



By Jill Pease

Body weight impacts survival of recipients of lung transplants

Rodrigue served as a principal investigator in a recent study, published in the February issue of *Chest*, the journal of the American College of Chest Physicians, that demonstrated the importance that behavioral health interventions can have on the survival of recipients of organ transplants.

Researchers found that people who are obese are three times more likely to die after a lung transplant than individuals at healthier weights, providing first-time evidence that people who are extremely heavy should lose weight before having lung transplant surgery.

“Our findings highlight the need for obese patients to participate actively in a weight-reduction program before transplantation,” he said.

Twelve percent of the patients in the study were obese (body mass index of 30 or above) before their lung transplantation.

UF researchers followed the progress of 85 patients who had undergone lung transplants at Shands at UF medical center. They discovered that underweight patients had a superior survival rate – above 80 percent – for the first four years after transplant, but survival rates fell to 50 percent after that time. Researchers were surprised to learn that patients who were overweight (BMI 25 to 29.9) had similar survival rates as their normal-weight counterparts, who had rates as high as 90 percent in the first two years after transplant and 70 percent thereafter. Patients who were obese, however, experienced the lowest survival rates. After transplantation, their survival rates steadily fell to 30 percent at two years and beyond.

Data compiled by the United Network for Organ Sharing show the national average for lung-transplant survival rates is 75.8 percent at one year and 55.6 percent at three years.

UF researchers theorize that increased respiratory demands and altered respiratory muscle mechanics caused by obesity led to the high mortality rates in the lung-transplant recipients who were obese.

“Not only is it more difficult for patients who are obese to recover after a major chest operation, their impaired respiratory muscles make it very difficult for them to recover after setbacks such as pneumonia or rejection, complications that are probably better tolerated by patients who are not obese,” said Maher Baz, M.D., an assistant professor in the College of Medicine’s division of pulmonary and critical care, and the study’s other principal investigator.

“Perhaps the bottom line is that lung-transplant programs should offer behavioral health services to their patients to help them lose weight and make other necessary lifestyle adjustments,” Rodrigue said.

Focusing on the psychological health of patients who have received organ transplants

Center for Behavioral Health Research in Organ Transplantation and Donation established

Providing patients on organ-transplant waiting lists with information on how to deal with daily fear and anxiety is one goal of the College of Health Professions’ new Center for Behavioral Health Research in Organ Transplantation and Donation.

The center promotes positive health outcomes for individuals who have received transplants and their families while facilitating collaborative research among health professionals in UF’s organ transplant and donor programs.

“The center is a pioneer at the national level with its comprehensive program that

cont. on pg. 3

Dr. James Rodrigue



photo by Jeff Kneee

a Message from the Dean



Robert G. Frank, Dean

Visit the University of Florida and, aside from a few new buildings, it appears much like the campus you walked during your college years. Although seemingly familiar, the university you attended is rapidly changing as universities become critical contributors to local and state economies' success.

The economic impact of universities can easily be demonstrated by their research activities. In 1997, \$23.8 billion was spent on research and development at American universities and more than half the basic research in this country is performed at

universities. Academic patenting is increasing faster than any other source of patents (Middaugh, 2001). In addition, state governments recognize universities are critical to sustaining economic growth through the facilitation of global connections and business partnerships.

The role of university faculty has changed as well. While teaching is a critical aspect of a faculty member's responsibilities, it is just one of the job expectations along with serving as scientists and public servants.

The changes needed to support these trends require that American universities become more accountable — accountable to state government for the citizen's money invested in the universities; accountable to students and their parents for quality education; accountable for the science produced; and accountable for providing the training needed for state economies to keep pace. Recently, many universities have addressed the need for accountability by instituting strategic reviews.

UF began its own strategic review in January 2002. A task force was created to address the "future of the University of Florida." The task force reviewed deans' reports on the colleges and held a number of forums. Provost David Colburn also conducted a review of how other universities had strategically restructured their programs.

The College of Health Professions' report to the task force demonstrated the growth of the disciplines in the college and the continued demand for our skills. In addition, the college created a proposal to expand the scope of programs to include a public health program, a comprehensive school of psychology and programs now included in the College of Health and Human Performance.

The Health Professions' proposal called for the creation of a larger college based on the principles we have followed to achieve success in each of our disciplines. This larger college would benefit our existing programs by providing enhanced opportunities for collaboration and scientific research. Moreover, it is clear larger colleges are more effective at procuring new resources, thereby strengthening existing programs.

The outcome of UF's restructuring effort will not be determined until next fall. Although the Health Professions proposal is bolder and suggested many more possibilities for change than proposals by other colleges, our faculty continue to show we are capable of achieving greatness with minimal investments. For every dollar the state invests in the College of Health Professions, we return an additional \$1.67. Clearly, investment in Health Professions' programs, whether by the state's citizens or the university, will produce a great return.

If you would like to learn more about our proposal or the college's programs, please visit our home page at www.hp.ufl.edu.

Student News

William Eastburn, a student in occupational therapy, has received a National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research Scholar (NIDRR) award. The prize includes a \$5,000 stipend to provide internship opportunities in disability and rehabilitation research for undergraduate students with disabilities. As a NIDRR scholar, Eastburn is assisting with research conducted by the UF Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Technology for Successful Aging, directed by William Mann, Ph.D., chair of occupational therapy.

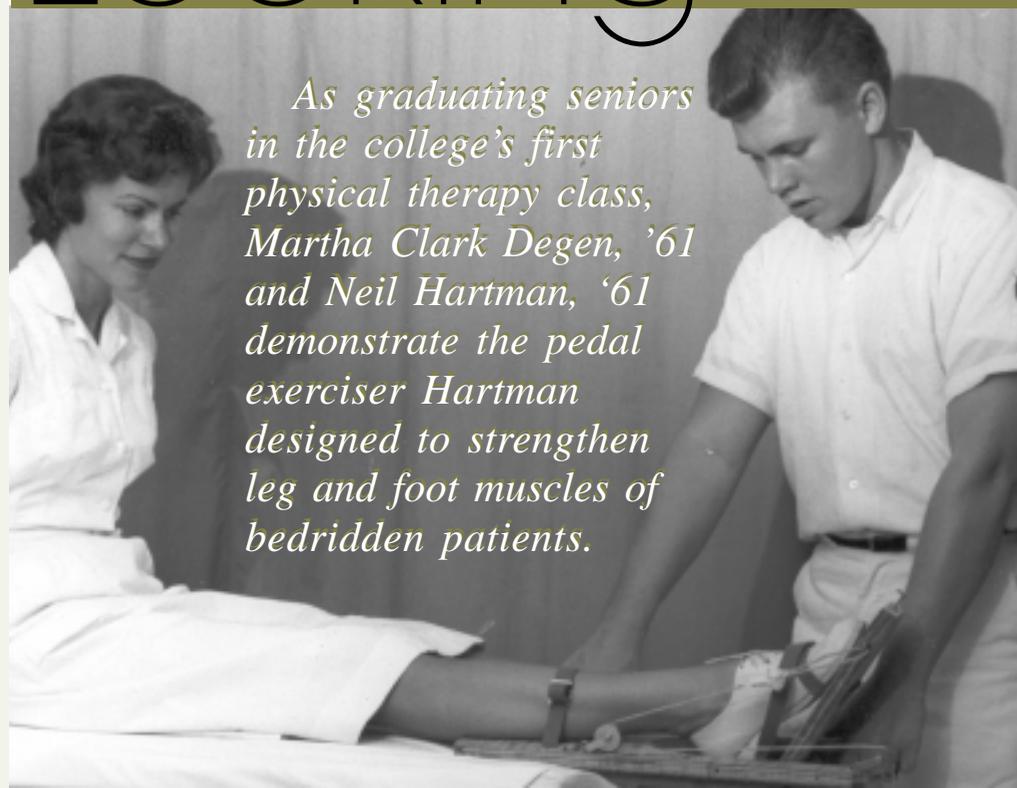
Sheryl Flynn, a recent graduate of the physical therapy department and the College of Health and Human Performances' department of exercise and sport sciences, received the Post-Professional Student Research Award from the neurology section of the American Physical Therapy Association at the association's annual meeting in Boston. Flynn is pursuing a postdoctoral fellowship in neuroscience at the UF Evelyn F. and William L. McKnight Brain Institute.

Kimberly Kirkpatrick Justice, Carrie McDonald and Brendan Rich, students in clinical and health psychology, each received the American Psychological Association's Dissertation Research Award. The annual awards of \$1,000 are granted to approximately 50 psychology doctoral students in the United States or Canada whose dissertation research reflects excellence in scientific psychology.

Erin Neary, a doctoral student in clinical and health psychology, received the Southeastern Psychological Association's Special Topics Research Award. She received a cash award and the opportunity to present her research in a special session at the association's annual meeting. Winning research projects were judged on overall quality, potential importance and innovation.

Otto Pedraza, a student in clinical and health psychology, received funding from the American Psychological Association's Division 41 (American Psychology-Law Society) Grants-In-Aid program. The annual awards are granted to 13 psychology doctoral students in the United States or Canada to support graduate research in psycho-legal issues.

back Looking



As graduating seniors in the college's first physical therapy class, Martha Clark Degen, '61 and Neil Hartman, '61 demonstrate the pedal exerciser Hartman designed to strengthen leg and foot muscles of bedridden patients.

organ transplant cont. from pg. 1

addresses both the medical and psychological components involved in the often-lengthy transplant process," said James Rodrigue, Ph.D., the center's director and an associate professor, clinical and health psychology.

Recipients of organ transplants and their families may experience a variety of emotions before and after transplant.

Before surgery, patients deal with the uncertainty, fear and anxiety of living with a debilitating illness. Once they are placed on an organ waiting list, patients must cope with the fact that they won't know when a potentially lifesaving organ will be available. They may wait months or even years for a transplant.

After transplantation, recipients face issues of quality of life, compliance with strict medical regimens, medication side effects, changes in roles within the family and financial worries associated with the high cost of a transplant, all of which can contribute to stress, depression and anxiety.

Rodrigue and his team meet with most UF patients as part of their transplant evaluation. The purpose of the psychological assessment is to identify behavioral health issues that can potentially impact health outcomes. Rodrigue's team provides psychological care or a referral, if necessary, to help patients and their families adjust to the transplant process.

The center's Web site, www.transplantpsychologist.com, provides patients, families and health-care providers with advice on how to manage these difficult aspects of transplantation. Additionally, Rodrigue hopes to publish a series of books for patients that will guide them through the psychological challenges of the entire transplantation experience.

Rodrigue knows the challenges transplant patients and their families face firsthand. "My mother-in-law is waiting for a heart transplant now," he said. "And my brother died of kidney disease before I was born – before kidney transplants were done regularly in children. This career is really exciting for me. It's an area where you can truly make a huge difference in people's lives."

Occupational therapy launches online learning program

www.hp.ufl.edu/ot/distance_learning

For Kristen Wilson, a resident of Salisbury, N.C., obtaining a master's degree in occupational therapy seemed like an impossible dream. No master's programs in her chosen field were offered in her state. With the launch of the department of occupational therapy's distance learning master's program, however, she can now reach her educational goal despite the fact that she lives 500 miles from the University of Florida.

Introduced in January, the two-year program is designed for the practicing occupational therapist, and content is focused on emerging practice areas, leadership roles and independent practice.

All course materials, including tests and assignments, are Internet-based and presentations are conducted using streaming video. Except for scheduled online discussions, students can complete course work anywhere, anytime, as long as they have computer access. Students are only required to travel to the UF campus at the end of their last semester of enrollment to meet face-to-face with classmates and faculty during a three-day seminar that emphasizes student presentations, small group work and discussions.

"This program is definitely the only way I could pursue a master's degree while balancing a private practice and busy family schedule," said student Janice Owens of Jacksonville, Fla.

The UF distance master's program is at the forefront of the trend toward continued education for occupational therapists that will become important to the profession in the near future.

"In the increasingly complex U.S. health-care system, the emerging role of the occupational therapist places new demands for independence in business operations, practice outcomes and broad perspectives. Recognizing these changes, many therapists with baccalaureate degrees want to move to the master's level, especially now that the American Occupational Therapy Association has mandated post-baccalaureate education for entry to the field by 2006," said Kay Walker, Ph.D., professor and director of the distance learning master's program.

For more information on the program visit the Web site or call 1-866-878-3297.

New physical therapy department chair named

Krista Vandenborne, Ph.D., P.T., an internationally recognized leader in human muscle physiology and rehabilitation, has been appointed chair of the physical therapy department.

Vandenborne succeeds Robert Garrigues, Ph.D., associate dean, who has served as interim department chair since July 2000. Before joining the UF physical therapy faculty in July 2001, Vandenborne held joint appointments in the departments of physiology, radiology and rehabilitation medicine at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.



Dr. Krista Vandenborne

"My goal is to continue the department's mission to educate quality health-care professionals capable of providing excellent physical therapy services while rapidly expanding our research activities," Vandenborne said.

She also said she plans to advance the physical therapy department's national ranking and become an equal partner in rehabilitation research initiatives across the university.

"Many fields are starting to recognize the importance of rehabilitation research and the role physical therapy can play. As a department we are uniquely positioned to help transfer laboratory research to clinical practice by teaching the next generation of physical therapists and working closely with the physical therapy clinical community," Vandenborne said.

In her research, Vandenborne examines muscular dysfunction and rehabilitation with a focus on musculoskeletal and neurological conditions. She utilizes magnetic resonance imaging and spectroscopy techniques to study the effectiveness of specific rehabilitation interventions, including gene transfer. She is the principal investigator on several National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants and has served on NASA and NIH study sections.

Faculty Notes

Pamela Duncan, Ph.D., the director of the Brooks Center for Rehabilitation Studies and a professor in the department of health services administration, has received the Department of Veterans Affairs' Senior Rehabilitation Research Career Scientist award. The award recognizes scientists who are international leaders in their field and have a record of successful VA research support. Duncan will receive salary support for five years for her position as the director of the Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center at the Malcom Randall Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Michael Robinson, Ph.D., professor, clinical and health psychology, has received a University of Florida Research Foundation Professorship. The three-year professorships recognize faculty who are considered leaders in their field and have a distinguished record of research. The award includes a salary supplement and a one-time allocation to support research.

Samuel Sears, Ph.D., associate professor, clinical and health psychology, has been named to the board of directors for the international Cardiac Arrest Survivor Network. The Boston-based network offers psychosocial and emotional support to sudden cardiac arrest survivors and their families through Web-based resources.

Evaluating swallowing disorders

A College of Health Professions faculty member has developed the first standardized test to determine the presence and severity of swallowing disorders and measure a patient's swallowing ability over time. Swallowing disorders affect about 15 million Americans, primarily the elderly.

The Mann Assessment of Swallowing Ability (MASA), designed by Giselle Mann, Ph.D., visiting assistant professor in the communicative disorders department and a core faculty member in UF's Florida Dysphagia Institute, provides a simple, non-invasive method for evaluating a patient's swallowing function.

The one-page MASA test instructs health-care professionals to rate patients' performance when completing a series of swallowing tasks. Once an overall score has been assigned to the patient's performance, it can be used to categorize them as having a mild, moderate or severe swallowing disorder, following the parameters defined by Mann. The manual accompanying the MASA test also includes a user's guide on how to measure results in patients and use the instrument for outcomes data collection and monitoring patient status.

"The MASA score guides treatment decisions and allows health-care practitioners to evaluate a patient's treatment progress over time as they are re-tested," Mann said. "Their MASA score can easily be transferred to other facilities if treatment is continued elsewhere."

Between 16 and 22 percent of people over the age of 50 have problems swallowing. Among people who have suffered from a head injury, stroke or Parkinson's disease, 20 to 50 percent have a swallowing disorder.

Common causes include gastroesophageal reflux disease, a digestive disorder that affects the muscle connecting the esophagus with the stomach; head or neck cancer; muscle weakness due to stroke; or other physiological problems in the muscles and tissues that aid in the swallowing process.

As patients with swallowing disorders attempt to avoid certain foods or modify their eating habits to compensate for pain or discomfort, they may suffer from dehydration, nutritional deficiencies, pneumonia or chest infections. Swallowing disorders can have psychological consequences as well.

"Swallowing difficulties have a negative societal impact," Mann said. "Patients may feel embarrassed to dine with family or friends if they know they may not be able to swallow their food."

In the past, methods of diagnosing and evaluating swallowing difficulties have varied among health-care institutions and health-care providers. Mann developed MASA because she recognized the need for a standardized measurement procedure that could be used by health-care practitioners who treat individuals with swallowing disorders, providing a common frame of reference when discussing a patient's swallowing ability. Along the way, she conducted research on hundreds of patients with swallowing disorders and assessed existing evaluation methods.

"Using talents derived from her unique background in statistical design research and rich clinical experience, Dr. Mann has provided us with a tool to assist us in the formation of a hypothesis regarding the nature of a patient's swallowing impairment and the level of severity," said Robert Miller, Ph.D., a clinical associate professor of rehabilitation medicine and otolaryngology/head and neck surgery and a lecturer in speech and hearing services at the University of Washington.

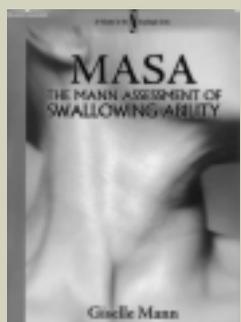
"Dr. Mann gives us what we need – an assessment tool that allows experienced clinicians to document and share credible data," he added.

Common treatments for swallowing disorders include exercises to increase swallowing muscle strength, changes in diet, medication, behavioral strategies and biofeedback.

Swallowing disorders are characterized by pain or a feeling of difficulty when attempting to pass food or drink from the mouth to the stomach. Individuals with a swallowing disorder may cough before or after swallowing, have trouble starting to swallow, experience a sensation of food sticking in the throat or feel like they are choking while swallowing.



Dr. Giselle Mann



MASA is available from Delmar Learning, a division of New York-based Thomson Learning, Inc, an educational publishing company.

MASA provides a simple, non-invasive method for evaluating a patient's swallowing function

Stephanie Hanson, Ph.D., associate dean and Robert Frank, Ph.D., dean (right) congratulate the College of Health Professions' 2002 teacher of the year, Robert Garrigues, Ph.D., associate dean.



teacher of the year

"He is able to convey the information and ideas of the class in an exciting and stimulating way and he truly challenges each student to learn and grow throughout the class,"

— student Alysha Workman said of Garrigues

awards

The following awards were given to these outstanding academic achievers at the College of Health Professions' 31st annual convocation on May 2.

Dean's Office Awards

Dean's Scholar Awards

Undergraduate – Jayme Olson, health science
Master's – Ajani Dunn, health services administration
Doctoral – Stacy Fritz, rehabilitation science

Judson A. Clements, Jr. Memorial Scholarship – Brooke Braman, rehabilitation counseling

Bachelor of Health Science Program Awards

Outstanding Leadership – Kelle Moore
Exceptional Academic Performance – Victor Pereira
Outstanding Teaching Assistant – William Kanasky, clinical and health psychology

Teacher of the Year – Robert Garrigues, Ph.D.

University Medallion – Claudette Finley, M.S., P.T.

Shands Hospital Auxiliary Scholarships

Chad Betters, rehabilitation counseling
Laura Frakey, clinical and health psychology
Kristen Jahnke, physical therapy
Rebecca Jump, clinical and health psychology
Marissa Catlin, physical therapy
Grace Winslow Auxiliary Scholarship – Eva Serber, clinical and health psychology

Clinical and Health Psychology Awards

Florence Shafer Memorial Award – Brendan Rich
Molly Harrower Award – Brendan Rich
Department Research Award – William Kanasky
Scientist-Practitioner Award – Amy Baughcum
Robert and Phyllis Levitt Research Award – Gregg Selke
Geoffrey Clark-Ryan Memorial Award – Avani Modi
Department Teaching Award – Ronald Rozensky, Ph.D.
Department Research Mentor Award – William Perlstein, Ph.D.
Hugh C. Davis Award – Lori Waxenberg, Ph.D. and Ronald Rozensky, Ph.D.

Communicative Disorders Awards

Kenneth R. Bzoch Speech-Language-Hearing Award for Excellence in Research – Emily Plowman
Lowell C. Hammer Outstanding Clinical Speech-Language Pathology Award – Kimberly Eisenzimmer
Kenneth C. Pollock Outstanding Clinical Audiology Award – Heidi Sanders

Health Services Administration Awards

Faculty Award for Excellence – Carolyn Ford
Alumni Award – Ajani Dunn
Excellence in Teaching Award – Louis Gapenski, Ph.D.

Physical Therapy Awards

Claudette Finley Scholarship Award – Kristen Jahnke
Frederick Family Scholarship (entry level student) – Josh Schenkel
Frederick Family Scholarship (advanced level student) – Bina Patel
Julie Conrad Trojanowski Scholarship – Marissa Catlin
Dr. Mark H. Trimble Memorial Scholarship – Kyle Tanamachi
Outstanding Student Intern Class of 2002 (May) – Mary Laurel Vawter
Outstanding Student Intern Class of 2002 (June) – Elizabeth Bartels
Outstanding Academic Performance – Julia Hunt and Jennifer Villamil Miller

Occupational Therapy Awards

Alice C. Jantzen Award for Academic Excellence – Dawn Ohlson
Ann Sirmyer Ballard Memorial Award – Catherine Llanes
Jane Slaymaker Memorial Award – Christina Mendoza
Hollis Sammons Research Award – Kelly Hannah
Lela A. Llorens Award for Excellence in Research – Christy Cannon
Outstanding Teaching Assistance Award – Tara Donahue and Tanya Marchant

Rehabilitation Counseling Awards

Graduate Leadership Award – Matthew Kragiel
Undergraduate Leadership Award – Cossette Tamargo
Scholarship Award – Arika Ruder and Casie Sellers
Bruce Thomason Memorial Award – Amery Bressler
Clinical Excellence Award – Melissa Davis
John Muthard Research Award – Katherine Byers
University Women's Club Award – Dan Pekich

Murder, she wrote

HP graduate embarks on new career as mystery novelist

Roberta Isleib, Ph.D., clinical and health psychology '85, may have joined the ranks of whodunit authors, but she hasn't forgotten her psychology roots.

Isleib's mystery novel *Six Strokes Under*, published by Penguin Putnam Berkley Prime Crime, debuts in bookstores in June. It follows Cassandra Burdette, an aspiring professional golfer and former UF golf team star, as she competes at the sectional qualifying school for a spot on the Ladies Professional Golf Association tour, the setting for a series of mysterious deaths.

"The golfer protagonist in the three-book series has a psychologist sidekick, which allows me to combine the things I love – golf and psychology. And I can do a little public education about psychological issues along the way," Isleib said.

After being introduced to the sport by her husband John, Isleib began writing articles on the psychology of golf. A friend suggested that Isleib take her writing a step further and work on a novel. Isleib continued to work as a staff psychologist at the Yale University Health Plan and in private practice while writing her book.

"I decided on a female golfer as the main character and made her so much better at golf than I am. I added a psychologist to solve mysteries," Isleib said.

Isleib believes a psychologist filling the role of a detective is a natural fit.

"There is something not so dissimilar between a detective and a psychologist.

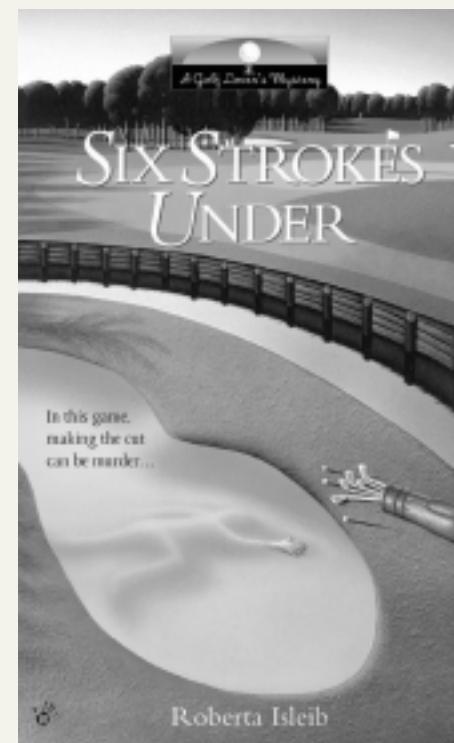
A detective starts with a crime and a psychologist starts with a patient problem. Then they both piece together clues to unravel the mystery," she explained.

Over the next several months, Isleib will travel from her Connecticut home to attend several mystery conventions and will appear at the American Psychological Association's annual convention in August as the chair of a panel that examines the role psychology plays in the mystery novel. She will be joined by authors Denise Swanson, Abigail Padgett and Don Davidoff.

Killer Lies, the next book in the Cassandra Burdette golf mystery series, will be published in spring 2003, followed by *Board to Death* later next year. For more information, visit Isleib's Web site, www.robertainleib.com.



Dr. Roberta Isleib



Isleib's mystery novel is the first in a three-part series featuring rising golf star Cassandra Burdette.

Dear alumni, faculty, and friends,

My name is Melisa Baldwin, and I am the new director of development for the College of Health Professions. I am very happy to have the opportunity to work with such a dynamic group of individuals. Thanks to all of you who support the college with your time, talents, and gifts. You are an important part of the success of the College of Health Professions. For those of you who would like to be more involved, there are numerous ways to achieve that goal, and I would like to have the chance to share those opportunities with you.



Melisa Baldwin,
director of development

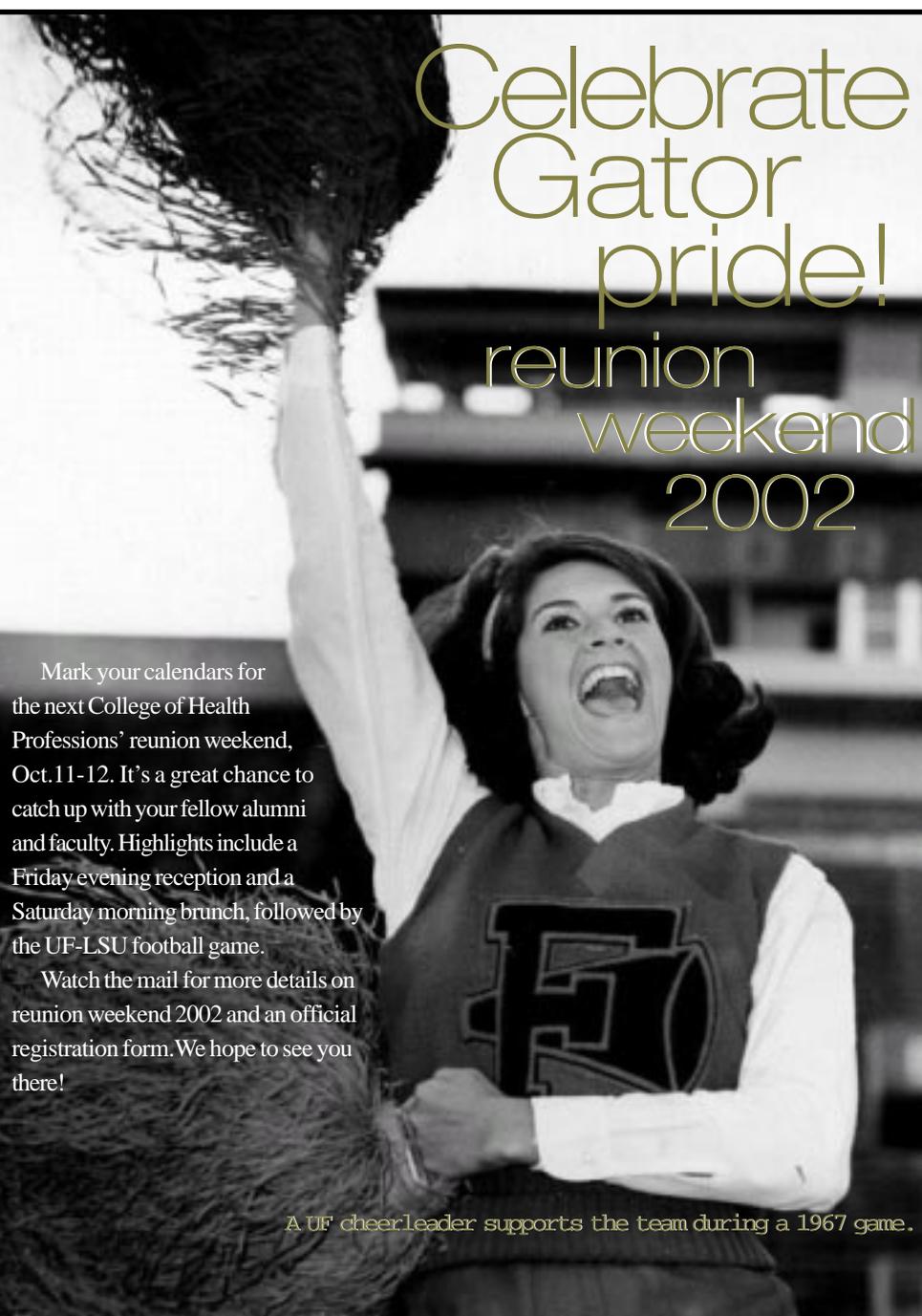
The college continues to grow by leaps and bounds. The new building that will house the colleges of Health Professions, Nursing, and Pharmacy is scheduled to open in the Spring of 2003, and fund raising for its construction is one of many projects in progress. Gifting levels for the new building range from \$500 to \$200,000, with various levels in between.

If you would like more information about the building, other fund-raising projects, or ways to donate your time and talents, please feel free to contact me at (352) 265-8097 or mbaldwi@ufl.edu. I look forward to working with you as we support the mission of the College of Health Professions.

Sincerely,

Melisa

Share your
news online at:
www.hp.ufl.edu/alumni



Celebrate
Gator
pride!
reunion
weekend
2002

Mark your calendars for the next College of Health Professions' reunion weekend, Oct. 11-12. It's a great chance to catch up with your fellow alumni and faculty. Highlights include a Friday evening reception and a Saturday morning brunch, followed by the UF-LSU football game.

Watch the mail for more details on reunion weekend 2002 and an official registration form. We hope to see you there!

A UF cheerleader supports the team during a 1967 game.

Mark Robitaille, health services administration '76, serves as the president of the health services administration alumni association for 2001-2002. He is the senior vice president/chief operating officer for Martin Memorial Health Systems in Stuart, Fla. His daughter, **Kari Robitaille**, graduated from UF in May with a master's degree in physical therapy.

George Bowen, rehabilitation counseling '87, is the vice president and co-owner of Sunshine Support Coordination Inc. The Daytona Beach-based company was established in 2000 and provides support coordination to clients of the state of Florida's Department of Children and Families division of developmental disabilities.

Laurel Jeter, physical therapy '84, is a therapist with the Duval County School Board after working in private practice and outpatient rehabilitation for the past 17 years. She recently became engaged to Elliott Bailey. Jeter resides in Neptune Beach, Fla.

David Jackson, rehabilitation counseling '99, has established his own business providing medical and vocational case-management and mental health counseling. He is working toward a doctorate in mental health counseling from the UF College of Education and is also teaching part time in the college. Jackson has been elected to the board of the Florida Mental Health Counselor's Association, and he received the American Mental Health Counselor's Association Graduate Student Service Award in 2000 for his work chairing the graduate student committee.

DeeDee Scharf Locascio, rehabilitation counseling '90, has joined the practice of Alachua Family Psychiatry in Gainesville. Her practice focuses on treating post-partum depression as well as counseling children and families. She received a doctorate in mental health counseling from UF in 2001. Locascio and husband Paul Locascio welcomed daughter Shannon in May 2001.

Deborah Collins Strickland, rehabilitation counseling '97, has started her own business, Lake Area Senior Care Management, serving the elderly of north central Florida. Strickland coordinates her clients' health care and assists them in making long-term care arrangements. Strickland and husband Tim Strickland live in Keystone Heights, Fla.

Heather Ayers Dibra, occupational therapy '00, is employed by Miami-Dade County Public Schools and South Dade Rehab Inc.'s The Children's Clinic. She works with children diagnosed with autism, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy and general developmental delays. Dibra also works in general and acute geriatric rehabilitation with Baptist Health Systems of South Florida. Dibra and husband Blerim Dibra live in Homestead, Fla.

Capt. Steve Mounts, health services administration '00, is the secretary and treasurer of the health services administration alumni association for 2001-2002. He is employed as the deputy chief of the Medical Corps Division, Medical Force Management Directorate, Office of the Surgeon General, in Washington, D.C. His wedding to Stephanie Gaveau is scheduled for August 2002.

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

Rehabilitation Counseling Grad Plays Pivotal Role in Lives of Elderly Patients

Rebecca Catalanotto, rehabilitation counseling '99, spends her days making sure elderly patients of a rural Florida health care center receive the best quality health care available.

As a case manager and site supervisor for the Senior Healthcare Center in Starke, Fla., Catalanotto seeks to remove barriers that prevent patients from receiving the health services they need.

The Senior Healthcare Center, one of three senior centers affiliated with North Florida Regional Medical Center, is an outpatient site specializing in geriatric care.

Catalanotto helps patients obtain drug prescriptions, medical equipment and home health care. She also answers patients' questions about insurance and Medicare,



Rebecca Catalanotto

administers mental status tests and depression scales and works with social agencies to coordinate care.

"I also am actively involved with some of our patients' family members to help determine what the patient's needs are and how best to meet them," Catalanotto explained.

The emergence of managed care, the increasing health demands of the aging population and new health technologies have contributed to the need for case managers in hospitals and clinics and for dealing with worker's compensation issues. There are approximately 100,000 case managers in the United States working to select appropriate providers and facilities for patients across the continuum of health care and to make certain that patients receive care that is timely, effective and in their best interest.

Although case-management positions are generally held by nurses, individuals trained as social workers, psychologists, physicians and rehabilitation counselors are increasingly filling those roles.

"Rehabilitation counselors are somewhat unique among those disciplines that provide case-management services," said Linda Shaw, Ph.D., associate professor, rehabilitation counseling. "They must complete substantial coursework requirements at the graduate level in medical and psychosocial aspects of disability, as well as specific courses in case management. Our program has a particularly strong emphasis in case management, so graduates of our program, like Rebecca, are well prepared to fill medical and rehabilitation case-management roles."

Catalanotto plans to continue in case management while exploring other aspects of health-care administration.

"I like the flexibility and marketability of case management; there are many opportunities for case managers in private companies, insurance agencies and private business. I am able to work closely with other health professionals in a team environment, which I love because I am interested in the perspectives and philosophies of other disciplines," Catalanotto said.

Health services administration alumnus is shaping the future of Florida health care

At 34, Alan Levine, health services administration '92, is young in his career, but his successes in hospital administration and his involvement in state health-care policy boards have solidified his role as a leader in Florida's health-care industry.

In his two years at the helm of South Bay Hospital, an acute care hospital in Sun City Center, Fla., Levine has overseen \$20 million in capital improvements, including the construction of outpatient diagnostic and rehabilitation centers and a new emergency department. Under his leadership, emergency department patient satisfaction scores have risen from the third percentile in the national Gallup database to the 90th percentile.

During his tenure as the CEO of Doctor's Memorial Hospital in Perry, Fla., Levine spearheaded the effort to implement a one-cent sales tax from the city and county for the construction of a new hospital to replace the existing 30-year-old structure. The initiative passed with 73 percent of the vote. The new facility effectively rescued the once-endangered hospital and established it as a regional health-care provider.

His participation in Florida health-care issues includes gubernatorial appointments to the Florida Center for Nursing, the Commission on Graduate Medical Education, and he served as a member of the Commission on Excellence in Healthcare.

As the chairman of the Florida Hospital Association's Small and Rural Hospital Council, Levine helped write the legislation that became the Florida Rural Hospital Capital Improvement Program, which has provided \$7 million a year in state funds to rural hospitals for the past three years.

Levine continues to monitor several national trends that could negatively affect health-care delivery if state and federal governments don't intervene: the decrease in Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements, the increase in employer's costs for providing health insurance for workers, the high price of health-care provider's malpractice insurance, and the increased cost of new technology and pharmaceuticals.

"When you choose a career in health administration, you are expected to be a trained health-care leader who can step out in front on these issues," said Levine, a recent recipient of the Tampa Business Journal's 40 Under 40 award for emerging business leaders in the Tampa Bay area. "How can you not love a job where you're considered a community leader, and you run an organization that helps people?"



Levine discusses South Bay Hospital's strategic plan with Dana Litaker, director of marketing and planning.

What's New?



What's New?

Share your news with classmates! Submissions will be published in the Alumni Updates section of a future issue.

Name (including maiden name)

Major/Year

Phone

Home address (city, state, zip)

E-mail address

Current position (Title, company -- or enclose a business card)

News to share

Mail to HP News, News and Communications, Health Science Center, P.O. Box 100253, Gainesville, FL 32610-0253; fax (352) 392-9220; e-mail jpease@vpha.health.ufl.edu or post your news online at www.hp.ufl.edu/alumni