ON THE FRONT LINES

The University responds to the COVID-19 pandemic with swift action to care for patients, advance research, sustain learning, and safeguard the health and well-being of our community and the communities we serve.
Help Our Students Rise Above the Challenge.

A gift to scholarships opens doors and changes lives.

COVID-19 has disrupted our lives in unimaginable ways. Many students and their families are now facing new and increased financial hardships at a time when our world is in even greater need of the next generation of bold leaders, innovative thinkers, and creative problem-solvers.

The University of Miami has made it a top priority to remove financial obstacles to admission and thus maximize every student’s access to the full range of educational possibilities the University offers.

We’re calling on you to open doors to dynamic experiences that change lives and, in turn, allow our graduates to change the world by applying their education in transformative ways.

Consider making a gift to University of Miami scholarships today at bit.ly/um-student-relief

Financial limitations should not be an obstacle to a University of Miami education.
Students Help Fuel Recovery, Resilience in the Bahamas

University group provides hope and inspiration to struggling business owners in Freeport—and gleans lasting personal insights

In conversations, professional consultants question their clients to know their “pain points”—a specific problem area that the customer is experiencing to provide the best assistance. For the cohort of University of Miami students who spent a February weekend in Grand Bahama as part of the Bahamas Consultancy Project, those pain points were visually evident. Toppled radio towers. Mangled machinery. Tens of thousands of dollars of merchandise lost. Empty warehouses. Damaged structures. All evidence of the destruction caused by Hurricane Dorian, which pummeled the islands of Grand Bahama and Great Abaco for days last September.

“We met with some fantastic owners who did everything they could to prepare and everything they could to mitigate the damage, but this really showed me how precarious business can be,” says Chris Williams, an M.B.A. student who made the trip.

““One thing that we can do to help is to really listen to them,” she adds. “They need to feel that they have that support in order to be more resilient for the future.”

The collaboration with the University of the Bahamas launched more than a year ago. After Dorian hit, it gained immediacy and shifted to helping local businesses recover through student consultancy. Patricia Abril, vice dean of graduate business programs at the Miami Herbert Business School, traveled with the students and outlined how the project supports the University’s mission.

“One of the roles of the University of Miami and of our business school is to solve complex problems in society and also to be a good citizen, leader, and teacher in the hemisphere,” she says. “We see this as a project that is stepping in the direction of doing that.”

Alex Niemeyer, who worked with a global management firm before joining the University as an associate professor, teaches the action project class. Over the course of the weekend, he noted marked changes in the students’ approach to the project.

“They went from thinking ‘this is an interesting project’ to ‘this is something where we can really make a difference in peoples’ lives and make the Bahamian economy more resilient,’” Niemeyer notes.

On the plane ride home, M.B.A. student Natalia Aldana Velásquez reflected on her experience.

“We’re doing something with a community truly in need,” says Aldana Velasquez. “In class, we don’t get real interaction like this. Here the problem is unsolved, and you have to explore to get as much information as you can from the client. That leads to a relationship—and then you have a responsibility to that person.”

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The U Creates Provides a Platform Dedicated to the Arts

The University launches a new website that spotlights creative expression and scholarship

Strengthening Mathematical Bonds

New institute will harness knowledge throughout the hemisphere

With Miami tapped as host city for Super Bowl LIV, the University optimized the opportunity to showcase the talent and expertise of students, faculty members, and administrators through a range of collaborations with the National Football League.

“Participating in the competition was a great opportunity to celebrate not only our role in the region, but also our efforts and research in the areas of big science, big data, and analytics in general,” says Duerk.

Norma Kenyon, vice provost for innovation and chief innovation officer at the Miller School of Medicine, and the U Innovation team played a major role in the event’s success.

Research computing and data—served as judges for NFL’s 1st and Future, a pitch competition to assess innovative products and data models held at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

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“The U Creates celebrates diverse perspectives and forms of expression, affording students unique opportunities to experience artistic creation and production,” he adds.

The site provides audiences interested in the arts easy access to information about academics, cutting-edge preeminence, thought-provoking lectures, exhibits, and films that reflect the University’s youthful spirit and multi-cultural vibrancy. It also spotlights the important role the arts and humanities play in academic institutions.

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Over the next five years, IMSA will engage in several working group projects where professors and graduate students from the University’s math department will be paired with academics from universities across Latin America to lead teams of researchers on significant projects in mathematics and its applications.

Super volunteer opportunity

More than a dozen University of Miami students volunteered at Super Bowl LIV and the University and Event Management class offered during the fall in the School of Education and Human Development’s Department of Kinesiology and Sport Sciences. Taught by Erin McNary, assistant professor, the new course gave students the chance to learn from Super Bowl employees and members of the Super Bowl Host Committee.

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The U Shines on Super Sunday

Super Bowl LIV is a win for the University

A halftime for all time

The Frost Band of the Hour, color guard, and the Hurricanettes dance team appeared in four high-profile NFL events during Super Bowl week, most notably as cast members and featured dancers for the halftime show.

“When I stepped onto the field at halftime it definitely felt special,” says Carly Battaglia, a sociology and criminology major and Hurricanette.

“We were part of a range of collaborations with the National Football League.

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The University will be first college campus to adopt the new technology

5G to Power Research and Academics

The University signed an agreement with AT&T to become the company’s first college campus to adopt AT&T 5G+ and AT&T Multi-access Edge Computing (MEC) technology. The term 5G refers to a larger cellular bandwidth that will deliver more data from the internet to wireless devices at a faster pace. This will help large data files like videos and graphics load quicker on phones and tablets, says Nick Tsinoremas, director of the University’s Institute for Data Science and Computing.

Jeffrey Duerr, executive vice president for academic affairs and provost, says that the University’s ability to pioneer this technology demonstrates its commitment to explorative pedagogies, digital scholarship, creative endeavors, science, technology, engineering, and math as part of the University’s Roadmap to Our New Century strategic plan.

Jazzy Tribute

Frost School concert honors the legendary Miles Davis

Marcello Carelli, a junior at the University of Miami and drummer in the Stamps Music Scholars Jazz Quintet, was still decades from picking up his first drumsticks when in 1970 Miles Davis’ audacious seminal record, “Bitches Brew,” turned the jazz world on its hi-hat.

Yet Carelli and 16 other Frost School of Music Concert Jazz Band student musicians celebrated Davis with a masterful tribute concert, “Bitches Brew,” performed at the University of Miami’s well-known Dade County Auditorium. The concert also served as a widely publicized fundraising benefit.

“The University will be first college campus to adopt the new technology.

Yet Carelli and 16 other Frost School of Music Concert Jazz Band student musicians celebrated Davis with a masterful tribute concert, Bitches Brew that changed the style of jazz.

In preparation, they were well-schooled by Frost associate professor Charles “Chuck” Bergeron, M.M. ’93, a music historian and professional bassist who has played Davis’ music for decades.

“Miles Davis’ music is still rising to the occasion, and the University is thrilled to provide the venues and spaces that enable our students to play such a high level of music in a variety of settings,” says Bergeron, pointing out that the concert jazz band students all completed two semesters of his Jazz History course and listened to countless hours of Davis’ recordings in addition to reading Davis’ autobiography.

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“Tribute concerts are a great way to celebrate a particular artist and a particular genre of music,” Bergeron says. “Bitches Brew” is a special tribute, as it is an album of new music that Davis and his band mates created for the concert and it was performed live at the Bing Crosby Theater in Los Angeles.

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As the arboretum’s new director, Galetti spent more than a decade studying the plant life of this collection of 439 tropical trees and students take full advantage of the collection well and alive. "So, we have to keep the collection well and alive," said Natalia Parra just before learning she will be doing her residency at the Frost School of Medicine. Galetti was the fulfillment of a dream, just as it was for Sumedh Shah, who will pursue his career in neurosurgery at UM/Jackson Memorial Hospital.

“Bitches Brew” repertoire at the Jazz Educators Network Conference, met with renowned contemporary musicians, and participated in master classes. Bergeron planned and coordinated the concert and enlisted the expertise of his longtime friend Charles Pillow, a renowned saxophonist and Eastman School of Music professor.

“We do concerts three times a semester, and we’re always looking for new and interesting projects,” Bergeron explains. “It’s always nice to collaborate with an interesting projects,” Bergeron explains. “It’s always nice to collaborate with an interesting projects,” Bergeron explains. “It’s always nice to collaborate with an interesting projects,” Bergeron explains.

National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master Saxophonist Dave Liebman, a Miles Davis sideman who completed a residency at the Frost School, also was pivotal in helping students integrate the complexities of Davis’ enduring album that changed the style of jazz.

The two-set tribute concert featured both the Frost Septet and the Concert Jazz Band. Pillow, Bergeron, Liebman, Frost Dean Shelton Berg, and Frost associate professors Martin Bejarano, M.M. ’88, and John Daversa all performed as well.

Preserving Nature’s Lab

Conservation ecologist takes Gilford Arboretum under his wing

An expert on palm trees who also has spent more than a decade studying the links between animals, climate change, and rainforests in his native Brazil, Mauro Galetti feels right at home in the University’s John C. Gilford Arboretum. As the arboretum’s new director, Galetti wants to help University faculty, staff, and students take full advantage of this collection of 439 tropical trees and myriad tropical plants on the Coral Gables campus.

“Instead of studying organisms in a petri dish, the arboretum is a natural lab for ecologists,” says Galetti, an associate professor in the College of Arts and Sciences Department of Biology. “So, we have to keep the collection well and alive.”

One of Galetti’s first priorities is to work with student curator Ezra Rener and with Teddy L’Houllier, the University’s sustainability manager, to replace many of the arboretum’s trees that were lost or damaged in Hurricane Irma.

Keeping the Tradition Alive

Graduating medical students celebrate Match Day at home and online

In past years, the graduating class of Miller School of Medicine students celebrated Match Day—the ceremony in which they learn where they will be completing their residency—on the University’s Roadmap to Our New Century strategic plan.

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DCC 10 Draws Record Numbers

Six thousand people participated on Feb. 29 to tackle cancer

A sunny but cool South Florida Saturday—perfect for riding, running, or walking—drew a record 6,000 participants and volunteers to the 10th annual Dolphins Cancer Challenge (DCC). The event provides critical funding for research at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, part of UHealth—the University of Miami Health System.

About 1,500 of the participants represented Team Hurricanes—employees, donors, and other proud members of the University family.

Jacqueline Travisano, executive vice president for business and finance and chief operating officer who led Team Hurricanes, takes the cancer fight personally. “I’ve lost very significant people in my life to cancer,” she says. “I want to make sure that no one else has to lose a friend, family member, or loved one. And, I think the only way that’s going to happen is through academic research into cancer treatment and cures.”

NextGenMD

New medical curriculum addresses innovative ways to teach and learn

In addition to Team Hurricanes, more than 230 cancer survivors also participated in the day’s events. Among them was Vivian Mechaber, mother of Alex Mechaber, M.D. ’94, the Bernard J. Fogel Professor of Medicine, director of LifeLines, and an overhaul of the way students are evaluated.

“This truly is an extraordinary effort,” says Alex Mechaber, M.D. ’94, Bernard J. Fogel Chair in Medical Education and senior associate dean for undergraduate medical education at the Miller School of Medicine. From the moment she learned she had endometrial cancer last May and through months of treatment at Sylvester, Mechaber was motivated to prevail, thanks in large part to the support of her family—who accompanied her on the 5K walk/run.

“I said, ‘For this race I’m going to be well enough to walk myself,’” the family matriarch says. “And here I am! I want to tell people who have cancer not to give up.”

Ancient Secrets Revealed

Traci Ardren, archaeologist and professor of anthropology, and fellow scholars are conducting the first lidar study of a 100-kilometer stone highway in Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula to reveal secrets about ancient Maya civilization.

Lidar—short for “light detection and ranging”—has been previously used mainly by meteorologists to study clouds, yet Ardren’s team is using the technology, which is deployed from low-flying planes, to scan beneath the dense vegetation to view the ancient houses, platforms, and pyramids that have lain hidden for ages.

“The lidar allowed us to understand the road in much greater detail and to identify many new towns and cities along the road—new to us but preexisting the road,” Ardren says.

An expert on gender in ancient Maya society, Ardren is exploring the theory that a powerful queen of one of the great cities of the ancient Maya world built the road to expand her domain. An analysis of the study was published in the Journal of Archaeological Science.

Ethnic Pain Disparities

In a new study published in Nature Human Behavior, Elizabeth Losin, assistant professor of psychology and director of the Social and Cultural Neuroscience Lab, and colleagues investigated the mechanisms underlying racial and ethnic disparities related to pain and pain treatment.

“There’s evidence that both the general public and clinicians believe that African Americans are less sensitive to pain than non-Hispanic whites; yet research, including our own, shows exactly the opposite,” says Losin.

The inaccurate racial and ethnic biases about pain could have medical consequences.

“If medical professionals, whether consciously or subconsciously, believe that African Americans feel less pain than others, clinicians may be less inclined to alleviate the pain of their African American patients,” explains Losin.

Their findings point to a promising avenue for reducing pain-related health disparities in the near term, and perhaps a path to building greater trust between African American patients and their doctors.

Partner Power Systems plants

Industrial engineering professor Nurcin Celik is developing technology that would allow local power systems to “talk” to each other and mitigate the impact of power outages.

As part of her federally funded research, groups of microgrids—local power systems that are connected to a main grid but can operate autonomously when outages occur—would communicate with and make decisions based on the status of each other, providing power to neighboring areas when electricity has been disrupted by a storm or some other catastrophic event.

“Think of it as running a long extension cord,” says Celik. “Imagine if the University of Miami, the city of Coral Gables, and Coconut Grove all had their own microgrids. If a storm were to knock out power to an area in the Gables, UM’s microgrid could help provide energy for that sector.”

The study, which is funded by a three-year, $500,000 grant from the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, offers the potential to save lives and millions of dollars by keeping power systems up and running during times of crisis.
Frost Professor, Four Alumni Win Grammys

A professor of jazz trumpet at the Frost School of Music and four alumni of the University of Miami received Grammy Awards during the 62nd annual ceremony that was held on Jan. 26, 2020, in Los Angeles.

Brian Lynch, jazz trumpet professor, was honored in the category of Best Large Jazz Ensemble. The Omni-Shelton Berg, dean of the Frost School, says Lynch is “one of the world’s greats as a jazz trumpeter, composer, and arranger, and richly deserving of the Grammy Award for his innovative, erudite, and most of all, highly artistic recording.”

The album, Berg notes, provides “the full value of Lynch’s endlessly curious approach to life, imbued with his varied musical influences, from Afro-Cuban to hard bop. I couldn’t be prouder of Brian, and the fact that most of the personnel on this Grammy-winning recording are Frost School of Music students and alumni, and the project was recorded in one of the school’s state-of-the-art studios is a fantastic achievement.”

Four Frost alumni who also were honored with a Grammy Award this year include: Best Classical Instrumental Solo—Marsalis: Violin Concerto Fiddle Dance Suite; Christian Macorau, B.M. ’03, Instrumental Performance; Best Latin and public health sciences.

“This is a big deal, and it’s an honor to be able to host such an event. It’s something that we do in commemoration and out of respect for those who have fallen,” says Herveline Saintil, a nursing and psychology major, who is co-president of Planet Kreyol along with Sara St. Juste.

“Ten years later, the fragility has been compounded, the poverty has been compounded by governance and political issues, an international community has created dependency, and several other disasters have happened in between,” says Marcelin. “While at the same time, young people are trying to do what they can and create an environment for their future. Through community-based organizations and social media, they are trying to create hope for the future.”

Shaping Leaders in Sustainability

New master’s degrees prepare students for novel challenges

The extreme changes in climate that threaten our planet will require urban environments and structures that are resilient in the face of severe weather, sea level rise, and whatever the future may bring.

With this in mind, the University of Miami introduces a Master of Professional Science in Urban Sustainability and Resilience degree, an interdisciplinary program offered jointly by the School of Architecture and the College of Arts and Sciences’ Department of Geography and Regional Studies. Shouzamen Sen Roy, professor in the Department of Geography and Regional Studies, and Sonia Chao, research associate professor in the School of Architecture, will codirect the program, which begins this fall.

“Excited about the partnership with the college and its potential for setting a model for our efforts in interdisciplinary education,” says Rodolpho el-Khoury, dean of the School of Architecture. “We also welcome a greatly anticipated program that aligns precisely with our strategic priorities and our focus on the challenges facing urban environments.”

“The purpose of this new interdisciplinary master’s degree program,” notes Leonidas Bachas, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, “is to help our students understand the way global cities operate and how sustainability is necessary to build and maintain resilient metropolises around the world.”

Another new graduate program, the Miami Herbert Business School’s 10-month Master of Science in Sustainable Business, enrolled its first cohort last fall of students from 10 countries who are seeking to become major players in companies that are adopting sustainable practices.

“The students come from a wide range of cultural and functional backgrounds, and they have various sustainability interests,” says Marie T. Dasborough, associate professor of management in the Miami Herbert Business School. “There is one thing that they all have in common—they all share a strong passion for making a positive lasting impact on the world.”

“This is the master’s degree of my dreams,” says Marcia Guevara, a Venezuelan student. “I am passionate about sustainability and climate change.”

“Our students are dedicated to the importance of sustainability, and they will be the leaders of tomorrow entrusted with building successful businesses that respect the environment and are socially responsible,” says John Quelch, dean of the Miami Herbert Business School. “They will be shouldering critical responsibilities.”

President Julio Frenk Named Interim CEO of UHealth System

New Joint Operations Leadership Team supports his role

Julio Frenk, president of the University of Miami, a physician and global health expert, has been named the interim CEO of the University of Miami Health System, or UHealth. Following the April 3 announcement of former chief executive officer Edward Abraham’s retirement, the UHealth Board of Directors asked Frenk to take over the role through July 1. He will be supported by the recently instituted Joint Operations Leadership Team (JOLT). The members of the JOLT are Joe Echevarria, who has been named interim chief administrative officer; Dipen Parekh, interim chief operating officer; Henri Ford, dean of the Miller School of Medicine; Stephen Nimer, director of the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Oscar de la Renta Chair in Cancer Research; Eduardo Alfonso, director of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute; Roy Weiss, chair of the Department of Medicine; and Oamida Velazquez, chair of the Department of Surgery.

Frenk is a former minister of health of Mexico, a past executive at the World Health Organization, and the former dean of the T.H. Chan School of Public Health at Harvard University.
Eye on Athletics

Athletics Adjusts to an Abrupt End of Season

The NCAA announcement March 12 that it was canceling all winter and spring championships in response to the COVID-19 pandemic delivered a stunning, nearly incomprehensible realization.

That decision meant that, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, four Hurricanes who had been preparing to compete for titles at the Division I Men’s and Women’s Indoor Track and Field Championships were forced to return home, their title hopes dashed.

In Orlando, where Miami’s baseball team had just watched a big win over the University of Central Florida, the seventh-ranked Hurricanes learned their promising season was over.

And, it meant that the ‘Canes diving contingent that garnered the top four finishes at the Gabrielsen Natatorium to qualify for the NCAA Men’s Championships would not be traveling to Indianapolis, Indiana, after all.

So, the uneven task of delivering the disheartening news to coaches and to begin the work of navigating a new reality fell on Blake James, athletics director.

“It’s hard to know you’re ending a student-athlete’s opportunity to compete in a sport they’ve worked so hard at and that they strive to be the very best at,” James says. “But we’re all about the well-being and safety of our students, and this was a decision that was made with the long-term well-being of not only our students but our entire country in mind.”

James and the athletics department began immediately ensuring that Miami’s student-athletes are prepared to handle the change, to stay healthy, and to be ready to compete again when sports return. They face many hurdles and questions in the coming weeks and months, especially in light of a subsequent NCAA announcement that student-athletes who would have competed in spring sports will receive eligibility relief.

Hall of Famer Ed Reed Named Chief of Staff

In late January, the University of Miami football program hired College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Ed Reed, B.L.A. ‘02, as its new chief of staff.

“Ed is not only one of the most decorated players in Miami football history, but also a devoted ‘Cane who cares deeply about this program,” says head coach Manny Diaz. “All of our players, coaches, and staff will be fortunate to tap into his experience, knowledge, and passion on a regular basis.”

As chief of staff, Reed will serve in an advisory role to Diaz in all aspects of the football program, including strategic planning, quality control, operations, player evaluation, and player development. Reed will also assist in team building, student-athlete mentorship, and recruiting, as permissible under NCAA rules.

A consensus All-America in 2000 and 2001, Reed helped the ‘Canes post a 25-1 record during his last two seasons, which culminated with the 2001 national championship. A first-round draft pick in 2002, he went on to a stellar career in the National Football League.

Reed is passionate about the opportunity to mentor current Hurricanes.

Manny Diaz’s staff in early January and has been part of a rash of off-season changes that include the signing of several highly regarded coaches and recruits. He helped his former team to a 10-3 finish in 2019 and to a ranking as the No. 7 scoring team in the country. Now, he’s focused on bringing that fast-paced mindset to Miami.

“Our philosophy is that we want to play fast and physical, and there are great advantages to playing fast, but you have to execute at a high level,” says Diaz, who’s on bringing that fast-paced mentality to Miami.

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“We have to show them how to win,” the new coach says. “That’ll be a big part for us as a coaching staff to show them what it takes to win at a high level.”

Lashlee has coached at a few different-sized programs and in different conferences. “I have a lot to learn, but this experience helped,” says Perez-Somarriba. “This gives me strength and confidence and tells me I can do this.”

Women’s Tennis Stars Face Off

The more than 5,000 tennis fans in attendance at the Delray Beach Open in mid-February got a special treat when 15-year-old sensation Coco Gauff, the world’s No. 51-ranked player, and Estela Perez-Somarriba, the second player in ‘Canes history to claim the NCAA Singles Championship title, faced off for a spirited match.

Gauff, a longtime Hurricanes fan, won the exhibition match 6-3, 6-3, but it was clear that both emerging stars enjoyed the experience of lightheartedly competing in the first women’s tennis match ever played at the tournament.

The idea to bring Gauff and Perez-Somarriba together began brewing last summer, not long after Perez-Somarriba won her national title and Gauff captured the attention of tennis fans worldwide with her remarkable run at Wimbledon.

For Gauff, the match came weeks after a run at the Australian Open that ended just shy of the quarterfinals. For Perez-Somarriba, it came less than 24 hours after a win at Georgia Tech.

Still, despite the quick turnaround, Perez-Somarriba more than held her own, returning more than a few of Gauff’s 108-miles-per-hour serves.

“I have a lot to learn, but this experience helped,” says Perez-Somarriba. “This gives me strength and confidence and tells me I can do this.”

Gaalff

Granted the opportunity for another year of eligibility because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the reigning NCAA women’s tennis champion decided in late March to return to the University in 2021.
Faculty Files

Researcher a Pioneer on the Impact of Cannabis

With 2020 projected to be “the year of cannabis,” Denise Christina Vidot, A.B. ’08, Ph.D. ’15, an assistant professor at the School of Nursing and Health Studies, is closely monitoring the rash of reforms and new laws regarding medicinal and recreational marijuana use in Florida and around the country.

While many are tracking the trends looking to turn a profit from the booming cannabis industry, Vidot’s interest is vastly different. An epidemiologist and researcher, Vidot has spent the past decade exploring the holistic impact of cannabis use. She wants to determine how cannabis affects metabolic syndrome—the cluster of conditions that occur together increasing risk to heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.

“My goal is to describe the idea of how the brain, heart, and gut work together—or don’t—in cannabis users,” Vidot says. “All the research I’m doing is in that direction. When I first started, I was focused on the heart, but now I’m exploring the bigger picture of how these organs work together.”

Of Puerto Rican descent, Vidot grew up in Boynton Beach. She wanted “to be a doctor, treat patients, and save the world” and challenged herself to attend the University of Miami where she earned her A.B. in English with minors in biology and chemistry. Yet while at the U, her father was diagnosed with multiple myeloma cancer.

The doctor called on the phone to tell the family the news. Over the phone? An incredulous Vidot was even more perplexed that the physician knew so little about the disease. “Because of the lack of research and understanding, he couldn’t give my dad the care he needed,” she says. She pursued a master’s degree in nonprofit management at the University of Georgia while working at Morehouse College in Atlanta and, though she “had no interest in research,” she accepted her mentor’s invitation to visit a detention facility and meet with incarcerated youth.

“Little is known about the long-term health effect of smoking cannabis, and it troubles me as an epidemiologist when policies are made without taking the scientific evidence into account,” she points out. “There’s no easy understanding of this issue, and that’s what makes me so passionate.” Vidot notes. “I’m not just a scientist with my petri dish—I’m an advocate and a teacher, too.” —Michael R. Malone

“Young adults who undergo bariatric or weight-loss surgery. “Hearing and seeing these kids talk about being exposed to and using drugs at such a young age, now in jail” shifted her world. She returned to Miami to pursue her Ph.D. after conducting research with University neonatologist Emmalee Bandstra, exploring the risks of perinatal substance abuse.

“No one was looking at cannabis back then,” Vidot says. “That’s where I found my niche, seeing that gap.” She returned to Miami University neonatologist Emmalee Bandstra, exploring the risks of perinatal substance abuse.

“It was my first time putting real faces to my learning,” she remembers. “Hearing and seeing these kids talk about being exposed to and using drugs at such a young age, now in jail” shifted her world. She returned to Miami to pursue her Ph.D. after conducting research with University neonatologist Emmalee Bandstra, exploring the risks of perinatal substance abuse.

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The University of Miami brought you some of the best years of your life. But just because you graduated doesn’t mean that your time as a ‘Cane has to end. Designed to fit you and your career goals, Miami Herbert Business School offers a variety of graduate opportunities to help you keep the success going at the place where it all started. To learn more about how to transform yourself into a future business leader and continue your legacy, visit go.miami.edu/doublecane.
In his newest book, Julio Frenk, president of the University of Miami, argues that universal health care, provided in Mexico through the program known as Seguro Popular, is a human right that must be protected.

“Proteger a México,” published in Spanish and introduced last November at the Guadalajara International Book Fair, examines the development and impact of the landmark Mexican government health care initiative launched in 2004 that provided care to tens of millions of Mexicans, most of them peasants and farmers.

Frenk, the health minister of Mexico from 2000 to 2006, was the driving force behind strategizing passage of the popular initiative—at risk of being dismantled by the current administration in Mexico. The centerpiece of “Proteger” is a case study on Mexico’s health care system, and Frenk explores how the “three Cs”—crime, corruption, and corporatism—that plague Mexico and other countries are “erosing its social fabric,” and perpetuating inequalities. He especially tackles corporatism, which “fabric,” and perpetuating inequalities.

“Three Cs” are “eroding its social system, and Frenk explores how the government’s fundamental responsibility is to protect its citizens, yet he warns against being duped by two “distortions” that some governments use—mainly “protectionism,” the use of trade and tariffs to shield domestic industries, and the demagoguery that populist leaders use to aggrandize themselves.

“I’m talking about protection against the real risks that citizens face,” he writes. “Not the fear mongering and inventing of imaginary enemies so that then the leaders of the government can proclaim themselves the ‘protectors of the nation.’”

For the essay core, Frenk draws on his decades of experience as a public health specialist and discusses his role in bringing Seguro Popular to life in the early 2000s.

“In Proteger,” Frenk urges the current Mexican administration to build on the progress made over the past 15-plus years with Seguro Popular and, as part of the book’s message, he advances the belief that diversity creates richness, a credo that he has seeded in a range of initiatives and dimensions as University president since 2015. “Each of us is all of us—there’s no pure anything,” he writes in the book. “We need to embrace that we are multidimensional—and that’s a richness that we carry within each of us.”

—Michael R. Malone

## Tracking Rivers in the Skies

### Doctoral student Breanna Zavadoff has developed a passion for studying extreme weather events

In living rooms and dining rooms from the Florida Panhandle to the southernmost tip of Texas, they watched for days, sitting, standing, or stooping in front of flat screens to learn the latest on Hurricane Katrina’s path.

One of those keeping an eye on the powerful cyclone was a Long Island 9-year-old named Breanna Zavadoff.

“Everyday weather just didn’t stir me up,” recalls Zavadoff. “But whenever there was a hurricane or large storm threatening land, I would obsessively watch the Weather Channel’s coverage.”

Her preoccupation with hurricanes wasn’t a passing fancy. It continued unabated, growing so strong that she majored in meteorology and physical oceanography and focused on the impact of atmospheric rivers in Europe. ARs, she points out, cause major flooding and landslides in the Iberian Peninsula.

“When atmospheric rivers in Europe, ARs, she points out, cause major flooding and landslides in the Iberian Peninsula. “If we could better predict where they will hit and determine if they’ll help or hinder, it would be a tremendous help to emergency response managers and forecasters,” Zavadoff says.

Studying a phenomenon known as atmospheric Rossby waves could hold the key. Named for the Swedish-born meteorologist Carl-Gustaf Rossby, these atmospheric waves are giant meanders in high-altitude winds that influence weather and are associated with pressure systems and the jet stream.

“When atmospheric rivers are in sync with anti-cycloic Rossby wave breaking, the rivers tend to be stronger,” Zavadoff says. “So, forecasting such an event could help us model atmospheric rivers more effectively.”

As an undergraduate, Zavadoff played rugby for three years, once breaking a rib. “I enjoyed the camaraderie the sport brings out,” she says. “There’s no protective gear, no stopping the clock. We’re all out there to win; but at the same time, we need to protect each other because of how physical and intense the sport is.”

Zavadoff borrows a page from her rugby playbook in terms of camaraderie amid the intensity of climatic events such as floods, hurricanes, and fires: “We’ve got to get everyone on the same page,” she says. “We need to ramp up the dialogue that the science of climate change is fact and not just a belief.”

—Robert C. Jones Jr.
A pandemic strikes, and an

ACADEMIC COMMUNITY RESPONDS

The novel coronavirus made its mark at the University of Miami, and members of the institution pulled together as a team to safeguard its students, faculty, staff, and patients.

BY ROBERT C. JONES JR.
The COVID-19 pandemic that changed the world had turned the University of Miami almost into a ghost town, as school officials, like so many of their counterparts across the nation, made the painful but necessary decision to send students home for the rest of the academic term in an effort to halt the spread of the virus.

The University didn’t go it alone. It partnered with Miami-Dade County and the State of Florida to monitor the crisis as it unfolded, and it followed guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization when issuing health advisories to its community of students and employees.

University President Julio Frenk, interim CEO of University of Miami Health System and a former health minister of Mexico, also employed the power of media. In video messages to the University community, he became a calming and comforting voice in a time of crisis, providing updates on the institution’s latest actions to safeguard students and workers. In one communiqué, he reminded everyone that it was “a time for preparation, precaution, and prudence—not panic.”

In his role as chair of the Miami-Dade Beacon Council’s One Community One Goal Academic Leaders Council, Frenk rallied other academic leaders. He met virtually with the presidents of other colleges and universities in the county to discuss ways to help the Greater Miami area amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

With more than 5,000 people participating in three virtual town halls held on March 31 and April 1, University leaders and medical experts answered questions and provided updates for faculty, staff, students, and their families on COVID-19 and its impact on the institution and the University of Miami Health System.

THE MOVE TO REMOTE LEARNING

If there was any measure that demonstrated how swiftly and thoroughly University leadership responded to the crisis, it was the decision and ability to migrate courses to a virtual environment after students left for spring recess.

The University extended the semester break for a week, giving faculty time to prepare for remote instruction, a process leadership helped facilitate by launching an academic and business continuity site. What normally would have taken weeks to pull off was done at breakneck speed. All told, the lectures, lessons, and learning continued—via Zoom, Skype, and on laptops and smartphones.

The changes occurred quickly—seemingly in the blink of an eye. It was the vision of a farsighted university president with a generation’s worth of know-how in responding to pandemics and a task force to support him that made things happen.

In truth, the University’s coronavirus response effort started before the decade even came to an end. When government officials in China reported in late December that health care workers were treating dozens of people in the central city of Wuhan for a mysterious pneumonia-like illness with symptoms that included fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and lung lesions, students were still on winter break, catching their breath after a months-long semester of studying and test taking.

Nearly 8,500 miles away in Coral Gables, University officials were keeping an eye on the outbreak, making plans for the virus’s inevitable arrival in South Florida. By the time the first cases were confirmed in four states, the University had already mobilized its Office of Emergency Management response team and was rolling out its first advisory to the University community and launching a coronavirus response website—which grew to include everything from information and FAQs for students, faculty, and staff to prevention and well-being tips and a comprehensive list of resources.

From late summer to early winter, the cadence had always been regular and steady. But then, suddenly, the campus’s circadian rhythm was thrown out of sync. Classrooms in every building sat empty. No students. No instructors. No group discussions. No experiments.

Walkways that connect a labyrinth of structures were devoid of foot traffic. Eateries in the massive food court were closed. And in a ballpark where 19- and 20-year-olds wielded bats and gloves to bag four College World Series titles and were poised to make a run at a fifth, the cheers went silent.

“The COVID-19 pandemic that changed the world had turned the University of Miami almost into a ghost town, as school officials, like so many of their counterparts across the nation, made the painful but necessary decision to send students home for the rest of the academic term in an effort to halt the spread of the virus.”
At UHealth Tower's Emergency Department (ED), tests have been erected outside to screen patients. There, medical staff members ask patients a battery of questions that range from whether they are experiencing fever, cough, or respiratory symptoms to their recent travel history. Anyone who gives a positive response is placed in an isolated area.

And within the ED, certain rooms have been designated as isolation areas for patients who are high risk. “We consider every patient that comes in as possibly having coronavirus,” says David Lang, medical director of UHealth Tower’s Emergency Department. “Some are a little bit easier to detect; they come in with fever, cough, shortness of breath. We also see patients who come in with something totally unrelated and who need to be admitted for other illnesses but can test positive for the virus.”

“So, our process has changed,” Lang continues. “The entire department now wears masks, and we have masks on the patients. When we go in to see patients, we put on protective gear. If it’s high risk, it may be a little bit more gear. And if it’s lower risk, we may not fully suit up. But our approach is to consider every patient a suspect.”

From rapid diagnostic tests to potential vaccines, researchers at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine are also fighting the battle against COVID-19 in novel clinical trials that could have a significant impact on the treatment of COVID-19 patients. An international team of scientists led by Camillo Ricordi, director of the Diabetes Research Institute (DRI) and Cell Transplant Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, was granted immediate FDA authorization for a 24-patient clinical trial to test the safety and exploratory efficacy of umbilical cord-derived mesenchymal stem cells to block the life-threatening lung inflammation that accompanies severe cases of COVID-19. This research is being supported through a $3 million gift from North America’s Building Trades Unions to the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation, the fundraising arm for the DRI.

And one physician is using a new therapy that has the potential to delay the need for a ventilator. Pulmonologist Roger Alvarez began treating a COVID-19 patient in late March using a nitric oxide system called INOpulse that had been recently approved by the FDA for treating coronavirus patients. “The cardiopulmonary benefit demonstrated by INOpulse in various indications provides the potential to prevent deterioration in patients with COVID-19, allowing ventilators to be preserved for the most critically ill,” explains Alvarez, referring to the system developed by Warren, New Jersey-based Belenophon Therapeutics, Inc.

As soon as I heard that something pretty bad was happening in China, I was excited to investigate the potential of our vaccine, which is a really different approach. It’s based on a natural protein, gp96, that is present in our cells and activates immune responses,” says Strbo, whose team is working on the COVID-19 vaccine with Heat Biologics, the biopharmaceutical company that now owns the gp96 platform she helped develop. “We already have tremendous knowledge from our previous vaccine studies, so I think the gp96 platform has a lot of potential in inducing a protective immunity against COVID-19.”

Meanwhile, Miller School biomedical researchers were involved in efforts to develop a rapid diagnostic test for the virus. The patient-friendly test, developed by Sylvia Daunert, chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and her colleagues, and funded in part by the Dr. John T. Macdonald Foundation, requires a simple pharyngeal throat swab to deliver on-the-spot results on a paper strip in less than 30 minutes. “Our lab has tremendous experience developing accurate and easily usable tests for infectious diseases such as HPV and Zika,” says Daunert.

“We WILL GET THROUGH THIS”

The pandemic isn’t the first challenge the University has faced. The first class of 646 full-time students enrolled at the University in the fall of 1926 when the South Florida land boom had already collapsed just days after a major hurricane devastated the area. And, in August of 1992, Hurricane Andrew hit the city, damaging buildings on the Coral Gables campus and delaying the start of classes.

“We owe it to everyone who is undergoing the sacrifices and hardships of the pandemic,” says Frenk. “We are all in this together.”

Frenk says, “But there is a lesson that the nation—indeed, the world—needs to learn from the current crisis, he says. “We will get through this, just as we’ve gotten through every pandemic.”

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THE NEW STUDENT HOUSING COMPLEX THAT FRONTS LAKE OSCEOLA BOASTS AN ARRAY OF THE MOST MODERN, ATTRACTIVE, AND ECO-FRIENDLY ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES IMAGINABLE, yet arguably the most emblematic are its open-air, front porches that look out—from the stairwells on five different levels—onto Lake Osceola, Cobb Fountain, the Shalala Student Center, the Fate Bridge—essentially the University’s “downtown.”

Porches have long conveyed a sense of home, community, and connection, and now as the first University of Miami students prepare to enter the appropriately named Lakeside Village, they will experience home, community, and connection as never before on the Coral Gables campus.

Lakeside Village, the University of Miami’s nod to next-generation student living and an amalgam of the best that living—and pursuing an education in Miami—offers has opened its doors.
James Smart, M.S.Ed. ’96, associate vice president for student affairs housing strategic initiatives, has watched the new architectural marvel unfold, literally right before his eyes. His office within Housing and Residential Life looks onto the lakefront construction site—an area once a parking lot—so for the eight years between the time the white paper was submitted to launch the project until the last liriope was planted in the rooftop green space, Smart gazed daily out his window and watched the structure take shape.

“I’ve learned a lot about architecture in the last eight years,” Smart says, noting that when traditional dormitories were built in the 1950s and ’60s, no one thought about them as part of the educational system. “Over these 50 years, we’ve learned that education doesn’t just happen in the classroom.”

“We’ve had the opportunity with Lakeside Village and the subsequent phases of this strategic plan to really think about how we want to make the student housing experience here a model,” he notes. “That chance doesn’t happen that often, and so for me, with 40-plus years in the field, it’s like working on your thesis—you apply everything you’ve ever learned.”

Jon Baldessari, executive director of housing operations and facilities, joined the University in the early 1990s when new notions about residential college systems were emerging nationally.

“We became much more student-centered and holistic in our understanding of education and began focusing on all the things we look at today that help students persist so they can complete their degree,” he says, noting that in 2012 “one of the things we had to do before tackling housing for first-year students was to build housing for sophomores, juniors, and seniors.”

The proposal to build something was a small first step. Ascertaining the national standard, deciding on the design to fit the master plan, and determining the complexities of a housing project for the 21st century—all within budget—was a leap into the unknown. Many voices—faculty, students, and parents, as well as staff in facilities and real estate divisions—expressed opinions of what to do.

“It’s been collectively hundreds, thousands of inputs into this process of being able to create a housing system that we are confident supports student education as well as student development into the 21st century,” Smart says. The team went through several iterations of design, and the final plan was selected from a design competition—a decision majorly influenced by the opening of the Shalala Student Center.

“That changed the campus,” Smart says. “We’d always talked about the lake as being the heart of the campus, and with the construction of the new center and renovations at the Whitten Center, it was becoming a hub of activity the way we’d imagined,” he adds.

The shimmering glass-and-pillars structure on the north side of the lake had a rippling effect. “When architecture is done well, it adds values in ways that you wouldn’t anticipate. We wanted to bring that same sense of energy to the south side of the lake,” says Smart.

Jessica Brumley, vice president for facilities operations and planning, joined the University in early 2018 and inherited the reins of the project.

“It’s been a fabulous opportunity professionally to jump into a project of this magnitude, one with such a visible, identifiable presence, together with Pat Whitely and her team,” says Brumley.

“So many parties—project managers, financial staff, central staff, and others—had to come together behind the scenes to make this possible,” she states. “This project puts a stake in the ground for the University’s future. The Braman Miller Center for Jewish Life and the Toppen Career Center have broadened our presence on Pace. This project, with its depth and volume, serves to say: ‘We’re here—and we’re making a statement.’”

“Our focus as a university is on our students,” Whitely says, noting that in 2012 “one of the things we had to do before tackling housing for first-year students was to build housing for sophomores, juniors, and seniors.”

Lakeside Village finds its architectural inspiration in Stiltsville, the spindly historic shacks that seem to float above the shallow sea grass beds in Biscayne Bay. Elevating the student residential spaces on 25-foot pilotis, or reinforced concrete pillars, frees the ground-level for gardens and lush tropical landscaping, promotes natural air flow, and allows for a comfortable outdoor space and a range of public functions.

The stats are impressive—545,000 square feet, 1,115 beds, 121 suite units (312 beds), 329 apartments (803 beds), and six floors with a mezzanine section near the main lobby (which will host Student Affairs office space).

The complex is composed of 25 residential nodes, strung together as a necklace to produce a single undulating structure. Dividing the building into clusters reduces its massiveness as a singular structure and introduces natural daylight and views into the interior circulation spaces. Three different façades—stippled wood, metal, and concrete/orange—reflect the natural feel of the site and enhance the concept of community. These same motifs and colors weave through the interior and exterior of the building.

The complex intends to create a destination space where residential students have everything they need to live and thrive on campus. The new residential complex offers students a place to live and flourish on the Coral Gables campus.

The new residential complex offers students a place to live and flourish on the Coral Gables campus.
Dorms: You’ve come a long way

From the eight-unit women’s dormitory on LeJeune and Santander, opened in 1927 and operated by “Mom and Pop Koch,” to Lakeside Village and phases of the Housing Facilities Strategic Plan to follow, student housing at the University has come a long way.

Among the most important in terms of supporting student success is the understanding of how students evolve during their time in college. “There’s a ton of change that happens between a student’s first and senior years, and this period is the last time where you’re going to have that type of change,” says Whitely, noting that the University actively seeks to align housing assignments to students’ development.

With Lakeside complete, the next phase is Centennial Village, which calls for the replacement of Stanford Residential College with two new residential colleges, followed by the removal of Hecht Residential College, which also will be replaced with two new residential colleges. Phase Three entails the renovation or replacement of both Eaton and Mahoney-Pearson residential colleges.

Smart says the new construction advances the aspirational goals of the University’s Roadmap to Our New Century strategic plan. “Certainly, the University has a lot going for it in terms of geography and our diverse community, and this exceptional new housing facility advances our commitment to diversity, sustainability, and excellence by maximizing those natural advantages,” Smart says.

His intense involvement over these past eight years—from white paper submission to the first student stepping into Lakeside Village’s sunlit atrium and walking up the winding orange staircase—has left a gratifying impression. “I’ve developed tremendous respect for our architects, the project manager, the engineers, the hundreds of players who make a project like this work,” Smart says. “It’s a juggling game getting the most value out of the resources available—and you don’t get it all right ever—but I have been awed by what’s been accomplished here.”

Elevating the living space on 25-foot concrete pillars frees the ground level for gardens.

Green roofs—one of the many features associated with Lakeside Village’s LEED Gold certification—reduce and slow water runoff, provide food for pollinator species of animals, and serve to naturally insulate the building.

The Expo Center, an open-concept black box space, allows event planners to manipulate the space to use it for art galleries, career fairs, and other events.

The Pavilion, a multipurpose room with dividers that lower from the ceiling, will serve as a place for meetings and workshops.

An outdoor study pod—the Chef’s Table—serves as a collaborative space for learning, recreation, and community events.

The 200-seat auditorium with retractable seating, an integrated audio-visual system, catwalk, and dressing room—also a flexible space—will feature performances and theater-type entertainment.

The bottom floor retail space offers a range of services: a Smoothie King, a restaurant that makes specialty foods on a waffle iron, a UPS Customer Center (reserved for residential students), and a Golden Touch barbershop.

An educational hub, also on the ground level, provides for a classroom with 360 degrees of windows, a training room for student groups or organizations, and a study lounge with priority for Lakeside Village residents.

MODERN, SPACIOUS KITCHENS

More information is available at miami.edu/newstudenthousing
With climate change one of the defining issues of this century, the University of Miami held a symposium that examined the link between extreme weather and our changing climate.

BY ROBERT C. JONES JR.

The fires started burning on the planet’s smallest continent last September, and nearly a month after the calendar had changed to a new decade, they were still raging. For South Florida’s coastal-dwelling residents, it is hurricanes, not fires, that typically cause angst. But the blazes burning in Australia, while more than 10,000 miles away, were cause for concern. Much like increasingly warmer ocean temperatures that are supercharging tropical cyclones, longer and more frequent periods of extreme heat and drought are stoking flames not only in the Land Down Under, but also in many other parts of the world.
That was one of the many harsh realities about global warming revealed to an audience of more than 500 people who gathered inside the University of Miami Watsco Center Fieldhouse on Jan. 24 for the public forum, which closed out the Miami Climate Symposium 2020, a three-day summit that examined the link between extreme weather and climate change.

Merging science and discussion with inquiry, the two-hour forum also provided guests, many of them students concerned about the fate of planet Earth, a sneak peek at CNN anchor Bill Weir’s upcoming environmental special.

“We are both the producers and the beneficiaries of the knowledge on this topic,” Frenk said, “and we have both a sense of urgency about applying that knowledge to ourselves and also a driving sense of responsibility for helping to save the planet we all share.”

While the inaugural symposium focused on extreme weather, future summits will delve into other areas to provide what Jeffrey Duerk, executive vice president for academic affairs and provost, called “a holistic picture of the impact of climate change.”

Researchers and scientists from California to Canada and from Pennsylvania to Peru led the two days of rigorous scientific talks, examining everything from tropical cyclones, extreme rainfall, and drought to coastal flooding, heat waves, and fires. Among some of the topics discussed: climate adaptation, extreme seasonal temperatures, improving resilience and also a driving sense of responsibility for helping to save the planet we all share.

“All told, more than 100 experts participated in the discussions, with University of Miami faculty members representing a fair share of that total. Others came from such distinguished institutions as Columbia University and University of Pennsylvania, and scientific agencies like NOAA and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Also represented were a major power utility, as well as the University of Pennsylvania, and scientific agencies representing a fair share of that total. Others came from the Florida Keys where a dream team of researchers from across the country met to discuss how hurricanes, storm surge, coastal flooding, and other weather phenomena are being exacerbated by a changing climate.”

“We are both the producers and the beneficiaries of the knowledge on this topic,” Frenk said, “and we have both a sense of urgency about applying that knowledge to ourselves and also a driving sense of responsibility for helping to save the planet we all share.”

At the public forum, Ben Kirtman, professor of atmospheric sciences at the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, pointed out some climate truths facing our planet.

“SUSTAIN is specifically designed to figure out how that ‘hurricane-force conditions, could solve the problem.”

“SUSTAIN is specifically designed to figure out how that exchange of heat and momentum between the atmosphere and the ocean determines the intensity of storms,” he said. “If we’re able to do the science right, we think we can solve the intensity problem. And it’ll help us understand why we’ll see more Category 4 and 5 storms.”

Weir previewed his special report, “The Road to Change,” which begins at ground zero for climate change, South Florida, where sea level rise has dominated environmental discussions. The CNN anchor also moderated a panel that included University of Miami researchers, local journalists, and government and public utility officials.

During the panel, Kirtman called attention to some of the efforts underway at the Rosenstiel School to solve some of the mysteries of extreme weather events, most notably, why hurricanes intensify.

“We’ve been improving year over year with getting the track for hurricanes better. But the intensity has turned out to be a really tough nut to crack,” he said, noting that the school’s air-sea interaction tank, SUSTAIN, which generates hurricane-force conditions, could solve the problem.

“Few challenges are as complex as climate change.”

—President Julio Frenk
A Miller School clinic helps its patients to thrive

The THRIVE clinic is a one-stop shop that provides comprehensive health care to victims of human trafficking.

BY ROBERT C. JONES JR.

THOSE FIRST FEW PATIENTS HAD FALLEN THROUGH THE CRACKS YEARS AGO, AND SHUFFLED from city to city, seldom knowing precisely where they were or even what day it was. They were someone’s daughter, someone’s sister. And, like all young girls, they had dreams—to be a schoolteacher, a singer, a scientist. But in what turned out to be a living nightmare, their hopes, along with their innocence, were shattered by human traffickers who used force, fraud, and fear to control them. When JoNell Potter, M.S.N. ’87, Ph.D. ’03, a University of Miami Miller School of Medicine nurse, encountered the women, they had been rescued and sheltered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Now, after years of neglect, they needed medical attention, and DHS asked Potter to provide it. At the time, it didn’t seem like a daunting request, certainly nothing that Potter—a professor of clinical obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive sciences—couldn’t handle. After all, in the early 1980s, when the HIV/AIDS epidemic emerged in Miami, she was one of the first health care workers on the front lines, helping to design a comprehensive, multidisciplinary model of care that allowed women and children living with HIV to access medical services.

He would quickly learn, however, that these women and others like them that DHS and local law enforcement agencies subsequently brought to her for treatment presented a whole new set of health care challenges beyond the scope of anything her team had in place.

“It was not just a matter of performing a simple GYN exam,” Potter recalls. “They had experienced trauma, and they had tremendous medical care and mental health needs.” Some of the women had suffered broken bones that never healed properly, and, in a few cases, some had been branded with tattoos by their pimps to show ownership.

Even the simplest of tasks were a challenge for them. “They couldn’t sit in a waiting room,” Potter says. “I would sit next to them, and I could see the anxiety start to mount because there were too many people. And, they had been brainwashed into thinking the traffickers were going to come looking for them. And, if not the traffickers, people who were working for the traffickers.”

Potter had already assembled a cadre of providers—nurse practitioners, physicians, and psychologists—who were all willing to help. But what was needed most, she knew, was a dedicated space just for the survivors.

So, she called the county’s top prosecutor, Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle, B.Ed. ’73. “She advocated on our behalf,” Potter says of Fernandez Rundle’s efforts. “She made it clear that there was a gap in health care access for these patients and that they desperately needed specialized, trauma-informed health care services.”

Shortly thereafter, the Trafficking Healthcare Resources and Intra-Disciplinary Victim Services and Education clinic, or THRIVE, was born.

A collaboration between the Miller School of Medicine and Jackson Health System, the clinic, which Potter, its inaugural director, describes as “a one-stop shop” for human trafficking victims, provides everything from primary and gynecological care to psychiatric and behavioral health services under one roof. DHS, the Human Trafficking Unit of the Miami-Dade County State Attorney’s Office, and other anti-human trafficking organizations refer victims to the clinic.

But what makes this model one of the first of its kind is the way it administers health care, starting with the way patients are brought in. There is no waiting area—patients are admitted and discharged inside the examination room. “This isn’t the way medicine usually operates,” says Panagiota Caralis, B.S. ’71, M.D. ’75, a professor of medicine at the Miller School and medical director for THRIVE. “You never have a registration, an exam, and a discharge in one place. But it’s been done that way in recognition of the sensitivities of these patients.”

While most of the patients need care from multiple specialists, THRIVE never requires them to navigate a maze of medical facilities. The providers come to them. And, to avoid re-traumatizing patients, their medical histories are taken only once. “Survivors often cannot remember or do not want to remember,” says Potter. “Their stories change over time. They aren’t lying. They have blocked out the trauma to survive.”

Mental health care is their most critical need, with many of them showing all the classic symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder—flashbacks, nightmares, depression, and suicide attempts.

“We can’t just say, ‘OK, I’m going to treat your hypertension and send you on your merry way,’” says Caralis, who is also medical director for women veterans health at the Miami Veterans Administration. “The mental health piece is key to having them come back into the community as productive people who are able to function on their own and not fall back because there is no other choice. It’s going to take role models and peers to help them make it. And we’re looking at a program to try and do that.”

Each referral, and successful treatment, is a victory of gargantuan proportions for the THRIVE team, as they have painfully come to realize that even getting survivors
56,504 cases of human trafficking reported nationwide since 2001
3,737 cases of human trafficking reported in Florida

From posters to barcodes, Miller School of Medicine students put the spotlight on human trafficking

The first poster went up just after 6 a.m. on Saturday in December, and by day’s end, some 1,000 others had been posted all over Maria Contermporâneos’s Wynwood campus in Miami—on walls, building facades, and light posts.

“If this is what it takes to raise awareness about human trafficking, so be it,” says Latoya Johnson, a second-year University of Miami Miller School of Medicine student, as she affixed a poster to a cement wall.

Merida is part of a medical school student organization formerly known as Code Rise, which has been working since last fall to shine a spotlight on what is believed to be the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world, second only to the lucrative drug trade.

The posters, of which there are 70 different versions, depict people of all ethnic groups and races wearing black T-shirts with a broken barcode on the front—the design serving as a symbolic message to human traffickers, who are known to brand their victims—to show ownership, that no child or adult is for sale.

Some of the people on the posters are actual human trafficking survivors. Others are medical students and residents from all over Miami-Dade County. “But you would never know who was who just by looking at them,” says Miller School medical student Isabella Ferré, M.P.H ’18.

“And that’s our point,” says Merida. “You would think it’s somebody you never see on the street or somebody you wouldn’t know. But there’s really no stereotypical human trafficking victim. It could have been any of us in a different place, a different time, and that’s why it’s important to raise awareness.”

The poster campaign in Wynwood is just one of many efforts undertaken by Merida and Ferré’s organization to combat human trafficking. They have also conducted training sessions for health care providers and medical students, teaching them what warning signs to look for in patients who may be victims of human trafficking.

And during Super Bowl weekend in Miami, they unveiled a temporary tattoo of a broken bar code, featuring it at Super Bowl-related events and on social media outlets, T-shirts, and even umbrellas. The tattoo also contains the national trafficking hotline number, providing what Ferré calls a lifeline for those who might need it.

One of those patient navigators is Shanika Ampah, a mother of nine.

Sexually abused as a child, Ampah ran away from home at the age of 11 and fell victim to a criminal enterprise that generates global profits of $150 billion a year—nearly $100 billion of which comes from commercial sexual exploitation.

“When I was being trafficked, it wasn’t a 9-to-5 situation,” she says. “The beatings came at 3 in the morning when you didn’t make your quota.”

At 18, Ampah got pregnant, and that’s when things started to turn around. She escaped her pimp, got back into school and became a medical assistant and then a licensed practical nurse, taking a giant step toward becoming independent.

Today, working at THRIVE is her passion. “I can empathize with [the patients], empower them, and let them know that this is just one moment in their lives that shouldn’t define them and that they can overcome it,” Ampah says.

As an outreach coordinator, she visits those streets where she once walked, going into dark alleys to share resources—and her story—with victims. She is street savvy enough to know how to avoid confrontations, fully aware that traffickers and pimps could be watching.

It should not have taken a Super Bowl coming to Miami to shine a spotlight on the problem, Ampah says. “We have Ultra, spring breaks, boat shows, a Memorial Day weekend celebration—human trafficking is here year-round,” she adds.

Not all of Potter’s battles have been fought advocating for and administering care to survivors. It has also been a fight for funding. While a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime supports some aspects of the clinic, grants do not cover everything—and they don’t last forever, leaving the clinic with the challenge of finding additional support to sustain services. So, donations have helped take up the slack.

THRIVE is being replicated in at least one other Florida county and in Atlanta, where Juhi Jain, M.D. ’15, currently in the second year of a pediatric hematology/oncology fellowship at Emory University’s Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, is working with a team of physicians to establish a health care and victim services model.

Five years ago, it was Jain who sowed the seeds for what would become THRIVE, when she applied for and received an Arsh Research on Ethics and Community Grant to educate health care professionals about human trafficking through educational seminars.

Potter says THRIVE is succeeding, noting the low recidivism rates among survivors who are treated there.

“Our patients,” she says, “are successfully reengineering their lives.”

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Visit to nation’s capital inspires civic-minded undergrads

The Leadership UMiami program gives students a greater understanding of what community activism really means.

LANDON COLES KEPT HIS EYES ON THE DOME OF THE U.S. CAPITOL AS HE APPROACHED THE GRASSY LAWN IN FRONT OF the home of the U.S. Congress. Once through the security checkpoint, the sound of ringing bells, signaling the day’s opening session, echoed off the white pillars and high marble walls. Coles was thrilled to be enveloped by the history inside. Since he was a child growing up in Tallahassee, Florida, he has been fascinated by American history, learning about everything from the exploits of George Washington during the Revolutionary War to the increase in women and minority participation in government service. It was his love of history and nation that prompted Coles to apply to Leadership UMiami, a program for University of Miami students who seek to hone their critical thinking skills to evoke positive changes at the University and beyond.

“Arguably, the greatest component of this trip was to expect the unexpected.”

—LANDON COLES

It was Landon Coles’ love of history and nation that prompted him to apply to Leadership UMiami.

BY ASHLEY A. WILLIAMS
The group met with U.S. Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, D-FL, who then escorted them through the cellar-like underground tunnels, leading them to the historic House Gallery, where they walked through doors and sat in seats overlooking the chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives.

“Arguably, the greatest component of this trip was to expect the unexpected,” says Coles, a sophomore majoring in political science, referring to the five days he spent in Washington, D.C., as part of the Butler Center for Service and Leadership’s third annual Leadership UMiami program.

“The House floor was reminiscent of a high school social hour, with the representatives speaking loudly and animatedly with allies from near and far,” he says. “The only word to describe this surreal experience is gratitude.”

The immersive program began in the 2019 fall semester and concluded with the trip to Washington in January, where students learned from the vast knowledge of faculty, administrators, elected officials, alumni, and each other. Through in-depth sessions of self-discovery and reflection on the Coral Gables campus to interacting with Miami’s local community leaders and elected officials, the program allowed students to gain a deeper understanding of what community activism and engagement truly means.

“You can’t create change until you know yourself,” says Giovanni Sibilia, a junior in the program.

Andrew Wiemer, director of the Butler Center for Service and Leadership, says the purpose of the trip is to create positive social change on topics that each student personally cares about.

Dinora Orozco has embraced the topic of immigration and family separation, and has been following the policies that determine the future of those affected. Her passionate and personal connection to the topic led the senior, who is majoring in political science, to found Lucha Latina, a student organization that works to empower women of Central American descent on campus. She says she likes the work of U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-NY, and was nearly moved to tears when she waved at the group while in the House Gallery.

“It’s people like her who are trying to make a difference that inspires me to be all that I can,” says Orozco.

The trip provided the students an up-close look at the work of D.C.’s decision makers. They explored Capitol Hill, met with leaders from NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and spoke with Jake Steel, deputy director of the U.S. Department of Education.

Doreen Gustave, a junior and member of the Leadership UMiami 2020 cohort, says she had no clue how much the trajectory of her life would change following her visit to Washington.

“This experience has changed my mindset and has made me be more open-minded,” says Gustave, who added health management policy as a minor during the trip. “Just because I was going down one career path doesn’t mean that’s where I have to stay.”

Because of the Leadership UMiami program, Dianne Stephen, a junior majoring in health science and public health, now has a clearer idea of her future plans. Coming into the program, she didn’t know what to expect, as she is enrolled in a STEM-related program—unlike others in the program who are pursuing political science and related study.

“This experience has motivated me to want to open a company of my own one day,” says Stephen. “I now know that I want to dedicate my time assisting in the nonprofit sector. I would love to open an organization that donates medical supplies to clinics in Haiti.”

While in D.C., the students also visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture and networked with alumni, including Johnny C. Taylor Jr., B.S.C. ’89, president and CEO of Society for Human Resource Management and a member of the University’s Board of Trustees.

For Stephen and others, seeing elected officials and alumni in action has “undeniably empowered” them to use their skills and voice to be future leaders of their communities.

“I am so grateful for this opportunity to explore my interests,” Stephen says. “As a civic scholar, this has truly been an eye-opening experience.”

People who are trying to make a difference inspire me to be all that I can.”

—Dinora Orozco
Nurturing Your Career and Mind for Life
Continue your University of Miami learning through enhanced digital tools

An exciting new partnership for interdisciplinary learning, Education for Life, opens up modernized online courses and digital tools for University of Miami alumni. The new initiative, a collaboration between the Division of Continuing and International Education and the Office of Engagement, brings resources and in-depth learning programs to alumni, no matter where they are. “A student’s relationship with the University of Miami does not end with the awarding of a degree,” says President Julio Frenk. “We are excited with the awarding of a degree,” says Stephanie Acosta-Castro, B.S.Ed. ’08, director of alumni career services online platform. “We want to support the goals and aspirations of those who have graduated from UM long into their careers,” says Sarah Seavey, director of alumni career services. “It is our mission to build strong connections with our alumni and serve their diverse professional needs to the best of our ability.”

The new Career Corner platform allows alumni of all career phases to easily navigate a range of career development resources, events, and job openings available to the ‘Canes network. It also features Cane2Cane, the University’s online mentorship directory that connects students with alumni mentors, launched last fall as part of the interconnected deck of resources. The site, developed in partnership with uConnect, the leading provider of career services marketing systems for higher education, provides a wealth of career content curated into industry clusters, allowing users to browse resources related to their career interest and where they are in their careers. Alumni can now conduct self-directed, customized career development anytime and anywhere. ‘Canes at any stage of their career—whether they are actively looking for work or just hoping to strengthen their professional networks or seeking to employ University of Miami alumni—can access the platform.

Visit alumnicareer.miami.edu to learn more about Career Corner.

Meet the CEO
Bojangles’ president and CEO offers professional advice

At age 14, he was fired from his first job—flipping hamburgers at his neighborhood McDonald’s on Southwest 8th Street in Miami. Nearly 30 years later, as an executive for McDonald’s and on his way to Latin America, he saw a magazine ad for the University of Miami’s two-year Master of Science in Professional Management program, taught in Spanish. Always longing to be a ‘Cane and to earn a master’s degree, he immediately enrolled in the program. He said that graduating from the program in 2003 “filled both a professional and emotional void.” He also became a face for the program, appearing in the same ad that caught his attention years earlier.

His advice to aspiring CEOs: “Be true to who you are, don’t be someone else, learn from others, and take on more than others believe you can. I was always the person who raised my hand to do the job nobody wanted to do,” Armario said. “See the opportunity, not just the challenge. If you’re a little scared, that’s a good thing. If you’re a little timid, a little worried, you’re going to make sure you do it right.”

Jose Armario, M.S. ’03, CEO, Bojangles

In 2019, the University of Miami Alumni Association launched Meet the CEO. The program features notable alumni from across the country and introduces them to alumni and friends through an interactive Q&A discussion in their hometown. The CEOs are interviewed by alumni news personalities.

Visit MeetTheCEO.miami.edu for more information and to watch the interviews.
The craft beer market is on the rise, and these ‘Canes have found the right ingredients.

Four thriving breweries in the Miami area have University of Miami alumni leading the way—inventing and producing unique brews.

**Beat Culture Brewery and Kitchen**
—Dan Espino, B.A. ’05
Beat Culture Brewery and Kitchen is a partnership between brothers Dan and Alan Espino and chief brewer, Erik Durr. Dan Espino, city attorney for Miami Springs, worked closely with his family and friends to open the unconventional brewery in the former Eastern Airlines employee lounge. Many of the managing partners are also Hurricane graduates.

Espino, the youngest elected official in the history of Miami Springs, was named “elected official of the year” by the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Alan Espino, who earned his science degree from Florida International University and is trained in microbiology, works alongside Durr brewing batches of beer and concocting original recipes for everything from honey-meads to hot sauce.

**Nightlife Brewing Company**
—Juan O’Naghten, B.S. ’10, B.B.A. ’10
Juan O’Naghten built Nightlife from the ground up. As a former U.S. Army paratrooper, he’s determined to learn all he can about craft beer. O’Naghten worked diligently building his business plan while earning dual degrees in psychology and business. He applauds the support and mentorship of the University’s Launch Pad, which helps students and alumni to start, build, and scale businesses.

For O’Naghten, the brewery is a foray into Miami’s craft beer industry. But this is just the beginning, he admits. His psychology and business. He applauds the support and mentorship of the University’s Launch Pad, which helps students and alumni to start, build, and scale businesses. Aschliman have crafted the brewery out of simplicity—a love for beer and a call for authenticity. Coining “the original Mavericks,” Swanson’s family history in Texas brings deep ties to operating in an untraditional manner. The bold move to open a brewery in an underutilized part of town is exactly the recipe for success that the pair is seeking.

**Unbranded Brewing**
—Zachary Swanson, M.A. ’15 and Lance Aschliman, Ph.D. ’17
The team from Unbranded Brewing Co. identified one of the most opportune areas of Miami to open their craft brewery—Hialeah. Nestled next to the commercial train tracks that helped to build commerce in the area, the warehouse space has been fully transformed to house the largest brewery in the county.

Connecting and forming a friendship while studying philosophy at the U, owner Zachary Swanson and chief brewer Lance Aschliman have crafted the brewery out of simplicity—a love for beer and a call for authenticity. Coining “the original Mavericks,” Swanson’s family history in Texas brings deep ties to operating in an untraditional manner. The bold move to open a brewery in an underutilized part of town is exactly the recipe for success that the pair is seeking.

**The Tank Brewing Company**
—Carlos Padron, B.B.A. ’96, J.D. ’00
Opening in 2017, The Tank Brewing Company was built out of a passion for Miami, cigars, and craft beer. After graduating from the University of Miami School of Law, Carlos Padron joined a law firm in downtown Coral Gables. He established a close friendship with the family affiliated with Plasencia Cigars and built a connection over the years.

As the craft beer scene became more intriguing to Padron, he and his family decided to transform their warehouse space into a modern brewery and tropical oasis in Doral.

Padron says that the craft brewing business is a lot of fun—keeping in tune with the local market, emerging trends, and ways to incorporate Miami style into the brews. For Padron, The Tank is a family business—employing his son, Carlos (Caki) Padron, B.A. ’14, as well as his son-in-law and numerous family friends.

**Growing up in Florida, Carolina Carvajalino knew from a young age that she wanted to study at the University of Miami. And, thanks to a new challenge to encourage alumni support of scholarships within the Canes Communities, Carvajalino’s desire to attend the U is no longer just a dream but a reality.**

“Carvajalino received one of the first eight Canes Community Scholarships awarded to current University of Miami students, with each community’s scholarship geared toward an incoming freshman from that respective community. The support that Carvajalino has received from fellow Broward County ‘Canes has exceeded her expectations, including the connections that she also has made. “As a first-generation university student, the academic and financial relief provided by such a scholarship is truly unmatched,” she says. “To be recognized for such a scholarship is nothing but inspiring to both my parents and me.”

Ken Graff, B.B.A. ’99, M.B.A. ’03, Broward Canes Community president, shares the pride in leading a local community of alumni. “Being part of the U family starts as soon as you are accepted and then never ends,” Graff declares. “Our ability to show that we are here for students from the beginning will help them now and also in the future when they are looking for jobs, mentoring, counseling, or anything else that the local Canes Communities can offer.”

“Being recognized and supported by fellow ‘Canes accurately portrays the family-oriented environment of the University of Miami,” states Carvajalino. “Receiving support from alumni not only serves as encouragement but reestablishes the importance of being an avid participant in one’s local community,” Melanie Martinez McDonald, B.B.A. ’07, Palm Beach ‘Canes Community leader, is passionate about volunteering and making an impact with students and alumni.

“As Miami Hurricanes, we have an obligation to support the University that molded us into the people we are today,” McDonald states. “As alumni, we should devote time to ensure our alma mater can create a legacy that lives on indefinitely.” she adds. “Knowing that we have the ability to play a small part in helping a deserving UM student realize their dream is heartwarming.”

**Canes Communities Support Local Students with Scholarships**

Money raised helps to provide critical financial aid to deserving undergraduates.

Broward County: ‘Canes celebrated the highest participation rate by engaging the most donors for the scholarship challenge.
Alumna Gives Back to Her Adopted Bahamas

From her home in St. Louis, Tara Conway Copper, M.D. ‘10, watched news reports of Hurricane Dorian barreling across the Atlantic Ocean toward the Bahamas, and a possible Florida landfall. Her parents, John and Maureen Conway, were hunkered down in Nassau on New Providence Island. Her younger sister, Jena Conway, was in Fort Lauderdale. When Dorian hit the northern islands of the Bahamas and stricken island, Copper spent a week in the Bahamas in January, helping at the Marsh Harbour Healthcare Centre on Great Abaco Island.

Before attending the University of Florida for her undergraduate studies, Copper lived and went to high school in Nassau for two years in the late 1990s, and her parents still call the Bahamas home. After Hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas on Sept. 1, 2019, Copper reached out to her family and friends in Nassau, trying unsuccessfully to find someone who could connect her with volunteer efforts on the ground. “I felt my hands were a little bit tied and that I couldn’t fathom what it must have been like on the ground,” she says.

When Copper arrived in Marsh Harbour in January, it was her first visit to the town. She was struck by the devastation on the island, which is facing a Herculean effort to rebuild. “Every single building I have seen was severely damaged,” she says. “It just seemed so upside down.”

At the Marsh Harbour Healthcare Centre, Copper worked the overnight shift, treating a steady stream of patients for various ailments. Copper admits that her experience at the clinic has been inspiring. Many of her cohorts volunteered for two or three tours of duty. “I’m just in awe of the team and their work ethic,” Copper says.

Emmy-award winner David Aizer was living the dream.

From hosting Nickelodeon’s popular “Slime Time Live” and the “Kids’ Choice Award” red carpet show to Disney’s “ESPN Club” and even American Idol’s online content, Aizer, B.S.C. ’96, had built a successful career in broadcast. But the experience left scars beyond the one he now has on his face.

In January 2015, a small mole on Aizer’s face was diagnosed as malignant melanoma and later, stage 3 cancer. Thankfully it was caught in time, and after treatment and two surgeries at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, part of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, he was cancer free. But the experience left scars beyond the one he now has on his face.

“It was a wake-up call,” he recalls. Being faced with his own mortality made the funny and outgoing TV host take stock of his own life: despite the fun career he wanted and needed to live a more purposeful life.

He turned to advocacy, becoming an ambassador for Sylvester, the place he says saved his life. He spoke on behalf of organizations like the American Cancer Society and the Melanoma Research Foundation, educating and warning others about the risks of skin cancer.

Aizer even wrote a book. “A Hypochondriac’s Guide to Beating Cancer: You’ll Laugh, You’ll Cry, You’ll Laugh” is a funny, self-deprecating account of his survival journey. “The goal of this book is to make you laugh,” he writes. “More than that, it’s to empower you to take ownership of your feelings, whether you’re personally going through cancer or know someone who is.”
In the Navy, I was exposed to opportunities and experiences that I never would have had otherwise.

—John Rotruck

This was not a typical mission for the USNS Mercy or its commanding officer, John Rotruck, A.B. ’95, M.D. ’96, M.B.A. ’17. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to spread across the United States, the USNS Mercy, a hospital ship usually deployed abroad, arrived on March 27 in Los Angeles to serve as a relief valve for local hospitals focused on caring for COVID-19 patients. As commanding officer of the ship—which features 1,000 beds, including 80 intensive care units—Rotruck is charged with running the hospital services and overseeing the medical staff, who make up roughly two-thirds of the nearly 1,000 personnel on board.

"Unlike our normal missions, we're actually here on home soil, treating our fellow Americans,” Rotruck says. "As many of us currently live in San Diego, coming to L.A. is like helping our next-door neighbors.”

But whether he’s serving abroad or at home, the triple Cane and member of the Iron Arrow Honor Society says his top duty choice, and he was appointed its commanding officer, in internal medicine, followed by an operational tour with the Marine Corps in Southeast Asia and two tours as a flight surgeon. He then completed his anesthesia residency and fellowship before serving as the chief of cardiothoracic anesthesiology at the National Naval Medical Center. His deployments later included various tours in Southeast Asia, where he served as general medical officer and senior flight surgeon.

After a deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, his colleagues elected him to be the president of the medical staff at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, the nation’s largest joint military medical center. Though he was getting plenty of on-the-job training in healthcare leadership there, Rotruck sensed he needed additional skills to support his new responsibility.

"I needed something more foundational, like an M.B.A.—and the University of Miami was my first choice," he says. He completed the two-year online program and earned his degree in 2017.

That decision paved the way for more advances at Walter Reed and, ultimately, he was named chief of staff. "That was the career milestone that enabled me to be selected for commands," he explains. The USNS Mercy was his top duty choice, and he was appointed its commanding officer in 2018. "I couldn't have been happier when I was selected," he says.

"There's no other job in the military that gives you that much ability to try to develop professional skills and improve people's lives than being the commanding officer," Rotruck says. —Nastasia Boulos and Michael R. Malone

At Home or Abroad, John Rotruck Is Ready to Serve

As the CDC began reporting the first cases of what would later be known as AIDS, national panic quickly spread about what was still a mysterious and deadly illness. On July 25, 1983, a couple of months before the CDC had even identified the main routes of infection, a nurse-led team at San Francisco General Hospital established the first ward to ensure dedicated, holistic care—a human touch—for patients dying from the newly named Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

"I saw patients alone, begging for someone to come assist them. It made me angry.” These words, spoken by Cliff Morrison, M.S.N. '79, explain why, when his nursing supervisor said something needed to be done, Morrison replied simply, “OK, I’ll do it.” And, he did. Bolstered by an all-volunteer staff, from nurses to janitors, Morrison opened Ward 5B (which ultimately expanded into the larger Ward 5A). In use for the next two decades, the unit served as a model of care for institutions the world over.

Morrison, a psychiatric nurse specialist, eventually left AIDS care to work with developmentally disabled adults. But his formative experience transforming patient care at San Francisco General has returned in vivid detail, thanks to the 2019 release of “5B,” a documentary commissioned by the University of Miami’s School of Nursing and Health Studies alumni, figures prominently.

“Never been more proud to be a part of something that’s so unbelievable,” says Morrison, who returned to his alma mater in January to share the film about defying the order of the day, fighting fearmongering and bigotry, and advocating for those who don’t have the strength left to fight for their own care and dignity.

“We decided, if we can’t save these folks, we’re going to touch them,” explains Morrison. Extensive archival footage shows patients at their most vulnerable. As important as taking vital in “5B” was taking time to listen, stroke an arm, and give a hug. As one emaciated man shares with the nurse at his bedside: “I haven’t been touched in over a year.”

After watching the award-winning film, Morrison’s longtime friend and colleague, Ana Garcia, a social work clinician in the Miller School of Medicine’s Department of Pediatrics, notes that Miami is still the No. 1 place in the United States for prevalence of HIV infection. She asks Morrison what he would tell the next generation of health professionals to keep that torch of patient advocacy going.

“There’s still a lot of work to be done,” agrees Morrison. “I love to be able to say to students, be defiant. Don’t take no for an answer. I never did.... I’m glad I was defiant. I’m glad I grew up where I did in the rural Panhandle, with everybody telling me I couldn’t do something, and I said, to hell with it. I’m just going to forge ahead. One of the reasons we were able to do what we were doing [is that] I thought we were all dying. I felt like, we have to do something because no one was doing anything,” he adds. “We have nothing to lose. And that’s what I would say to you, you really have nothing to lose.” —Robin Shear

Nursing Alumnus Helped Provide Human Touch to AIDS Patients

Cliff Morrison

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Spring 2020

Class Notes

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Richard M. Lobo, A.B. ‘88, is co-chair of the board of directors of The Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C., and a member of the Community Advisory Board of WHET/fmtv in New York City.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Steven Maddof, J.D. ’78, recently joined the Bona Law Firm as of counsel. Bona specializes in civil and commercial disputes, with a focus on landlord-tenant law and collection enforcement. Maddof is executive vice president of the Bona Law Firm, a member of the Florida Bar, and a former president of the Bona Law Firm.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Charles A. Michelleu, B.Arch. ’79, M.U.P. ’98, is celebrating the 40th anniversary of his firm, Michelleu Architects, an award-winning architectural firm providing a full range of architectural and planning services.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Frederic J. Guerrier, M.D. ’81, was named 2019 AAFP Family Physician of the Year by the American Academy of Family Physicians. As an AHA national health coach, Richt encourages children on the elementary school level to develop a work ethic into adulthood.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Mark A. Richt, B.B.A. ’82, was inducted in the 2019 Hall of Champions of Miami-Dade County Youth Athletes. An AIA national health coach, Richt encourages children on the elementary school level to develop a work ethic into adulthood.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020


50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Xavier I. Cortada, B.A. ’91, M.P.A. ’91, M.F.A. ’96, dedicated “Peaceart Mangrove Forest: Plan(1) for the Future.” Cortada was an artist-in-residence, which used seedlings collected by his Plant(1)project volunteers, was planted at Phineas Gardens. His new 200-foot-long mural serves as the backdrop for Miami’s first urban forest.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Lauren A. Lile, L.M.E. ’97, a board-certified trial lawyer, and estate attorney, has been elected to sit on the eighth consecutive term of the Florida Bar Board of Governors. The Florida Bar Board of Governors is one of two governor’s boards elected by members to participate in the 25th Judicial Circuit, which includes Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Hendry, and Glades counties.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Jennifer Duval Lindy, B.A. ’89, M.M. ’86, published an article that affects the disability community and caregivers and was previously a complex commercial litigator. Jennifer Duval Lindy, B.A. ’89, M.M. ’86, published an article that affects the disability community and caregivers. Lindy is the administrative judge for the 13th Judicial Circuit, Seat 1, and was recognized by the Broward Bar Foundation with the 2019 Community Leaders of Excellence Award.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Julie A. Richardson, B.B.A. ’04, J.D. ’09, was named the 2019 Community Leaders of Excellence Award winner for Miami-Dade County. Richardson’s full-time legal practice focuses on commercial and real estate litigations.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Martin J. Keane, Jr., J.D. ’01, has been named UBS Financial Services’ Coral Gables private wealth management office has obtained the Certified Financial Planner designation. Keane is the administrative judge for the 18th Circuit, Seat 1, and was recognized by the Broward Bar Foundation with the 2019 Community Leaders of Excellence Award.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Jaqqueline Reyes Hull, B.S. ’10, was promoted to assistant vice president at the U.S. Bank in North Miami Beach where she played an instrumental role in planning and executing the operational transition of the state-of-the-art, U.S. Health Miami Campus of U.S. Bank in North Miami Beach.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Carlos E. Lowell, B.S.E. ’84, M.B.A. ’86, former vice president and finance director for UBS in South Florida, has joined the private wealth management group at the U.S. Bank in North Miami Beach.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Alena Capra, B.S.C. ’90, was recently bestowed the title of “Softworks Woman,” a weekly home design show airing on WPLG Local 10, the Miami ABC affiliate. Capra has been on the air for more than 20 years, and she has been on WPLG’s morning show for six years as the spokesperson for Lifetime Achievement Award for 2020. Paul was named a “Praiseworthy Pick” selected for noteworthy mention in Kitchen & Bath Business Magazine.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Alyx Aron, B.B.A. ’12, M.A. ’14, J.D. ’16, has joined Mintz-Buildout boutique firm Mintz & Gealy & Hyatt. Aron was previously a complex commercial litigator at Kaye Kagan & Throssell. She is a past president in high-stakes litigation, including securities law violations, and fraud and corporate shareholder disputes, in addition to class actions involving investor fraud, securities fraud, and products liability. Aron currently serves as president of the Jewish National-Fund Miami Chapter, chair of Women for Israel, and chair of Access Miami. Aron is also a member of the American Jewish Committee, Miami’s Executive Committee, as well as the Miami Jewish Media Society’s Board of Friends of the Israel Defense Forces.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Rachell T. Bril, B.S.C. ’02, was hired by Warner Media sports brand Bleacher Report as senior vice president and general manager of the recently created B/R Studio and will look to build a motor of projects targeting an estimated 200 million millenials and Gen Z fans of B/R, who had been head of unscripted original programming for Epi, will be based in New York.

50 MIAMI Spring 2020

Rachel T. Bril, B.S.C. ’02, Ph.D. ’11, has been promoted to partner at Akim Group. Ellis focuses in the representation of companies in intellectual property and technology transactions, IP and technology disputes, and commercial litigation. Bril has previously served as an IP and technology attorney at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Her clients span a broad range of industries including technology, pharmaceuticals, medical device, energy, and higher education institutions.

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Share some news about yourself in a future issue of Miami magazine.

Send us your messages wherever you are.
range of sectors, particularly biotechnology and the life sciences.

Francisco Navarro B.A. ’22, was selected as the California Transportation Federation Oakland Section Commissionee. Navarro is one of 10 commissioners in the state of California overseeing high school athletics. He has a long track record in Oakland, California, both for supporting students, promoting dedication, teamwork, and success in high athletics, and uniting the community.

Leif E. Soreide B.A. ’07, B.B.A. ’13, won the 2019 United States Investing Champion Award. The “Czar of Wall Street” was named for his work with young talents like “Hello, Dolly!” and “La Cage Aux Folles,” and he received two Grammys for Broadway shows and is considered a legend among his peers for his simple and heartfelt message and commitment to making the University of Miami one of the first independent universities. The Miami Herald Ring Theatre on the Coral Gables campus bears his name.

Class Notes

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Griselda St. J. L. ’41

1950s

Carolyn C. Ianni, M.D. ’51

1960s

Pamela Jones, M.D. ’61

1970s

Catherine M. Heer, M.D. ’71

1980s

Susan E. Anderson, M.D. ’81

1990s

Jennifer L. Brown, M.D. ’91

2000s

Rachel E. Smith, M.D. ’01

2010s

Amanda M. Carpio, M.D. ’11

2020s

Brenna M. Gregory, M.D. ’21

2023

Aubrey A. White, M.D. ’23

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Nicole L. Rodriguez, M.D. ’24


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**In Memoriam**

**Norman M. Kenyon**

Norman M. Kenyon, M.D.’56, a gifted surgeon, mentor, leader, and communicator, who was president of the University of Miami’s first class of graduating medical students, died in April. He was 90. The father of Norma Sue Kenyon, the University’s vice provost for innovation and the Miller School of Medicine’s chief innovation officer, the elder Kenyon was intensely proud of his ties to the University, which began in 1952 when Florida’s first medical school accepted him into its inaugural class of 28—from a pool of 350 applicants. “His passion for medicine was extraordinary. He loved it, and the U,” says Norma Kenyon. “He was a maestro in the operating theater,” says Dr. Alan Serure, a 1979 graduate of the Miller School who worked with Kenyon. “His hands moved like a conductor of an orchestra.” In addition to his wife, Sue, and Norma, Kenyon is survived by two other daughters, Cynthia Kenyon Drake, an exercise physiologist; and Pamela Kenyon, a physician assistant; and five grandchildren.

**Arvo Moore Parks**

Arvo Moore Parks, M.A. ’71, a University of Miami trustee who was often the first source to whom people turned when they needed information on the Magic City’s rich history, died in May. He was 88. Parks is best known for his writings and books on Florida, Greater Miami, and University history. She also produced films on Miami and Coconut Grove, earning an Emmy Award from the Florida Academy of Television and Sciences. Elected to the University’s Board of Trustees in 1994, Parks served on various standing committees and as vice chair of the Academic Affairs Committee. She became a senior university officer when the University’s history than anyone else in the room, and so she understood its challenges and success from a perspective that few others understand,” says Hilarie Bass, J.D., ’81 chair of the University of Miami Board of Trustees.

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Alumni records of the University of Miami are kept confidential. Directories is released only to other members of the alumni community unless an email or written request requires a specific group. As a result, the information shared with outside vendors is limited. Any information related to the University community, including the directory, is shared with outside vendors who are not related directly with the University. Should you not wish to receive your name or any other information in shared with outside vendors who are not related directly with the University. Should you not wish to release your name to any outside vendor and/or other members of the UM alumni community, please notify, for Office of Engagement at a setting of all UM Alumni, Coral Gables, Florida 33124-1054.

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  - President-Elect
    - Devang B. Desai, B.B.A. ’89, Atlanta, GA
  - [Biography link](https://umiami.edu/magazine)

- **Palm Beach County**
  - [Palm Beach County Alumni](https://umiami.edu/)
  - [Biography link](https://umiami.edu/magazine)

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**Student Alumni Ambassadors**

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- [Christian Diez, B.S. ’00, M.D. ’04](https://umiami.edu/)

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- [Student Alumni Ambassadors](https://umiami.edu/)
  - [Student Government](https://umiami.edu/)
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