby is so different in terms of the social aspect," Masse says. "You can be any size, any age. You're beating each other up on the field and when the game's over, the home team hosts the other team at a social and you have food, you interact, you talk. There's no hate."

The Rugby Society wants to find more former USF players to join the fun and lend a hand to the students. To follow events or contribute to scholarships, sign up for their newsletter at usfrugbyalumni.com or follow @usfrugbyalumni on Instagram or Twitter. On Facebook, USF Rugby Alumni Society is a private group; just visit and request an invite.

Class Notes

1970s

MICHAEL G. FLAHERTY, Political Science '75 and MA Sociology '77, Life Member, has published "Cage of Days: Time and Temporal Experience in Prison" (Columbia University Press, 2021). He is a professor of sociology at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg.



senior vice president was recognized for exceptional leadership and support.



CAROLE MCGURK, MA Political Science '78 and MEd '90, has joined Premier Sotheby's International Realty as a Tampa Bay area sales professional.



attorney and assistant general counsel.

EDWARD J. PAGE, Criminology '78, Life Member, was selected as a fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America. He's a shareholder with Carlton Fields, PA in Tampa.



Small Business of the Year runner-up; and 2021 Best OBGYN Practice. He also received

STEVE FLUHARTY, Mechanical Engineering '79 and MBA '84, was inducted into the Junior Achievement of Tampa Bay Hall of Fame as a National Silver Award honoree. The Bank of Tampa

has joined Premier Sotheby's International Realty as a Tampa Bay area sales professional.

JANICE "JAN" MCLEAN, Social Sciences Interdisciplinary Studies '78, has joined Gray-Robinson, PA.'s land-use team in Tampa. She previously served as the City of Tampa's senior assistant city

DR. MICHAEL SWOR, Chemistry '78, MD '81 and MBA '98, Life Member, received honors for his practice, Swor Women's Care in Sarasota, including 2021 Best Places to Work; 2021

2021 Best Gyn Scientific Paper International Systematic Literature Review.

1980s

BETSY BENNETT, MAcc '84, was inducted into the Junior Achievement of Tampa Bay Hall of Fame as a National Silver Award honoree. A co-founder and partner of Florida CFO Group, Bennett was recognized for exceptional leadership and support.



Schools was recognized for exceptional leadership and support.

RICHARD HELLER, MSMS '88 and PhD '89, was named an American Association for the Advancement of Science fellow for distinguished contributions to medical engineering. He is a professor in USF's department of medical engineering.

ISRAEL MOREJON, Electrical Engineering '88, was inducted into the Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine. He is president of Integrated Engineering Technology in Tampa.

MICHAEL S. RAO, Chemistry '87, was appointed chair of the American Council on Education board of directors. He is president of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia.

1990s



Naples in Naples, Florida.

MIKE GREGO, MEd '89 and EdD '97, was inducted into the Junior Achievement of Tampa Bay Hall of Fame as a National Silver Award honoree. The superintendent of Pinellas County

Schools was recognized for exceptional leadership and support.

He is president of Integrated Engineering Technology in Tampa.

BRENT BAYES, MAcc '95, has joined Masonic Homes Kentucky as vice president of sales. He previously served as senior director of sales and marketing at The Arlington of

KENDALL J. BROWN, Marketing '91, Life Member, was promoted to vice president of sales and operations for Universal Window Solutions in Sarasota. He was previously director of sales.



mariner supporting the nonprofit's waterborne litter collection vessel.



admissions for Corbett Preparatory School of IDS in Tampa.

CHARLES JUSTICE, Geography '93, Life Member, was named chair of the Pinellas County Commission. A former member of the Florida House and Senate, he has served on the commission since 2012.

KERRY KRISEMAN, Mass Communications '92, has published "Accidental First Lady: On the Front Lines (and Behind the Scenes) of Local Politics." The book chronicles her experiences as the spouse of politician Rick Kriseman, who most recently served as mayor of St. Petersburg. The author is the public relations manager for Creative Clay, a nonprofit art studio.

ERIC ROE, Chemical Engineering '98 and PhD '03, was appointed dean of the College of Professional Studies at National University in La Jolla, California. He previously served as assistant dean of continuing education at the Cockrell School of Engineering at the University of Texas, Austin.

LAURA WIDERBERG, Science Education '99, was named Hillsborough County Public Schools' 2022 Teacher of the Year. She is a biology teacher at Armwood High School in Seffner.

Send us your class notes!

Send Class Notes submissions and high-resolution (at least 300 ppi) photos to pcarnathan@usf.edu or mail to Penny Carnathan, USF Alumni Association, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., ALC100, Tampa, FL 33620-5455

2000s

STEFAN BEUGE, Geography '02, was promoted to partner at Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP, where he's a member of the finance, banking, creditors' rights and insolvency service line in the Tampa office.

KRISTEN BROWN, Psychology '02, was named Florida's 2022 Mother of the Year by the national nonprofit American Mothers, Inc. The award recognizes women for their work, resiliency and commitment to family and community. She's the founder and director of the Tampa nonprofit TRIBE Seminole Heights.



He previously served as vice president of residential services at Boley Centers in St. Petersburg.

EDDIE COLLINS, MA Rehabilitation Counseling '02, was appointed chief of client services at Jewish Family and Children's Services of the Sun-coast in Sarasota. He

JULIE A. DAVIS, Accounting '08, has become a shareholder with Rivero, Gordimer & Co., a Tampa CPA firm. She was previously senior audit manager for the firm.

JESSICA DUEMIG, Mass Communications '07, Life Member, became the second woman in history to serve as public address announcer for a major college football game at the USF Homecoming game in November 2021. Duemig is head of client services for Campus Legends online sports marketplace.



Partnership Alumni Award recipient.

GREGORY HYDEN, Political Science '04, was promoted to partner at Nason, Yeager, Gerson, Harris & Fumero, PA, based in South Florida. He was previously an associate.

LASHAWN FROST, MEd '04, has joined the All Faiths Food Bank board of directors. Frost is principal of Booker Middle School in Sarasota and was a USF College of Education 2021 Spirit of

JENNIFER JASO, MAT '06, was named Sarasota County Schools' 2022 Teacher of the Year. She teaches social studies and critical thinking at Sarasota Middle School.

KARLA MASTRACCHIO, Communication and Political Science '03, Life Member, was named professor and Indo-Pacific regional chair at U.S. Special Operations Command.



MELANIE MCFIELD, PhD Marine Science '01, received the 2021 Coral Reef Conservation Award from the International Coral Reef Society for her work assessing the health of Mesoamerican coral reefs and building an international coalition to protect them. McField is director of the healthy reefs initiative at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

TERRI MEDINA, Mass Communications '02, Life Member, has joined the Southwest Florida Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals board. She is the annual fund manager for The Bishop Museum of Science and Nature in Bradenton.

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TARA (KLIMEK) PRICE, Political Science '01, joined Shutts & Bowen, LLP, as a partner in the Tallahassee, Florida, office, focusing on administrative, commercial, constitutional, and appellate litigation. She previously worked as an associate attorney with Holland & Knight LLP.

DR. ROSHNI RANJIT-REEVES, Anthropology and Biomedical Sciences '09 and MD '13, has opened Oculofacial Surgery and Cosmetic Laser Institute in Lutz, Florida. She was previously an assistant consulting professor at Duke University School of Medicine.

DUSTIN ROBINSON, Elementary Education '11 and MEd '15, was appointed to the Education Law Association board of directors. Robinson is assistant principal for elementary instruction at Stowers Elementary in Lithia, Florida.

JEFF SCHLOTTERBECK, Marketing '02, earned a certificate in blockchain and digital assets from the Digital Assets Council of Financial Professionals. He is the founder of Water Street Wealth Management in Tampa.



ANDRÉ SESLER, Finance '07, was promoted to partner at Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP. He practices in the insurance defense litigation group out of the Tampa, South Florida, and Chicago offices. He was also recently appointed to serve as secretary of the Hillsborough County Bar Association board of directors.

KARTHIK SRIRAM, Biomedical Engineering '07, received the Cade Prize for Innovation for wearable technology developed to measure blood flow. Sriram and USF Assistant Professor Ashwin Parthasarathy were co-leaders of the team that created the device.

CYNTHIA S. VISOT, EdD '00, Life Member, retired as USF's vice president of university affairs after 31 years at the university, including 20 as chief of staff and secretary to the USF Board of Trustees. She has joined The Registry, a higher education executive interim placement organization, as an executive education professional and senior advisor, and provides freelance services for corporate CEOs.

USF (USPS #025203) Number 59

USF is published quarterly in the spring, summer, fall and winter as a benefit of membership in the USF Alumni Association, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., ALC 100, Tampa, FL 33620-5455. Periodicals Postage Paid at Tampa, FL 33634-9651 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to USF, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., ALC 100, Tampa, FL 33620-5455.



MEGAN WASHINGTON, Communication '08, was named a semi-finalist in the American Heart Association's Real Women 2022 national campaign for her commitment to heart health advocacy and education. She will represent Florida at the Ms. Global Continental national pageant in Orlando in June.

2010s

STEPHEN BENSON, Geography '10 and Master of Urban and Regional Planning '12, was named director of the City of Tampa Planning Department. He previously served as the city's chief planner.

KIEN NGUYEN CONG, PhD Physics '19, was named a finalist for the Association of Computing Machinery's Gordon Bell Prize. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in high-performance computing.

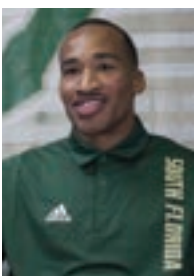
DEB FRANKLIN, MBA '14, was named chair of USF's School of Risk Management and Insurance Advisory Board. She is the co-CEO of PEAK6 InsurTech.

EMILY GORMAN, MBA '16, became the youngest director of Sierra Club Florida in the chapter's history. She previously served as a national organizer for the Miami-based Sierra Club Florida's Ready For 100.



TYLER KLINE, Master of Music '15, released "Orchard," a musical character study of fruits expressed in 50 solo piano works. Kline is co-artistic director of Terroir New Music and a classical music radio announcer at WSMR-89.1, WUSF's classical radio station.

COLLEEN NAUGHTON, MCE '13 and PhD '16, has been selected for one of Ceres Nanosciences' new Centers of Excellence, part of the National Institute of Health's Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics initiative. Naughton is a professor at the University of California Merced School of Engineering.



MATTHEW O'NEAL, Management Information Systems '16, was inducted into the USF Athletic Hall of Fame. He was the first six-time All-American in USF Athletics history and a six-time conference triple jump champion.



Class Notes

TODD ST. JOHN-FULTON, General Studies '19, Life Member, was promoted to chief people and culture officer at Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas and West Pasco Counties. He has worked for the nonprofit since 2020.

JONATHAN WILLMAN, Physics '13 and MS '17, was named a finalist for the Association of Computing Machinery's Gordon Bell Prize. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in high-performance computing.

2020s

CHRISTINA AUGUSTINE, Marketing '20, has joined SouthTech as a marketing coordinator. She previously worked as a marketing assistant for an international airline sales company.

NATALIE HERNESMAN, Mass Communications '21, has joined Sachs Media, a Florida public relations firm, as an account coordinator. She previously worked as a reporter for USF's NewZRoom.

In Memoriam

ADELE SANDRA BERNETT, Accounting '66, Oct. 19, 2021
SUZANNE EVELYN BOPP, Elementary Education '72, Nov. 4, 2021
LEONARD BRITTEN, Biology '74, Life Member, Dec. 28, 2021
KATHLEEN SWANN BROOKS, MA Art History '98, Aug. 29, 2021
RONALD WAYNE BROWN, Management '73, Feb. 16, 2022
SHARON JORDAN BROWN, Elementary Education '70, Oct. 20, 2021
CHARLES RICHARD "DICK" CROOKS, English Education '71, Dec. 23, 2021
MARIAN SHEPPARD (SMITH) DANDRIDGE, Sociology '64, Nov. 23, 2021
SHELBY DEES, Nursing '18, Nov. 15, 2021
AUDREY M. DOSTER, Mass Communication English Education '72, Oct. 21, 2021
WILLIAM EICHHOLZ, Political Science '71, Aug. 24, 2021
PETER LOUIS ESCOBIO, Industrial Arts Technical Education '77, Feb. 10, 2022
MARSHA (READ) GARRETT, Elementary Education '78 and MA Library & Information Science '82, Feb. 11, 2022
RICHARD DAVID GOLDSTEIN, Mass Communications '76, Dec. 4, 2021
IVAN GORTINSKIY, International Studies '14, Oct. 6, 2021
GEORGE F. GRAMLING JR., History '79, Nov. 1, 2021
CHARLOTTE HENRY GRANT, Accounting '78, Jan. 22, 2022
MARY (CARSON) GRIMALDI, English Education '70, Jan. 3, 2022
KENNETH JOHN HABERSHON, Communication '69, Feb. 24, 2021
THOMAS A. HAGLER, ME Electrical Engineering '78, Jan. 19, 2022
WILLIAM "CRAIG" HALL, History '74, Jan. 23, 2022
ADAM HASEBROOCK, Wellness '00, Nov. 4, 2021
RALPH T. HEATH JR., Zoology '69, Oct. 2, 2021
THE HON. JUDGE CARL COY HINSON, Management '82, Dec. 3, 2021
LAURA ANN KENNEDY-BELL, English '93, Jan. 31, 2022
JOHN MARK KESSLER, Management '81, Sept. 26, 2021
CAROLYN JANICE (JOHNSON) LAW, Social Science Interdisciplinary Studies '78, Oct. 21, 2021
DONALD J. MAHONEY, History '72, Dec. 31, 2021
ANTHONY FRANK MANISCALCO, History '75, Oct. 20, 2021
STEVEN LAWRENCE MARCUS, MA Guidance & Counseling Education '73, Feb. 3, 2022
DONNA GRABOWSKI MARYES, Elementary Education '76, Feb. 12, 2022
DR. STEPHEN PAUL MEYER, Chemistry '84, Biology '85 and MD '89, Aug. 8, 2021
ROGER L. MEYERS, Music '76, Dec. 11, 2021

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KATHLEEN MOORE, PhD Adult Education '90, Life Member, Feb. 18, 2022
REGINA G. (JOHNSON) MOORE, Sociology '78 and Nursing '80, Jan. 16, 2022
ALICE ALDRIN NEWELL, MLA '96, Jan. 1, 2022
THOMAS FITZHUGH RAWLS, MS Engineering '91, Life Member, Oct. 18, 2021
SHARON ANN REISEN, Elementary Education '84, Jan. 18, 2022
SUSAN ELIZABETH (RENGERT) SCHAEFFER, English '82, Oct. 5, 2021
ANTHONY RAIN "TONY" STAREZ, Public Relations '91, Nov. 10, 2021
WILLIAM THOMAS STEINER, MAcc '99, Nov. 11, 2021
GERALDINE M. TACKETT, MA Elementary Education '69, Oct. 27, 2021
AUDREY HELENA (MULLER) TRAUER, Anthropology '85, Oct. 18, 2021
BARBARA ELLISON WARE, Art '63, Anthropology '92 and MA Applied Anthropology '00, Sept. 8, 2021
DAVID LLOYD WEST, MBA '83, Jan. 27, 2022
CAROL TAYLOR ZEPH, Geography '79, Jan. 30, 2022

Faculty and staff

CYNTHIA RODRIGUES CIMINO, Professor, Psychology and Neurology, Life Member, Nov. 5, 2021
DR. ODIS GLENN GEIGER, Professor, College of Education School Psychology Program, Jan. 11, 2022
BEVERLY BETTS TERP HARRIS, Administration, Jan. 17, 2022
VANCE JENNINGS, Professor Emeritus, Music, Feb. 9, 2022
CAROLYN KERRIGAN, Director of Student Advising, College of Performing Arts, Dec. 5, 2021
DR. AARON SMITH, Professor, Social Work, Nov. 19, 2021

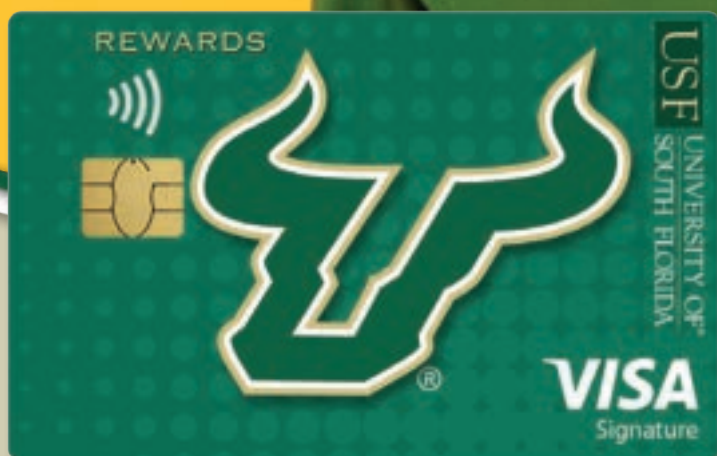
Friends

FLORENCE "DOLLY" (GETZEN) BOUSHALL, Benefactor, Dec. 27, 2021
ANA MARIA CRESPO, Benefactor, Jan. 1, 2022
VERONICA (REYNOLDS) GREAVES, Benefactor, Nov. 12, 2021
RICHARD TERRY JOHNSON, Benefactor, Feb. 7, 2022
JAMES MAJOR, Benefactor, Nov. 23, 2021
JOHN J. MCTAGUE JR., Benefactor, Feb. 11, 2022
BRENDA (ST. PIERRE) MEDIROS, Benefactor, Feb. 5, 2022
MANDELL HINKS SHIMBERG, Benefactor, Life Member, Nov. 16, 2021

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