

PEERAGESS

Let's Go!





ONWARD AND UPWARD

Whether making groundbreaking discoveries, reaching new goals, exploring uncharted territory or smashing personal records, Knights are driven to do more and be more. Such is the case with our UCF rowing team, which earned its fifth-consecutive conference championship title and national top 20 team finish this spring.



THANK YOU FOR THE SPRING 2019 ISSUE OF Pegasus, which had interesting articles about quite a few women of color. I am especially proud of the staff for featuring a black woman on the front cover. What a step in the right direction.

SHIRLEY BRADLEY '74MED

I LOVE, LOVE, LOVE YOUR COVER AND STORY about **Marcie (Swilley) Washington '83**. The fact that she did not feel she was treated poorly as a black female in the engineering college in 1979 is great testament to the culture of UCF at that time and now. I am very proud to be an alum. Pat yourselves on the back for allowing women to succeed there — including a new provost/VP. Go Knights!

SALLY HARBOLD '88

WHAT A WONDERFUL TOUCHING STORY OF Marcie Washington. Thank you, Robert Stephens, for writing an article that kept my attention all the way to the end.

JILLIAN CAIN, UCF PARENT

OUR SON IS A JUNIOR, AND WE HAVE BEEN receiving Pegasus for a few years now. "Unstoppable" was an amazing article about an amazing woman. Her love of her field, her determination, and her demonstration and witness to the Christian faith are all beautiful. This is truly one of the most inspiring articles I have read in the last three years. Please keep articles about past students coming. It embodies the importance of a UCF education, academic drive, and providing change and strength in a world that needs it. Bravo!

MARGARET SMITH, UCF PARENT

I HAD TO SMILE WHILE reading "WHY I AM a Festival Kid" in the spring issue of Pegasus because, like the author Lexi, "nearly a decade after my first time ... I'm still shaking endless amounts of dust out

of my camp gear." We went to different places. Lexi's first time in 2010 was Bonnaroo; mine was in 2010 at Burning Man. The magic of the temporary metropolis known as Black Rock City is that everything you can imagine is there because someone else imagined it and made it happen. And if they didn't, you can make it happen. And Lexi, if you're reading this, you are so right. The community, not the music, is the reason to return year after year. The sequins are just an added benefit.

STEVE HEYL '82



For this issue's cover, we hired paper artist Caryn Ann Bendrick. Using hand-cut layers of paper, she created a topographic map around this issue's adventure theme: Let's Go!

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Emails to the editor should be sent with the writer's name, graduation year, address and daytime phone number to pegasus@ucf.edu.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. Due to volume, we regret that we cannot reply to every letter.

MOVED RECENTLY? NEED TO UPDATE YOUR INFO?

Update your contact information: ucfalumni.com/contactupdates

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LUNAR LANDING

Fifty years ago this summer, U.S. astronauts left the first footprints on the moon, less than a year after the university — then called Florida Technological University — placed its own footprint east of Orlando and started classes with the primary mission of providing talent for the space program.



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In Focus

EASY RIDER

For competitive BMX rider **Robert Barranco '17**, thriving on new experiences is more than a way of life. It's a business model.

The business grad started riding BMX bikes when he was 15 and made his first impromptu trip to Texas for a BMX competition while a first-year student at UCF. With very little money and a supply of peanut butter sandwiches, he pulled off the trip. He's since made it his mission to visit skate parks all over the world, applying thrifty travel methods to visit 29 countries and hundreds of skate parks.

"You don't always need a plan, and you don't need a ton of money," Barranco says. "I've always kind of been spontaneous, but traveling has definitely enhanced it even more. Just seeing something for yourself will give you more of an understanding than anything else ever will."

Taken with this idea of trying new things, Barranco and some friends started a clothing company in 2015 called FTE Collective, or "For The Experience." The online store sells items — such as T-shirts, patches and mugs — that embody their tendency to try things for the sake of experiencing them.

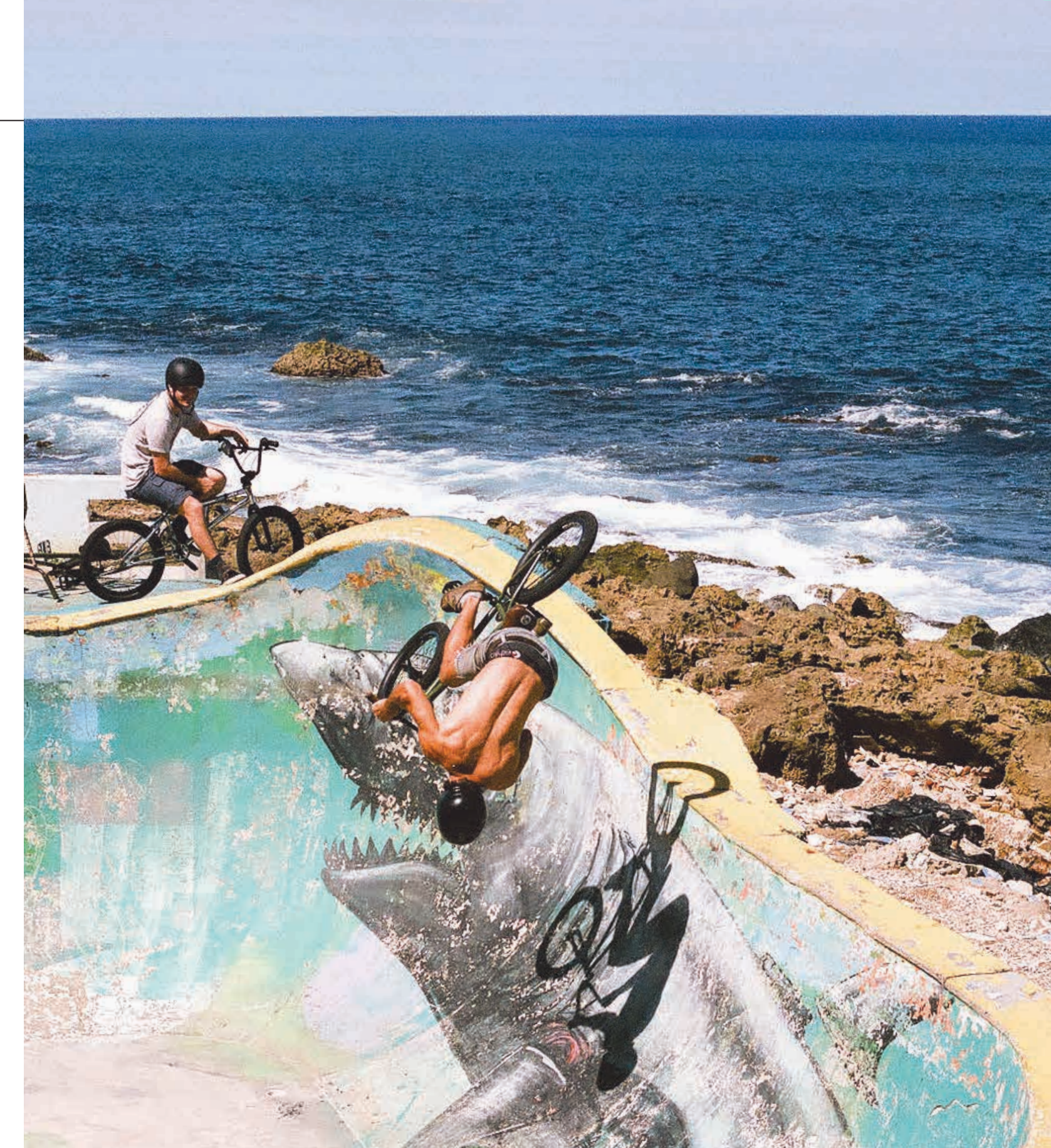
His travels and company are gaining followers and sponsors, including Timex, which recently sent Barranco and his colleagues to London to document his trip as part of an advertising campaign. Timex also sells FTE Collective's products in its Japan store.

"At this point in my life, all I want to do is ride my bike with friends and travel," he says in the 30-second commercial that premiered earlier this year. "You realize you have one life, and you can do whatever you want."

"I feel like I get more out of traveling without a plan because I have to interact with locals who really know the area."

— **Robert Barranco '17**

To watch a video and see more photos from Barranco's travels, visit ucf.edu/pegasus.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT BARRANCO



EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES

When Matt Ortiz set his sights on college in middle school, his parents wanted to help him go after his dream — even if they weren't sure how to make that happen for their son, who is intellectually disabled. "I just felt like if we stayed [at home], his life would be small. And there's nothing wrong with that. But not for him," says his mother, Kimetta. "I felt like there was something more."

Fast-forward to May 3, when Ortiz was among the first class to graduate from UCF's Inclusive Education Services program.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, adults with disabilities are three times more likely to be unemployed than those without disabilities. Launched in August 2015, UCF's certificate program aims to address that discrepancy by preparing students with intellectual and developmental disabilities for employment and providing a college experience for students who may not otherwise have the opportunity.

But IES' students aren't just attending classes and living in dorms. They intern, teach Zumba classes, are on-campus leaders and take international mission trips.

"They are dedicated to finding a career that really aligns with their gifts, their skills and the abilities they've been given," says Adam Meyer, IES director. "And they want to make a difference in this world."

Ortiz plans to make his impact as a full-time teaching assistant at a nearby charter school.

"I'm looking forward to working at my dream job," he said after graduation. "The kids make my day."

"I can't put him back in the box that he was in before he left for UCF. He's grown. He's independent. There's more to do."

— Kimetta Ortiz, Matt's mother

To watch a video and read more about this year's graduates, visit ucf.edu/pegasus.

In Focus

ADVENTURE IS OUT THERE

“It just felt like the whole world fell away, and we were just there in that moment with the wind whipping at our faces ... like little explorers or mountaineers,” says marketing and Spanish double major Jasmin Clark of the recent UCF Outdoor Adventure trip to Perito Moreno Glacier in Argentina. Clark was one of nine students to travel to Patagonia as part of the program, which offers UCF students outdoor excursions ranging from local one-day trips to weeklong expeditions. Adventures include everything from surfing lessons at Cape Canaveral, Florida, and whitewater rafting in Alabama to backpacking in Norway.

“The program is about the outdoors, but it’s more than that. It’s about building a community and exploring different parts of yourself. Take the 10-mile trek up Torres del Paine. You feel like your legs are going to fall off and everything hurts — but you find out a lot about what you’re capable of and how far you can push yourself.”

— Jasmin Clark, UCF student trip leader

4,925

Miles traveled on the farthest trip taken (Patagonia)

1999

Year UCF Outdoor Adventure began

70%

Maximum amount students can save through the reduced prices offered

62

Trips scheduled for the 2018-19 school year

\$15

Median price for a local trip

P To see more photos and read a Q&A with Clark, visit ucf.edu/pegasus.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF UCF OUTDOOR ADVENTURE



Briefs

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



FASTER TRAVEL

UCF Assistant Professor Kareem Ahmed and his research team may have unlocked the key to make traveling from New York to Los Angeles a breezy 30-minute plane or train ride. By manipulating the state of a flame, engines and aircrafts could be modified for traveling at Mach 5 or higher while using less fuel.

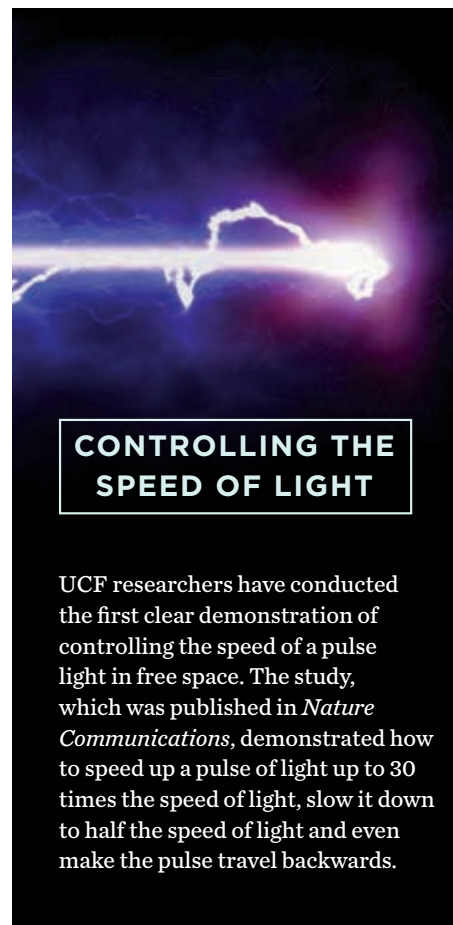
“This new discovery is key for using ... a specific type of engine that can propel an aircraft to five times the speed of sound and above.”



KAREEM AHMED
UCF assistant professor of aerospace engineering

\$9 MILLION

Amount UCF researchers were awarded from the Department of Defense in April. As part of the defense awards, physics Professor Enrique del Barco will look for ways to increase the complexity and speed of electromagnets, which could lead to faster computers and highly sophisticated security scanning.



CONTROLLING THE SPEED OF LIGHT

UCF researchers have conducted the first clear demonstration of controlling the speed of a pulse light in free space. The study, which was published in *Nature Communications*, demonstrated how to speed up a pulse of light up to 30 times the speed of light, slow it down to half the speed of light and even make the pulse travel backwards.

SAFER DRIVERS

“I can’t think of a better application than using big data, predictive analytics and other innovations in [professor of civil engineering Mohamed] Abdel-Aty’s work to help keep us safe on the road.”



— Elizabeth Klonoff, vice president for research and dean of the College of Graduate Studies, on a team of UCF researchers being named one of only two finalists, along with Ford Motor Co., in a national competition by the U.S. Department of Transportation to improve traffic safety



RINGS TRUE

Using data from the *Cassini* mission, UCF researchers created a 3D map of Saturn’s largest innermost ring. The observations, which were published in *Science*, provide insight into the nature and composition of the mighty planet’s legendary rings, which in turn can offer a better understanding of how planets form.

POWERED BY UCF

CytoSen was acquired for nearly \$70 million, marking the largest sale of a biotechnology company in central Florida’s history. The biotech company, which stimulates natural cancer-killing cells, was founded by UCF researchers, started at the Research Park Incubator and has been headquartered at UCF’s Winter Springs Incubator for the past two years.



“Adding UCF to this prestigious network of schools will provide our Cast Members with even more options to create the futures they imagine.”

— **George A. Kalogridis '76**, president of Walt Disney World Resort, on UCF becoming a part of Disney Aspire, an education investment program that offers 100 percent free tuition to eligible employees looking to fulfill their career ambitions.

HEALTH HUB

A recent article by *Forbes* announced that Florida is becoming a hub for developing the most advanced healthcare technology — and UCF is spearheading the charge. Projects such as a device that can diagnose and treat pathogens and other ailments, and augmented reality goggles that doctors will one day be able to control with their thoughts are just a few examples of what’s being developed in our facilities.

“It’s not just us — people are convening over tough problems, and the scene is thriving. There’s so much happening in this space in Orlando.”

— David Metcalf, director of UCF Mixed Emerging Technology Integration Lab



KNIGHTS ON TOP



#2 Cyberdefense team in the nation (National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition)

#2 Drone racing team in the nation (Collegiate Drone Racing Association’s 2019 National Competition)



#4 Hospitality and hotel management school in the world (*CEOWorld* magazine)

#5 Video game graduate program in the world (*The Princeton Review* and *PC Gamer*)

#18 Rowing team in the nation

#19 Women’s tennis team in the nation

#22 Women’s golf team in the nation



23 Consecutive semesters that student-athletes have averaged a 3.0 GPA or better

27 Graduate programs ranked among the Top 100 in the nation (*U.S. News & World Report*)



JUNE 4

Photonics student Mateo Cuesta studied light diffraction using lasers.



APRIL 21

UCF women's tennis celebrated a victory over USF to clinch the team's first American Athletic Conference trophy.



JUNE 19

The sun rose over Addition Financial Arena, formerly known as CFE Arena.



MARCH 15

During Match Day, Jake Altier '19MD and Alexis Guevara '19MD posed with Knightro and their dog Simba, announcing their residency match at the Medical University of South Carolina.

On **CAMPUS** ◆◆◆



MARCH 28

Students sang along with rapper Joyner Lucas as part of the annual UCFestival concert.



MAY 3

Hannah Holbrook '19 received the 50,000th DirectConnect to UCF degree during this spring's commencement.

JUNE 10

UCF staff members Andrea Snead '18MA and Gabe Martinez '16MSW paid tribute to the 49 victims killed during the Pulse attack three years ago as part of this year's UCF Remembers event.

THE BOLD NEW WORLD OF DRONE RACING

BY NICOLE DUDENHOEFER '17

Blowing up a rocket isn't usually a strong indicator for success, but when Derek Saltzman's first-year UCF engineering project exploded on launch in 2016, he knew he was onto something. Yes, the project exploded, but all 13 feet of the carbon fiber frame Saltzman manufactured remained perfectly intact, creating a highly durable solution to a problem he hadn't yet discovered.

Enter drone racing, an up-and-coming sport. Replicating the same carbon fiber manufacturing method used in his failed project, Saltzman and his roommate, Mason Mincey, launched Soar Aerospace, which creates custom, durable drone frames that can withstand the collisions and falls that happen during races.

The sky's the limit for two aerospace engineering students looking to advance the sport.

"Imagine NASCAR, but all the cars are the same color, and they're too small to really see. That's what drone racing is like right now," Saltzman says.

True to the spirit of engineering, the team of juniors is trying to solve this problem by creating a brighter solution: colorful 3-foot X Class drone frames in addition to the standard 5-to-10-inch mini quadcopters used for races all over the world. The aerospace engineering majors hope to advance the league into a sport that will draw more spectators and sponsors to support its growth.

"We think this industry has the same potential as esports, NASCAR and Formula [racing,] so we decided to take a risk to see if we can be one of the primary companies pioneering drone racing," Mincey says.

Over the past year they've partnered with drone racing equipment suppliers to expand the company's reach. At UCF, drone racing is also growing through the student organization First Person View Knights, which earned second place at the Collegiate Drone Racing Association National Championship in North Dakota. In May, Soar brought intercollegiate drone racing to central Florida by hosting its own competition.

"Seeing student and amateur drone racing pilots competing at our event was inspiring," Saltzman says. "Drone racing is more than a hobby. There are future engineers, pilots, technicians and radio operators helping to lay the foundation of this new era of aviation."

Earlier this year the team also moved out of its garage and into Factor, a makerspace in downtown Orlando. Operating out of the coworking space allows them to teach others about carbon fiber manufacturing, which Mincey says is in high demand in Orlando.

As the industry continues to shift, Saltzman and Mincey will continue watching the market to stay ahead of the curve and build the sport's following, which just might get a boost when ESPN broadcasts the AlphaPilot drone racing challenge to be held at UCF in October. ♦



MASON MINCEY



DEREK SALTZMAN

WHO

Aerospace engineering students Derek Saltzman and Mason Mincey

THE PITCH

High-quality, durable, custom drone frames featuring colorful designs in small and X Class sizes

THE INSPIRATION

Months after Saltzman's rocket explosion, he and Mincey noticed a friend was using a lower quality frame to race drones. "The quality wasn't up to par, and it was just black so it looked like every other frame and didn't stand out," Mincey says.

BACKERS

UCF's 2018 Joust New Venture Competition (second place, \$7,000)

UCF's UpStarts Student Venture Accelerator, which offers free office space, advanced mentoring, and exclusive access to services, resources and colleagues

WHERE YOU CAN FIND IT

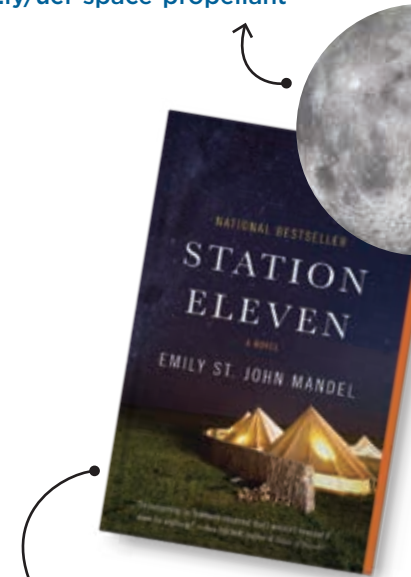
SoarAerospace.com



Find more @ [ucf.edu/news](https://www.facebook.com/ucf.edu/news) [@UCF](https://twitter.com/UCF) [@University of Central Florida](https://www.instagram.com/ucf.edu/news)

Space Propellant

UCF researchers are working with TransAstra to study the most efficient and cost-effective way to mine ice on the moon, which will help fuel space exploration. bit.ly/ucf-space-propellant



Witty Words

Emily St. John Mandel, author of *Station Eleven*, discusses her novel, its origins and the themes incorporated in it. bit.ly/ucf-witty-words

Fact or Fiction

Two UCF professors break down the science and technology seen in Marvel movies and compare it to what exists today. bit.ly/ucf-fact-or-fiction

Dreaming Further

The role one UCF grad plays in some of Nike's most inspirational commercials. bit.ly/ucf-dreaming-further

Dancing Dream

One UCF student unknowingly started Beyoncé's "Before I Let Go" viral challenge. bit.ly/ucf-dancing-dream

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARVEL AND NIKE

WHAT'S TRENDING ON...

UCF TODAY



Decisive Decision

A UCF grad shares his story on why he decided to transition from female to male during medical school. bit.ly/ucf-decisive-decision

Hope for Homeless

How UCF medical students are helping downtown Orlando's homeless population. bit.ly/ucf-hope-for-homeless

Prestigious Prize

Professor Sudipta Seal is the first in UCF history to receive the Materials Research Society Fellow award for his contributions to materials science research. bit.ly/ucf-prestigious-prize

TWITTER

Jun 5 @UCF

New ranking puts UCF in the top 100 universities in the world when it comes to issuing patents and 31st among public universities in the nation 🇺🇸

Jun 10 @ThadSeymour

At @UCF you never have to wonder where you stand. We are all one #UCFamily. Thank you for continuing to show what kind of people Knights are. #UCFRemembers

Jun 20 @UCFRWC

Today is a great day to reach new heights



FACEBOOK

University of Central Florida
June 10, 2019

56 years later, here we are 🤔
When was the last time you visited main campus?



613 123 Comments 139 Shares

Suzanne Bergman Lamar At least twice each year for Christmas and summer breaks. I graduated in 2000, so the campus looks completely different. I've enjoyed watching all the growth 🙌❤️

Charlyn Rappa Bradshaw We were there last week for Orientation, and back again next week for move-in! Daughter is SO excited and fell in love with the campus/school after our first tour.

Linda Gerlach Guzowski I haven't been back since I graduated in 1973 when Nixon was here. I'm afraid I wouldn't find anything familiar except the Reflecting Pond.

The interim president talks books,

Leading one of the largest universities in the nation isn't what most people have in mind for retirement. But then, Interim President Thad Seymour Jr. isn't most people.

Prior to being confirmed for the interim position in March, Seymour helped lead the development of UCF's strategic plan, spearheaded efforts to make UCF Downtown a reality, and was named vice president for partnerships and chief innovation officer.

All this was after retiring from a 30-year business career, including his position as senior vice president of Tavistock Development Company, where he helped bring in more than \$3 billion in investment for Lake Nona Medical City.

"[Former President Dale Whittaker] reeled me in nearly four years ago, and it's been this wonderful progression toward complete, abject failure at retirement ever since," Seymour says.

And while taking on increasing responsibilities over the past few years may seem antithetical to slowing down, finding himself in higher education administration is not actually all that far off from where he imagined he'd wind up — just perhaps a little more circuitous.

Seymour grew up on college campuses, where his father was an English professor and a dean at Dartmouth College, then president of Wabash and Rollins colleges, in Crawfordsville, Indiana, and Winter Park, Florida, respectively.

"Growing up, it felt like a logical path to be in education," Seymour says.

At first, that meant teaching and coaching high school students at a small New Hampshire boarding school, after earning a history degree from Dartmouth. "That was great fun and convinced me that I wanted to continue my studies," he says. From there, he went on to the University of Wisconsin, where he earned master's and doctoral degrees in history.

"I never saw myself becoming the top American historian," he continues. "I enjoyed research, but I liked teaching more."

While Seymour was finishing his dissertation on Theodore Roosevelt, his wife, Katie, decided to go to business school to study her passion, nonprofit management.

motivation, the value of higher ed and the future of UCF. BY LAURA J. COLE

"Katie has always inspired me, and I was impressed by the work she was doing and thought, 'Maybe that's what I really want to do,'" Seymour says. "The funny thing is she recently found my application essay for [the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University], where I wrote that someday I saw myself in college administration. I'd completely forgotten about that."

How he arrived in his current position may seem like happenstance, but make no mistake. His degrees and time spent acquiring knowledge informed who he became. And with his background in education, his inside knowledge of business in central Florida, and his previous involvement in everything from Valencia College and Visit Orlando to StarterStudio and Shepherd's Hope, Seymour is perfectly positioned to lead UCF at this point in its history.

Pegasus sat down with Seymour to learn more about what drives him as well as why he thinks UCF will only continue getting better.

1.

Laura J. Cole: What are you currently reading?

Thad Seymour Jr.: A lot of what I love to read is history. One of my favorite authors is Doris Kearns Goodwin, whose most famous book is *Team of Rivals*, which is about Abraham Lincoln and how he assembled a cabinet made up of his political opponents to ensure he had multiple points of view. She just wrote a book called *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, which profiles Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson and looks at common threads in their upbringing, and the personal and professional obstacles they ran into that forged their leadership style. Ultimately, each of them was most impactful because they fell back on core values that really mattered to them. It's a great read.

2.

LJC: What motivates you?

TS: I think Katie and I are both motivated by family and service. We are privileged to come from close-knit families with parents who instilled in us key values, such as the importance of family and living lives of service. Katie is the eldest of seven, and there were five kids in my family. And we raised three children of whom we are very proud because they are kind, caring people.

Professionally, I've been fortunate to largely work in organizations where you can make a difference, where you can see the connection between the hard work you do every day and its positive impact on the world. Certainly, that's the case with the work we do at UCF.

3.

LJC: You currently have an exchange student living with you. Can you tell me about him and how you became a host family?

TS: For more than 18 years, our family has been involved with our sister Catholic diocese of San Juan de la Maguana in the Dominican Republic. Our friends there live in remote mountain villages, and the communities still have limited resources, though things are improving. Katie's first trip was to assist on a surgical mission; and later, my sons, Katie and I helped with home-building efforts. Then Katie and our daughter began teaching English to youth in the summers.

As the program has matured, five schools have been started. Several of those schools' top-performing students were invited to study in the U.S. and were supported by different Catholic schools in central Florida. Many of the students returned back to the Dominican Republic to attend college, but some stayed here.

One of Katie's students, Bacilio, a valedictorian from Melbourne Central Catholic High School, wanted to go to college here. Katie and I invited him to live with us two years ago. He completed his honors degree at Seminole State College, which is a five-minute bike ride from our house, and was admitted to UCF. He'll come here to study computer science as a DirectConnect to UCF student this fall.

4.

LJC: There's been a lot of conversation recently in the media about the cost of higher education and if it's worth it. What do you think is the value of higher education?

TS: In my DNA is the belief that education is the single most important thing that somebody can do to improve their opportunities, their quality of life, their livelihood and their impact on the world. If you think about higher education not as a cost but as an investment in your future, the returns are huge by every measure.

Now, that doesn't mean that we don't want to constantly work on the cost of education because the value is even greater if it's more affordable. That's why I'm utterly committed to the mission of UCF, which is to transform as many lives as possible by making a high-quality college education accessible to as many people as possible. I would add that's also true for our state college partners.

5.

LJC: Why are you optimistic about UCF's future?

TS: I'm optimistic for many reasons. There is a foundation of great people, history and momentum here. We went through a tough time, but that doesn't define us. The core of who we are is strong and unchanged.

As we continue moving forward, we need to keep our focus on three things. One is to approach all of our work with a bias toward action. I think that's essential to any good organization, particularly when you are committed to constant and rapid improvement, as we are.

Second is to invest in our people. The core of our mission is to develop the next generation of talent. That work depends on our greatest assets, which are our faculty and staff. So we have to pay attention to the people we have — how best to retain and develop them, so they can have the maximum impact here — and then we must continue to recruit the best people.

The third is discipline and focus. By that I mean we should say "no" more often so we can say "yes" to bigger things.

Because we're big we're going to be able to do many things and do them well. Asking ourselves, "What do we want to be known for 20 years from now?" will lead us to focus on four or five things that we can be the best in the world at. It's not that we will ignore everything else, but we need to find those few areas and be disciplined about making them exceptional.

For example, cybersecurity wasn't on anybody's radar screen in a meaningful way 10 years ago. We've carved out a niche where we're highly respected globally. How do we keep building on that and do even more?

If we continue to execute our strategic plan, define how we will be truly distinctive, and focus on fueling the future of the region and the state, I believe we can become one of the great 21st-century universities. I'm honored to work with a great team that's committed to making that happen. ♦



QUESTIONS

with

THAD

SEYMOUR

JR



INSIDER'S TRAVEL GUIDE

UCF students from around the world share their best local travel tips.

BY ERIC MICHAEL '96

Knights come from more than 150 countries, so who better to tap for trusted travel advice? Whether you're hitting the road to these exotic destinations — or just fantasizing about it — here's some great local knowledge from international students about the best scenic sites, cultural experiences, thrilling adventures and fantastic flavors from their homelands that you won't want to miss.

COSTA RICA

PABLO AYARZA
Studying: Industrial engineering
Hometown: San José, Costa Rica

MUST VISIT

Manuel Antonio National Park

"At this protected rainforest on the Pacific coast, visitors can appreciate both jungle and beach landscapes, as well as incredible biodiversity. It's common to see howler monkeys, giant sloths, lizards and different kinds of birds."

MUST TASTE
Desayuno típico
 "When I think about Costa Rican food, the first thing that comes to mind is breakfast. Our typical breakfast comes with fried cheese, fried plantains, toasted bread, eggs and *gallo pinto*, which is our national dish of rice and beans. Simply amazing."

MUST EXPERIENCE
A canopy tour
 "High in the rainforest, you fly along a zip line through the trees and across valleys with incredible views. More than just appreciating nature, you get an amazing rush of adrenaline too."



BRAZIL

ANDREA BRUERE
Studying: Data analytics
Hometown: Recife, Brazil

MUST VISIT
Fernando de Noronha
 "This archipelago about 200 miles off the coast has an ecological sanctuary for animals, and one of the most incredible things to do there is scuba diving. It is special because it makes you feel like you're literally somewhere outside of Earth."

MUST TASTE
Pão de queijo
 "It translates to 'cheese bread' and is one of Brazil's food staples. It's made out of yucca flour, so it's gluten-free. It's super gooey on the inside, but crunchy on the outside — and absolutely the first thing I eat when I go home."

MUST EXPERIENCE
Carnival
 "We celebrate [Carnival] every February or March throughout the whole country, and everything about it is amazing: the colors, the costumes, the music. I think it truly represents the essence of the Brazilian people and their happiness."



INDIA

SEHEJ SOUND
Studying: Integrated business
Hometown: Mumbai, India

MUST VISIT
Udaipur
 "A city in the western state of Rajasthan, Udaipur is a place steeped in royal culture and boasts an extravagance of fascinating palaces and temples. It reels you into the old quaint world of Indian heritage and history."

MUST TASTE
Laal maas
 "An absolute favorite of both locals and tourists, it's a perfect combination of both the Mughlai and tandoori cuisine traditions. It's a really hot mutton curry cooked overnight in yogurt and a blend of hand-ground spices. It's so soft it melts in your mouth."

MUST EXPERIENCE
Shilpgram
 "A visit to this living-history village outside Udaipur is an everlasting experience. I watched a 90-year-old man dressed in flamboyant local attire dancing and singing while balancing four earthenware pots on his head."



SPAIN

VICTOR MALAGON SANTOS
Studying: Civil engineering
Hometown: Toledo, Spain

MUST VISIT
Camino de Santiago
 "Many locals and visitors like to walk this network of pilgrimage routes leading to the shrine of the apostle St. James in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Some routes cross many heritage sites, plus it is an awesome experience, and you get a certificate when you arrive."

MUST TASTE
Paella Valenciana
 "Paella Valenciana is normally made of rice, chicken, rabbit, green beans, tomato, olive oil and saffron. The rice must be a specific size and be carefully cooked so it absorbs all the flavors from the other ingredients."

MUST EXPERIENCE
La Tomatina
 "Located in the small village of Buñol outside Valencia, this annual festival is a huge tomato fight that's extremely fun. But don't worry about wasting food: They only use tomatoes that cannot be sold in the market."

CHINA

XIANGPENG LI
Studying: Mechanical engineering
Hometown: Jinzhou, Hebei province, China

MUST VISIT
Great Wall of China
 "You will feel the incredible engineering power of the ancient Chinese people trying to defend themselves from invasion."

MUST TASTE
Nanxiang xiaolongbao
 "A special treat you'll find only in Shanghai, these delicious steamed buns have a thin wrapper and a juicy filling, usually pork."

MUST EXPERIENCE
The Palace Museum, Beijing
 "A former Chinese imperial palace from 1420 to 1912, this is a must for visitors interested in history and culture. Outside, the palace exemplifies traditional Chinese architecture. Inside, there are rare and valuable works of art, including calligraphy, paintings, antiques and bronze-ware."



INDONESIA

VELDA AZARIA ISKANDAR
Studying: Forensic science
Hometown: Bekasi, Indonesia

MUST VISIT
Bali
 "Bali is a really unique place to relax, de-stress and grow. I love how it's different every time I visit. There are a lot of things to do, from hiking and surfing to great nightlife."

MUST TASTE
Sumatran coffee
 "'Java' became synonymous with coffee because of this creamy, rich, chocolaty drink from the island of Java. We use a process called *giling basah* or wet hulling, which gives it a higher moisture than a regular coffee."

MUST EXPERIENCE
Becak ride
 "Ride in a tricycle taxi. It's similar to an Uber, but instead of the driver in front of you, he will be in the back pedaling — and you get to enjoy the view."



ILLUSTRATION BY ALI MAC



THE EXAMINED LIFE

Curiosity has fueled the world's biggest discoveries. Here's what it means for UCF researchers on the front line.

BY LAURA J. COLE

Adventure is about more than traveling to new places. It's about meeting new people, taking on new experiences and learning new things. At its core, it's about being curious.

Over the years, various studies have shown the benefit of curiosity — from improving memory and overcoming anxiety to strengthening relationships. But what does it mean for researchers, whose work is driven by big questions that impact every level of our lives? We asked four professors how exploring new possibilities has impacted their work, their disciplines and their lives.

JASCINTH LINDO

Associate Professor of Nursing

While working as a registered nurse in her native Jamaica, Jascinth Lindo realized the importance of taking a public health approach to nursing. “The patients had a number of social and economic problems that affected their care, and I felt that I could affect the lives of more people with a more holistic population-based approach,” Lindo says. She has since earned a Ph.D. in public health, worked with Jamaica’s Ministry of Health and Wellness, and published numerous articles on fetal infant mortality, workplace health, nursing education and nursing practice.

Spark of Curiosity

“My interest in learning was kindled in high school when I realized that I enjoyed the sciences beyond the career opportunities that they offered. In particular, I was fascinated with how the body worked and how it failed. I found myself reading college texts on anatomy and physiology.”

Inspiration

“My experience teaching research methods to graduate students in Jamaica afforded me an opportunity to address practical issues in the community by mentoring nursing students in the field of research. This fueled my desire to build research capacity among nurses in the Caribbean, addressing issues related to nursing education and practice issues such as nursing documentation.”

Role of Curiosity in Nursing

“Curiosity is constantly questioning how we practice nursing, regardless of specialization. It’s being aware of current evidence, applying knowledge to practice and understanding how policies directly affect patients.”

Importance of Intellectual Adventures

“Both intellectual and physical adventures are rewarding because of the pleasure of discovery. Intellectual adventures open new pathways with rewards and new challenges. These are often refreshing and renewing and are essential for intellectual growth and discourse, but we need both.”



VALERIE SIMS

Associate Professor of Psychology

Since childhood, Valerie Sims has questioned why people choose to behave certain ways — regardless of popular opinion. As an undergrad, she studied video games. “No one was doing it, and people thought it was a silly topic,” Sims says. “Today, people are very interested in the effects of video games and whether or not games can be used effectively for training.” Her unbounded curiosity has fueled her research in topics ranging from the cognitive abilities of video game experts to how humans interact with computers and animals.

Spark of Curiosity

“Although I did not know it at the time, I started in this field with a seventh-grade science project on why people chose specific fast-food restaurants. It was the first time that it had occurred to me that things I was interested in studying were studied by others, and that there was a field called behavioral and social sciences.”

Inspiration

“My family has been my biggest inspiration. Since I study developmental and cognitive psychology, I am often inspired by things happening at different stages of the family life cycle. For instance, when my daughter was in elementary school, I became interested in how children understand computers and how they anthropomorphize them. As my mother gets older, I wonder how interfaces can change to accommodate age-related barriers.”

Role of Curiosity in Psychology

“I am interested in how humans think, and how to make the world a better place for them. I am particularly interested in how people apply their knowledge of humans to understand nonhuman entities, such as machines and animals.”

Importance of Intellectual Adventures

“Thinking creatively is truly a luxury, even for academics. In a society that constantly requires concrete evidence of work, thinking can go by the wayside. Yet thinking and mentally arguing with ourselves may be our most human trait.”

MICHAEL STRAWSER

Professor of Philosophy and Department Chair

As a philosophy professor and the coach of the UCF Ethics Bowl team for more than a decade, Michael Strawser helps students explore and answer life’s most challenging questions. “Answering difficult questions is about more than a desire to understand,” Strawser says. “It’s about learning to do the detailed research necessary to understand the complexities in every particular situation.” That approach has led UCF teams to qualify for national ethics bowl competitions for the past two years and win a national title in 2011. It also guides the approach to his own research in topics ranging from ethics to the philosophy of love and religion.

Spark of Curiosity

“My curiosity was sparked by an exceptionally dynamic and knowledgeable philosophy professor in an Introduction to Philosophy course. I then discovered my passion for the kinds of questions philosophers ask, the first of which I encountered being ‘Why do we suffer?’ ”

Inspiration

“Reading great writers inspires me. There’s something very alluring and somewhat mysterious about the quest for new meanings and the possibility of deepening oneself in relation to the written word, especially as it informs one’s life view.”

Role of Curiosity in Philosophy

“Philosophy is a discipline that places paramount significance on questioning, such that it is arguably more important to generate new questions than it is to provide final answers. Curiosity in ethics, for example, is connected to openness and being willing to accept new ideas brought about through research and discussion.”

Importance of Intellectual Adventures

“There’s great value in taking risks in both asking new questions and asking anew the all-important questions about ourselves and our world, and then trying to develop new ways of thinking to respond to these questions. This pursuit provides a context for living a meaningful life.”



TINGTING ZHANG

Assistant Professor of Hospitality Management

Tingting Zhang is no stranger to customer experience. After gaining degrees in tourism marketing and consumer science, she taught at Beijing International Studies University while working in various departments — from front desk and food and beverage to the executive lounge — as part of Marriott’s faculty trainee program. “Hospitality is a practical subject, which reacts closely to industry practices and people’s daily lives,” she says. This is especially true for areas she studies, which are customer engagement, mobile and smart technology, and value co-creation.

Spark of Curiosity

“As a graduate student, my graduate advisor asked me to write a case study on Starbucks for his book. After studying their business model for MyStarbucksIdea.com — one of the most representative value co-creation business practices in the hospitality industry — I found it fascinating and useful to solve real-life problems, particularly in people-intensive businesses.”

Inspiration

“I am most interested in the evolving nature of what encourages customers to move from a passive to proactive role.”

Role of Curiosity in Customer Engagement

“One of my research focuses is technological innovation, which is rapidly changing and progressing over time. Staying open to new ideas and new innovations is a necessity for me to keep up with my research work.”

Importance of Intellectual Adventures

“I believe researchers are explorers — mostly intellectually, but sometimes physically. My ethnographic research projects, for example, require firsthand observations and findings. Intellectual adventures are necessary for researchers to explore the world of their academic field. As my advisor told me, every piece of research I do should propose or find something new that contributes to the existing body of knowledge.” ♦

Too Many Tourists?

The problem of overtourism — and how to solve it.

BY ALAN FYALL

Earlier this summer, a photo of people queuing to reach the top of Mount Everest launched a series of articles about the safety of climbers, the cause of the overcrowding, the impact on the mountain itself and how to solve the issue. At the heart of these inquiries are the questions: Why is there an increase in tourism, and what is the negative impact?

Tourism is hardly a new trend, but concern about the impact of an influx of visitors is a relatively modern one. Coined a few years ago, the term “overtourism” describes a reduction in the overall quality of life for locals and the tourist experience, of which the natural environment is so often a significant part. Like all complex phenomena, there is no quick-fix explanation as to the causes and remedies.

The biggest challenge remains managing the popularity of certain locations, from Yosemite in California to Everest in Nepal and Tibet, at a time when people are traveling more than ever. International tourism receipts reached \$1.7 trillion last year, an increase of 4 percent over 2017, representing nearly 30 percent of all service exports globally — exceeding the economic output of the global food and automotive industries.

A significant population growth across the globe and exponential growth in the middle classes in China and India, in particular, mean more people with more money to spend on items once viewed as a luxury. Cheaper airfares and the rise of more affordable services such as Uber and Airbnb have made travel to new places less expensive and easier. And there has been a growth in global

demand, as a result of social media (Instagram perhaps being the biggest culprit with people even claiming, “I did it for the ‘gram”) and new emerging markets.

There are certainly arguments to be made for the benefits of traveling: learning more about other cultures, boosting your confidence, creating memories, and learning more about yourself.

The tolls, however, can be vast.

Though tourism to Everest brings in \$300 million to Nepal every year, there is a human toll. More than 300 people have died on the mountain since 1953. This year’s climbing season saw 11 deaths, marking the deadliest season since 2015 when an avalanche killed 19 people at a base camp following a 7.8 earthquake. In part, the most recent death toll is due to Nepal increasing the number of permits issued this year to 381, leading to overcrowding, an influx of inexperienced climbers and a limited amount of oxygen tanks needed for climbing at higher levels. Inclement weather certainly played a role as well, as it does every year.

But there’s also the environmental toll. In June, an expedition crew removed 12 tons of garbage from the mountain, including “empty oxygen cylinders, plastic bottles, cans, batteries, food wrappings, fecal matter and kitchen waste,” according to a Nepal Army spokesperson.

Mount Everest is hardly the only locale facing the impact of overtourism. Thailand and Iceland have both closed popular destinations as a result of an increase in visitors. After being featured in the 2000 film *The Beach*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio,

Maya Bay in Thailand experienced significant environmental damage — including decimated coral reefs, a declining mangrove population and receding beaches — due to the up to 6,000 people drawn daily to its once-pristine beauty. And in May, Iceland announced having to close Fjaðrárgljúfur, a canyon popularized in Justin Bieber’s 2015 music video, “I’ll Show You.” The natural formation faced erosion and damage to its sub-Arctic flora as a result of an additional 127,475 visitors from 2016 to 2018.

Fortunately, many solutions do exist. For example, responsible forms of tourism development, preemptive policies (especially with regard to air and cruise travel), the economic and environmental accounting and auditing of tourism development, and the dispersal of tourists to other areas can all play a part in mitigating the problem. So, too, can economic fees and taxes to limit demand and de-marketing strategies to reduce or re-direct demand. Solutions need to come from governments — and, frankly, from us.

Ultimately, we as tourists need to show some self-restraint and consider staying local sometimes. By reducing the amount of gas used during travel, staycations are perhaps the best way for us all to limit our carbon footprint — if not the most glamorous or social-media worthy. ♦

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Alan Fyall is the Visit Orlando Endowed Chair of Tourism Marketing in the Rosen College of Hospitality Management and is a member of UCF’s National Center for Integrated Coastal Research.



PHOTO BY @NINSDA/PROJECT.POSSIBLE.CO.UK

THE DEFIANT ONE

UCF student-athlete
Konya Plummer made history
playing for Jamaica in
the Women's World Cup.

BY JENNA MARINA LEE



UCF rising senior Konya Plummer's journey to becoming the youngest team captain at the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup started on the sideline of an open field in the small Jamaican community of Epsom, Saint Mary.

At 14, Plummer had just received her first soccer ball as a gift from her mother, and she took it to a field hoping to join a competitive evening game. The neighborhood boys didn't think she was good enough to play, so they took her ball and sent her to sit on the side to watch.

Plummer plopped down and began braiding long blades of grass to pass the time. And then, with the same determination that would eventually drive her to lead the first Caribbean nation to a Women's World Cup appearance, she vowed to prove herself.

"I started training. I had to be strong and I had to be tough," Plummer says. "From then, I decided, I'm never going to sit on the sideline again."

What unfolded next has been an adventure that has provided the interdisciplinary studies major with the opportunity to forge a path unlike anyone in her native country who has come before her.



Plummer's hometown is roughly 40 miles from Jamaica's capital, Kingston, on the northeast side of the island. She describes it as "country" — which is the nickname her national team teammates gave her — and says it's her favorite place in the world.

When she was 16 years old, she flew on a plane for the first time to compete in Miami, and her world opened up. The idea that something more could be out there propelled her to move to the United States and join a club team, West Pines United F.C. in South Florida. There,



**I WAS BORN
TO BE
A LEADER,
AND I WAS
BORN TO BE
IN THIS
MOMENT.**



she first caught the attention of Hue Menzies, who is the executive director of a competitive club team in Oviedo and the Jamaica women's national team's head coach.

"She was the best of the younger players. We felt like we needed to follow her," says Menzies, who joined the women's national team staff as a consultant in 2015 before taking over as head coach a year later.

She soon worked her way up to the senior national team as a center back defender and was named captain. Menzies says she may be young on paper, but her maturity and leadership qualities are evident in the way she carries herself.

"We have players on the team who are 33 years old and look up to her. It's just who she is as a person," Menzies says. "She is Jamaica. She is what Jamaica is about."

66 SHE IS JAMAICA. SHE IS WHAT JAMAICA IS ABOUT. 55

HUE MENZIES
JAMAICA WOMEN'S NATIONAL
TEAM HEAD COACH



“Do I look strong?” Plummer asks as she poses during a photo shoot on UCF’s soccer field.

Sure, there are brief moments when she’s also concerned about the integrity of her top bun, but she never asks if a strand of hair is misplaced or if the makeup artist on call can glam her up a bit.

“Do I look strong?” Because of their lack of opportunities and the perception of female footballers in their country, the women of Jamaica have to be strong.

Jamaica has no professional league for women. Even in 2019, some people insist it’s a men’s game — no women allowed.

According to a feature story that ran in the June issue of *ESPN the Magazine*, the Jamaican Football Federation has cut the funding for the team twice, leaving the squad disbanded for years at a time and eliminating any possibility of qualifying for a World Cup or Olympics.

When the federation did reinstate the team, the article states that the players did their own laundry. They rode in rickety vans. The squad would practice and then break for a few days so players could work at their day jobs.

Meanwhile, Jamaica’s men’s national team has full funding and ran training camps ahead of the 2018 World Cup in Russia, even though their squad hasn’t qualified for the tournament since 1998.

The women’s team has had to largely rely on benefactors, like Cedella Marley (Bob Marley’s daughter), to get to where they are today.

By qualifying for this year’s World Cup, the team cautiously hopes the milestone will serve as a catalyst for change and progress.

Menzies has made it a priority for the women’s national team to run soccer clinics for children. In the past, he says they were lucky to draw 20 kids. Now, 200 will show up.

“It’s all about preaching the opportunity is there if you just focus yourself to beat all the odds around you and make that decision to go on the right path,” he says. “I think football can do that for them. It’s another avenue for young females who want to come to the States and get a proper education.”

Shortly after the team qualified for the World Cup, Olivia Grange, Jamaica’s minister of culture, gender, entertainment and sport, insisted on a nationwide celebration for the Reggae Girlz, the team’s nickname.

People lined the streets to welcome the players as they pulled into towns. Plummer accepted keys to the city at various stops, including

Montego Bay and Kingston, on behalf of the team. Concerts were held. They met the prime minister.

Menzies says the whole experience was more than any of them expected. The only thing he could compare it to is when he witnessed Nelson Mandela visit Jamaica in 1991.

“We already see the impact. We call them ‘the wagonists.’ We have no problem with you jumping on the wagon. We just want you to stay on it,” Menzies says. “Our story doesn’t end now. It goes beyond. I don’t want our players and our staff to become complacent. We still have to remember the reason why we’re doing this. It’s not just about the World Cup. It’s about how we are going to sustain this after the World Cup.”

Prior to this year, just three Knights had ever been named to a FIFA Women’s World Cup roster in the 28-year history of the championship: Lena Petermann, who played one season at UCF in 2013 before turning pro and competing for her native Germany in the 2015 Women’s World Cup; **Amy (Allman) Griffin ’88**, a 1991 champion; and legend **Michelle Akers ’89**, who was a part of three World Cups and led Team USA to two championships in 1991 and 1999.

This year, however, Plummer was one of four Knights who represented their countries in France, and the first UCF student-athlete to compete on the global stage while still enrolled in school.

“Participating in the World Cup or winning a World Cup championship is the equivalent of competing at the Olympics or winning a gold medal. It’s a dream that any soccer player is going to have.

That’s the pinnacle of your career,” says UCF women’s soccer head coach Tiffany Roberts Sahaydak, who won Olympic gold and the World Cup

during her 10 years as a member of the U.S. women’s national team.

Roberts Sahaydak was 22 years old — just a few months older than Plummer is now — when she helped the United States capture glory in the 1999 World Cup in front of more than 90,000 fans at the Rose Bowl in California. Much like Plummer, the UCF coach didn’t have any female soccer players to look up to when she was growing up. But in 1999, Roberts Sahaydak became that role model for the next generation.

“Konya is now in that position to be that person for Jamaica, which is incredible to think about,” Roberts Sahaydak says. “Some little girl from Jamaica is going to be watching Konya this summer, and that fire is going to go off. They are going to say, ‘I want to be just like her when I grow up.’ ... Having these role models helps these young girls stay on path and stick to their education, stick to their work ethic and their dreams.”

And that realization is not lost on Plummer.

Whether she’s on the field or studying for a test, she thinks about the kids looking up to her. She thinks about her family. She thinks about her teammates. She thinks about the people in her hometown who stop her on the street to ask for her autograph. And she doesn’t want to disappoint a single one of them.

She says she wrestles with some heavy questions: How should she deal with fame? How can she achieve all she wants to and still have a life outside of soccer? Why was she appointed to be a leader at such a young age?

While on an official national team trip to South Africa in April — two months before stepping onto the field in France for the biggest moment of her life thus far — she got the answer.

“I was talking to one of our hosts and she said, ‘Your name means leadership. It means command.’ I almost cried when she told me that,” Plummer says. “I was searching for the answer my whole time being a captain — why was I chosen? It may be a coincidence, but I take it seriously. Everything happens for a reason.

“I was born to be a leader, and I was born to be in this moment.” ♦

▶ To watch a video of Konya, visit ucf.edu/pegasus.

THEN: UCF AT WOMEN’S WORLD CUP

AMY (ALLMAN) GRIFFIN '88
USA (1987-91) | GOALKEEPER

1991 FIFA World Cup Champion
1999 UCF Athletics Hall of Fame
1987 All-American

MICHELLE AKERS '89
USA (1985-2000) | FORWARD

1999, 1991 FIFA World Cup Champion
FIFA Women’s Player of the Century
1998 UCF Athletics Hall of Fame
1996 Olympic Gold Medalist
3-Time U.S. Soccer Female Athlete of the Year

UCF HEAD COACH
TIFFANY ROBERTS SAHAYDAK
USA (1994-2004) | MIDFIELDER

1999 FIFA World Cup Champion
1996 Olympic Gold Medalist
Ambassador for U.S. Soccer with Department of State Sports Envoy Program
3-Time AAC Coach of the Year

LENA PETERMANN
GER (2015-18) | FORWARD

2015 FIFA World Cup Appearance
2014 FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup
Played one season at UCF before turning pro
2013 AAC Rookie of the Year
2013 AAC All-Conference Honoree

NOW: UCF AT WOMEN’S WORLD CUP

SOPHIE HOWARD '15
SCOTLAND | DEFENDER

Plays professionally for Reading Women FC (United Kingdom)
2014 AAC All-Conference Honoree
2013-14 AAC All-Academic Team

ALINE REIS '11
BRAZIL | GOALKEEPER

Plays professionally for UDG Tenerife (Spain)
2019 UCF Athletics Hall of Fame
2016 Olympian
2010-11 Academic All-American
2008 All-American

KATHELLEN SOUSA
BRAZIL | DEFENDER

Plays professionally for FC Girondins de Bordeaux (France)
Enrolled in UCF Online
2017 AAC Defensive Player of the Year
2017 AAC All-Conference Honoree



THE LOST HIGHWAY

The story of a single road not often traveled in its entirety. The relationships, politics and passions that built it. And what it tells us about who we really are.

BY MAUREN HARMON

It was a footnote in a random book in Central America that sent Eric Rutkow — lawyer, author and UCF assistant professor of history — on one of the biggest journeys of his life. The footnote was a nod to the construction of the Inter-American Highway — 3,400 miles of road that stretches from Mexico to Panama. But what Rutkow found so interesting was the mention that this stretch of highway was the United States’ largest global development project between the world wars.

Even though he was deep in graduate work at Yale and had been studying U.S.-Latin American relations for years, this was news to him. And, really, it was news to most who consider large-scale U.S. global development programs — from the Marshall Plan to USAID — as wholly post-World War II phenomena, save the Panama Canal, which got its start in 1903.

“I’d never seen that anywhere,” says Rutkow. “I always get excited when things don’t fit the narrative. The U.S. was supposed to be very isolationist in the 1920s, and then the Great Depression happened. So this really shifted the whole narrative.”

Rutkow’s original plan was to use that footnote as a starting point for his grad school dissertation,

which would make the case that the U.S. was bridging infrastructure relationships with South America long before we thought. But the project soon became a network of tales — 100 years’ worth.

“I discovered that it was just the center of a huge story that had been totally missed, which is that, for a century, it had been U.S. policy — sometimes at the highest, most overt levels, sometimes in complicated ways involving private actors — to try to connect North and South America,” says Rutkow.

With the assistance of the Yale library, the National Archives in Washington, D.C., the American Heritage Center in Wyoming, and oral histories and diaries from several countries, Rutkow wrote his dissertation, and eventually his book *The Longest Line on the Map: The United States, the Pan-American Highway, and the Quest to Link the Americas*. In it, he tells the tale of the political battles, the economics, the terrain that made it nearly impossible, and the unfinished road that exists today.

But this isn’t the story of Rutkow’s book or a road. It’s the complicated history of what the Pan-American Highway symbolizes: a century’s worth of hemispheric relations — and where we are today.

We may assume that ... the volume of our trade with South America will soon grow to large proportions. These means are: Adequate transportation facilities, such as steamship lines, railroads, and isthmian canal; reciprocal trade relations; participation in the business of banking, and a corps of commercial travelers specially equipped for Latin-America trade. It is not impossible that, following such development, the magnificent conception of an international railroad connecting the United States with the remotest parts of South America may at last be realized.

— PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT, OCTOBER 1901



PAN-AMERICAN HIGHWAY

The plans for land travel between the Americas started on a boat. The idea was hatched by a seafarer Hinton Rowan Helper, the U.S. consul to Argentina, as he traveled from Buenos Aires to New York in late 1866 by way of the *Lord Clarendon*. It was the spark of an idea — an intercontinental railroad — that would launch 100 years of planning and politics and policy to bridge the continents, opening room for trade and mutually beneficial relations between the Americas.

Contrary to what historians have believed so far, says Rutkow, America’s first steps toward globalization found their footing on this railroad dream. “Pan-Americanism is not simply just this naked excuse for imperialism. It’s a very complicated phenomenon,” says Rutkow. “It’s very real, and it’s America’s first international relations of any consequence.”

The relationship over the past century has been complicated, to say the least. For some parts of Latin America, the relationship with the U.S. was diplomatic. For others, not so much.

“When it comes to Pan-Americanism,” says Yovanna Pineda, UCF associate professor of history, “Latin America is a very diverse place. In Central America, Pan-Americanism is seen as imperialistic, but as you get into Brazil and Argentina it becomes more diplomatic.”

And many of those U.S.-Latin American relations started with a railway dream. That railway never came to pass, but it led to a new route to connect the Americas: what would become known as the longest road in the world, stretching 19,000 miles from Alaska to the tip of Argentina. Yet it’s the Panama Canal that gets all the Pan-American attention in the history books.

“I know 10 books right now all on the Panama Canal,” says Pineda. “It was such a huge venture, and also from the Latin American side, you see how many people actually died during the making of it. In a way, it was kind of like building the Great Wall of China.”

In the midst of all the literature on the canal — the politics, the race relations, the tragedies — the Pan-American Highway got lost. “The road rarely received more than a passing mention in any of the literature,” says

Rutkow, “and the more I searched, the more elusive the road seemed to become.”

There exists no clear definition of the Pan-American Highway, and the United States doesn’t officially recognize it today as such (though

that's what most travel bloggers and *National Geographic* writers will call it). Even travelers of the road don't always know they're on it.

"If you travel between capital cities, basically anywhere in Latin America, you'll often find yourself on the Pan-American Highway," says Rutkow. "Generally, the Pan-American Highway is just Highway 1 or 2 of the national system in most of South America."

Information about the road itself is limited. Aside from the length of the road and the variety of terrains it crosses (from jungles to deserts to mountains to beaches), and the types of cultures you might encounter along the way, it is simply a road traveled, and certainly not often in its entirety. Some label the road as "the ultimate road trip." As one travel blogger puts it: "Why settle for an ordinary road trip when you can drive across the Americas?"

But the road, for Rutkow, represents something much larger: The Pan-American Highway is the end result of negotiations, policies and ideas that started with a railway in the 1800s. Today, for Rutkow, the highway is a concrete example that we were wading into, and funding, international infrastructure decades before we thought.

Rutkow's book, argues Gilbert Joseph, Farnam professor of history and international studies at Yale and Rutkow's dissertation advisor, details a "missionary impulse to connect the hemispheres

by roads, by railroads and then byways. ... [Rutkow] is giving us many ways of looking at U.S. power that is personified by the Pan-American Highway."

The footnote that Rutkow discovered in that book in Central America became a thread on which he pulled to unravel the plan for a railway and eventually the creation of the highway. And the discoveries Rutkow found along the way were surprising. The road itself was partly funded by New Deal funds, for example — a deal most consider a domestic policy.

"Franklin Roosevelt ended up having such an important role in pushing this forward right at a moment when it had no need to be," says Rutkow. "I mean, it's the Great Depression, and he's the one demanding this happens."

America had created the infrastructure for roads, and the automobile industry fueled that infrastructure — and now the government and private entities wanted to expand their reach.

That reach is evident in American mega industry sites — spots of private enterprise sprinkled along the route. "Some of those sites have since been abandoned," says Rutkow, "some have changed hands." But the site he found most fascinating on his own journey was the Chuquicamata copper mine north of Santiago, Chile. "At one time, it was one of the biggest physical holes in the world and is still one of the

major copper producers," he says.

But for Rutkow's interests, the most telling nugget of information is that the mine — a three-mile-long hole that's been dug for a century — was privatized by the Guggenheims before World War I. American private industry in a spot that history — up until now — has largely overlooked.

The Pan-American Highway was 30 years in the making after the Americas tried and failed to create the intercontinental railway system. It took five Pan-American conferences, a world war, the birth of the automobile industry in the U.S., and the knowledge of the infrastructure required to get the autos from place to place before the American highway system could begin to snake its way south. But the ride wasn't always smooth.

Even after 100 years of Pan-American relations, the road — with all the political wrangling, private enterprise, and hopes and dreams that went into it — is still incomplete. The Darién Gap — about 60 miles of territory located between Panama and Colombia that has been shrouded in mystery, danger, and now very tentative tourism for those who want credit for passing through one of the world's most dangerous areas unscathed — remains unfinished.

The Darién Gap

Between Panama and Colombia lies roughly 60 miles of territory shrouded in mystery, danger and very tentative tourism for those who want credit for passing through one of the world's most dangerous areas unscathed. As part of his research, Rutkow visited the veritable no man's land to gather live interviews with indigenous people and Panama's Security Force, among others, in order to tell the story of this still-incomplete stretch of the Pan-American Highway.



The Pan-American Highway is the end result of negotiations, policies and ideas that started with a railway in the 1800s. Today, for Rutkow, the highway is a concrete example that we were wading into, and funding, international infrastructure decades before we thought.

The terrain — and the jaguars and snakes that inhabit it — has kept the area unpaved. And the absence of cars, infrastructure, highway and trade has given way to guerillas, drugs and migrants willing to risk the journey. In all the idealism that brought the road this far, U.S.-Latin American relations now, in many ways, sit in the gap.

"It's a fabled, legendary no man's land that's bedeviled the most storied adventurers, members of the American military and legions of would-be migrants. But it doesn't put them off. Even today, tens of thousands of migrants a year risk their lives to cross it," wrote Adam Yamaguchi for CBS when he ventured to the gap to make the trek with a migrant named Shahab Shahbazi.

There are some who come to the gap in the road for adventure. And some, like Shahbazi, who come for much more: the promise of a better life in the U.S. — a country embattled in its own interior war of allowing people like Shahbazi in or keeping people like Shahbazi out.

Rutkow knows this road like no one else. He knows the lengths that the United States went to make it happen both publicly and privately. He has traveled to the Darién Gap to talk with the people who live nearby, to gather oral histories, to walk the land, and to befriend the hikers and adventurers he met along the way. The tale of the longest line on the map, he says, isn't just the tale of a road. It is the tale of every deal and policy made between the Americas, from those initial talks about a railway all the way to President Barack Obama's move to warm up diplomatic relations with Cuba and President Donald Trump's plans for the future.

It is the tale of a road, yes, but also the tale of a railway, a canal and now, perhaps, a wall.

Rutkow isn't necessarily interested in the political arguments for or against such a project. He certainly has an opinion as an American, but as a historian, it's simply another note in history — a new twist in the road of U.S.-Latin American relations.

And we will see where it takes us. ♦

BY THE NUMBERS

A look at a few facts and figures that make up the Pan-American Highway

Prudhoe Bay
Ushuaia

19,000

The estimated number of miles covered by the Pan-American Highway, which starts in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and stretches to the tip of Argentina in Ushuaia.



14

The number of countries through which the highway runs.



117

The number of days cyclist Carlos Santamaria Covarrubias logged to own the Guinness world record for "fastest cycle journey of the Pan-American Highway."

60+

The number of miles of the Pan-American Highway that remain incomplete. This dangerous section of the route is called the Darién Gap.

2

The number of U.S. entry points on the original route of the highway. Early travelers accessed the Pan-American Highway in the north through Washington and in the south through Texas.



11,322

The elevation on what is considered one of the highest points of the road in Costa Rica. This peak is called *Cerro de la Muerte* — or Summit of Death, a throwback to early crossings before the highway made travel a little more accessible.

2,426

Number of days George Meegan logged to earn the Guinness world record for traveling the road fastest on foot.

\$2,415

Cost, in gasoline, to travel the road in its entirety (assuming a \$3 per gallon cost)





After a lifetime as a competitive athlete, **Kyle Coon '13** is taking on his toughest challenge yet — to compete in the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo as a blind triathlete.

BY NICOLE DUDENHOEFER '17

At 7:30 a.m. every weekday, **Kyle Coon '13** begins his first of potentially four workouts for the day — a 4,000-meter swim. Next, he'll run or bike for 90 minutes. And then, depending on the day, he'll push through some more cardio and strength and conditioning sessions. On weekends he'll complete one workout each day, either a long run or bike ride outdoors.

He's followed the same routine without stop since January, when he became a resident at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Although the demands are high, Coon, a triathlete, knows they're necessary to accomplish his goal of qualifying for the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo.

"It's an honor and privilege to be here at a facility where some of the greatest Olympic athletes have trained," says Coon. "They only invite athletes that they think have a chance of making it to the Olympics or Paralympics, so it means a lot to me to be here."

In order to make it to the 2020 Paralympics, Coon must put forth his best efforts in as many high-profile races as possible during a yearlong qualification period, which started June 28.

Only one visually impaired man and woman who earn the highest rankings by the International Triathlon Union's standards will represent Team USA. This feat will require consistently high levels of athletic

performance, but pushing himself to the edge of his capabilities has always come naturally for Coon.

At the time of publication, Coon is ranked No. 18 in the world among ITU's visually impaired triathletes.

In the U.S., his biggest competition for making the Paralympic team is ITU's No. 2 visually impaired athlete Aaron Scheidies, an 11-time world champion who competed in the 2016

Summer Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro. In March, Coon trailed Scheidies by less than 2 minutes to earn second place in the Sarasota-Bradenton CAMTRI Paratriathlon American Championships. But Coon isn't too worried. One workout and one race at a time, he's steadily working to close the gap with Scheidies.

Although his schedule is demanding, Coon enjoys having a strict routine. Having lost his sight as a child, Coon can't be spontaneous, not even for something as routine as a trip to a coffee shop or grocery store. For the most part, he knows what he'll be doing for the next 24 hours. Life has demanded he develop a keen sense of foresight.



PHOTOS BY JONATHAN CHAVES

“There are a lot of people out there who still aren’t aware of the capabilities of people who are blind and visually impaired.”



At 10 months old, Coon was diagnosed with bilateral sporadic retinoblastoma, the most common form of eye cancer for children.

“We would spend weeks in the hospital for chemotherapy sessions. At one point Kyle had 16 tumors in one eye and 10 in another,” says Steve Coon, Kyle’s father. “For my wife and I, those were some of the darkest days of our lives.”

By the time he turned 7, both of his eyes had been surgically removed. Coon was an active child who remembers riding his bike, rollerblading and playing basketball. When his eyes were removed, he wondered if he would be able to resume his usual activities and how he would simply function in everyday life.

But shortly after, Coon’s father introduced him to Erik Weihenmayer, a blind extreme athlete who lists downhill skiing, skydiving and being the first blind person to summit Mount Everest among his accomplishments. It was the first time Coon met an adult who was blind, providing him an idea of what was possible for his own life. Weihenmayer encouraged Coon to envision life without limits and suggested he try rock climbing.

Coon’s parents encouraged his desire to reach new heights. At 14, he participated in a group trip sponsored by Weihenmayer’s nonprofit, No Barriers, which hiked the 26-mile Inca Trail to the top of Machu Picchu.

The next year he joined No Barriers again, this time to summit 19,341 feet to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa.

“What I respect most of all about [Kyle] is his ability to set goals, achieve them and set new ones so he never gets comfortable,” Steve says.

Coon’s parents always encouraged him and his sisters to be active and enjoy the outdoors. Before he lost his sight, his family took a trip to a dude ranch in Montana. During that time, he developed some of his most vivid visual memories, taking in leaves changing colors with the season and the sight of snow-capped mountains



for the first time. Over the years, Coon has returned to mountains for family hiking and camping trips.

“Growing up in an athletic family made me who I am today,” Coon says. “My sisters and I were all super competitive with each other, so we loved finding out who was the best climber amongst us.”



In 2010, Coon started on a new journey as a first-year student studying communications at UCF. He dedicated himself to wrestling and worked as a group exercise instructor at the Recreation and Wellness Center before completing his degree only three years later. Despite his involvement and being a strong writer, he struggled to find a job after graduation. Within a year, he interviewed for more than 30 jobs without a single offer because he says employers questioned his abilities.

Frustrated, he took up running and searched for a guide through the C Different organization, which pairs blind athletes with guides in their area.

“As an adult totally blind person I definitely think I do have a bit of a chip on my shoulder just because there are a lot of people out there who still aren’t aware of the capabilities of people who are blind and visually impaired,” says Coon, who keeps his communication skills sharp as a motivational speaker and by writing for his blog. “It’s a lot harder for someone like me to find a full-time job in an office environment than to do an Ironman Triathlon.”

In the summer of 2014, he was paired with guide Mike Melton, an emergency room doctor. At the time, Melton was preparing for the Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii, one of the most difficult one-day sporting events in the world, which challenges participants to swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles and run a marathon without any breaks in under 17 hours. With race day three months away, he invited Coon to join him on his runs. Tethered together using a 2.5-foot rope and with Melton calling out objects to avoid, they began finding their rhythm. After they completed a few half and full marathons together, Coon progressed so much that Melton suggested he try triathlons himself. He was shaping up to be a fairly good runner, and he had ridden tandem bikes with his father since he was a kid. The real challenge would be learning to swim.



Coon learned to swim in a 25-yard lap pool using lane guides to stay on track. During his first session, he couldn’t even make it to the end. It would take a few months before he could swim 1,000 yards without stopping. Eventually though, Coon developed enough skill to complete his first half and full Ironman races with Melton in 2016. Since then, he’s gone on to complete 18 triathlons. And in 2018, he set the record for the first blind person to complete an Ironman in under 11 hours — more than 90 minutes faster than the average time it takes a sighted competitor to complete the race.

But in order to reach his goals, Coon knows he has to perform even

better. He’s constantly working toward becoming a stronger swimmer. Completing fast swim times during lengthy practices is difficult, but race day swims will always be more challenging since they’re in open water. Tethered by a bungee cord wrapped around their thighs, Coon and his guide must work together to beat the clock and their competitors. Using cues such as shoulder taps and rib pokes, the duo must be great at communicating nonverbally with one another, something Coon has achieved with his current guide, Zack Goodman.

Coon and Goodman met in January 2018 at Camp No Sight No Limits, a high-performance training experience for athletes who are blind. The camp is based in San Diego, where Goodman is a doctoral student. Shortly before October 2018, Coon was planning to race the Sarasota-Bradenton Paratriathlon World Cup, but none of his usual guides could make it. Although he hadn’t worked with Goodman before, they had become friends and Coon decided to ask him to pair up.

With only a few days before the race to train together, Goodman and Coon took second, with the fastest time on the bike and one of the fastest runs of the day.

During their third and most recent race together, Coon was the only American to medal, earning bronze, at the Milan race for the World Paratriathlon Series. The accomplishment was surprising considering he was the lowest-ranked athlete in the race. He completed his fastest 5K, swim and the second-fastest bike session of the race, falling just 57 seconds short of silver medalist and ITU’s No. 1 visually impaired triathlete, Dave Ellis from Great Britain.



With Coon living in Colorado and Goodman in California, they don’t get a lot of time to train together, which is typical for blind athletes and their guides — some partners don’t get together until race day. But Coon and his guide speak frequently and keep tabs on each other’s progress through performance tracking apps. The standards Coon has for himself are pretty high, but he says he expects even more from his guide. They’ve got to be able to do more than keep up the pace to properly guide.

“One of the biggest challenges is finding someone who is significantly stronger than you. My rule of thumb is on my guide’s worst day, they need to be 10 percent faster than me on my best day,” Coon says.

Goodman is striving to meet Coon’s standards and plans to continue guiding him through the qualifying races during the next year. He even spent a couple weeks working with his partner at

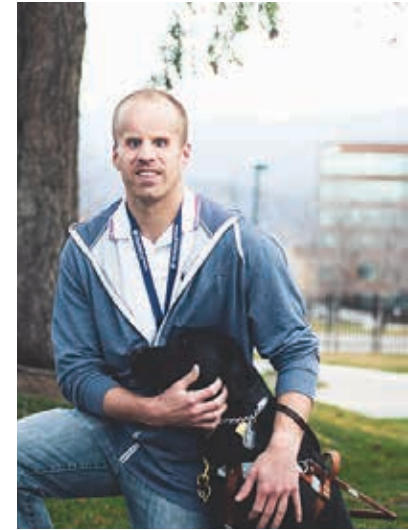
the training center. However, he recognizes there’s a possibility that Coon might eventually outpace him.

“I’ve never seen someone push themselves quite like Kyle pushes himself. I think that’s why it’s so much fun working with him,” Goodman says. “He’s done all these amazing feats that most sighted people probably can only dream of accomplishing in a lifetime.”

Coon’s Olympic Training Center coach Derick Williamson says it’s been incredible to witness his progress. Early on, Coon’s biggest mistake was pacing. Coon had a tendency to start out too hard on each run, bike and swim, leaving him burned out before he could complete his workouts.

“Just a couple months into training and I’ve already seen big improvements across the board. He’s a really talented runner. I don’t think he’s even come close to what he’s capable of,” Williamson says. “He’s learned to listen to his body, breathing and stride to know how to much more effectively push through the entire session.”

For now, Coon’s own sense of motivation and dedication is stronger



than ever as he continues to step up his training and compete against the toughest opponents he’s ever had to face in increasingly high-profile races. With each workout and race completed, he’s focused on 2020. But if he doesn’t make it, he’ll push himself harder to make it to the 2024 Paralympic race.

“Some people say I just like to suffer, and they’re probably not too far from the truth,” Coon says. “I just love a challenge. I love pushing my mind and body to find the edge of my ability. I like seeing how much further I can push beyond my limits to improve.” ♦



AlumKnights

Adventures IN Ice Cream



As head of research and development for Van Leeuwen Artisan Ice Cream, Ellie Zitsman '07 draws inspiration from her adventures to create new flavors.

BY LAYLA FERRIS '18



Ellie Zitsman '07 never expected to travel the world or land a job dreaming up one-of-a-kind ice cream flavors.

After earning her bachelor's degree in liberal studies (now called interdisciplinary studies), she packed up and worked in London for six months before catching "the travel bug."

During the next two years, she immersed herself in the cultures of 52 countries — including Norway, Croatia, South Korea and Laos.

"I would come home to St. Augustine and work in restaurants as a server and bartender, and then go back to traveling," Zitsman says. "When I was traveling, I was eating really great food and taking cooking classes in Thailand and Mexico."

Those food-inspired journeys abroad ignited a passion for cooking, which she applied at the Natural Gourmet Institute, a culinary school in New York City.

After several years of working long hours in fine-dining kitchens, Zitsman found stability in her next career stop: as a baker at Van Leeuwen Artisan Ice Cream in New York City. She helped make "inclusions," which are cake bits, cookie pieces or anything else added into the ice cream.

In December 2017, she pitched an idea to create a new position at Van Leeuwen to help concoct new flavors and handle product development logistics.

"I wanted to spend more time researching food trends, planning our menus and testing recipes before releasing new flavors," Zitsman says. "Seasonal flavors and new additions to our core menu are what continue to keep us relevant, and I didn't want that aspect to fall through the cracks."

The company took a chance, and Zitsman has been head of research and development ever since.

What is a typical day on the job like?

"I'm technically a department of one. I would say 70 percent of my time is in the office in Brooklyn. A lot of my job is sourcing quality ingredients and doing a lot of work on the supply chain side, and then I'm also writing recipes. I create the seasonal menus of four new flavors that switch out about every six weeks."

What do you consider when making new flavors?

"It's really a combination of what's trending in the dessert world, what's available seasonally as far as foods go, things I've seen that excite me and what's popular on social media. I tend to follow my instincts to create trends. I'm currently working on releasing a dairy- and nut-free oat milk line, making oat milk from organic oats in house."

What's your favorite flavor you've created?

"Vegan passion fruit, which was specially created for our 10th anniversary in the summer of 2018. It was really beautiful because we used natural food dye from beet juice and purple carrot extract. It was a yellow ice cream with pink and purple cake bits, and the look of it was based off the color and design of Van Leeuwen's first ice cream truck."

What projects do research and development work on?

"One of my big missions last year was to get our Los Angeles locations on the same schedule as Brooklyn and sync up the releases of new flavors. Right now, we have 16 stores in NYC and LA, and we're adding six more. Our wholesale pints are in some Whole Foods, so hopefully we're going national with that this year."

How did your travels shape who you are professionally?

"I use a lot of my culinary interests from around the world for flavor creations. Traveling really gave me the background and confidence to do a position like this. I think that was a big part of getting this job."

What do you see in your future?

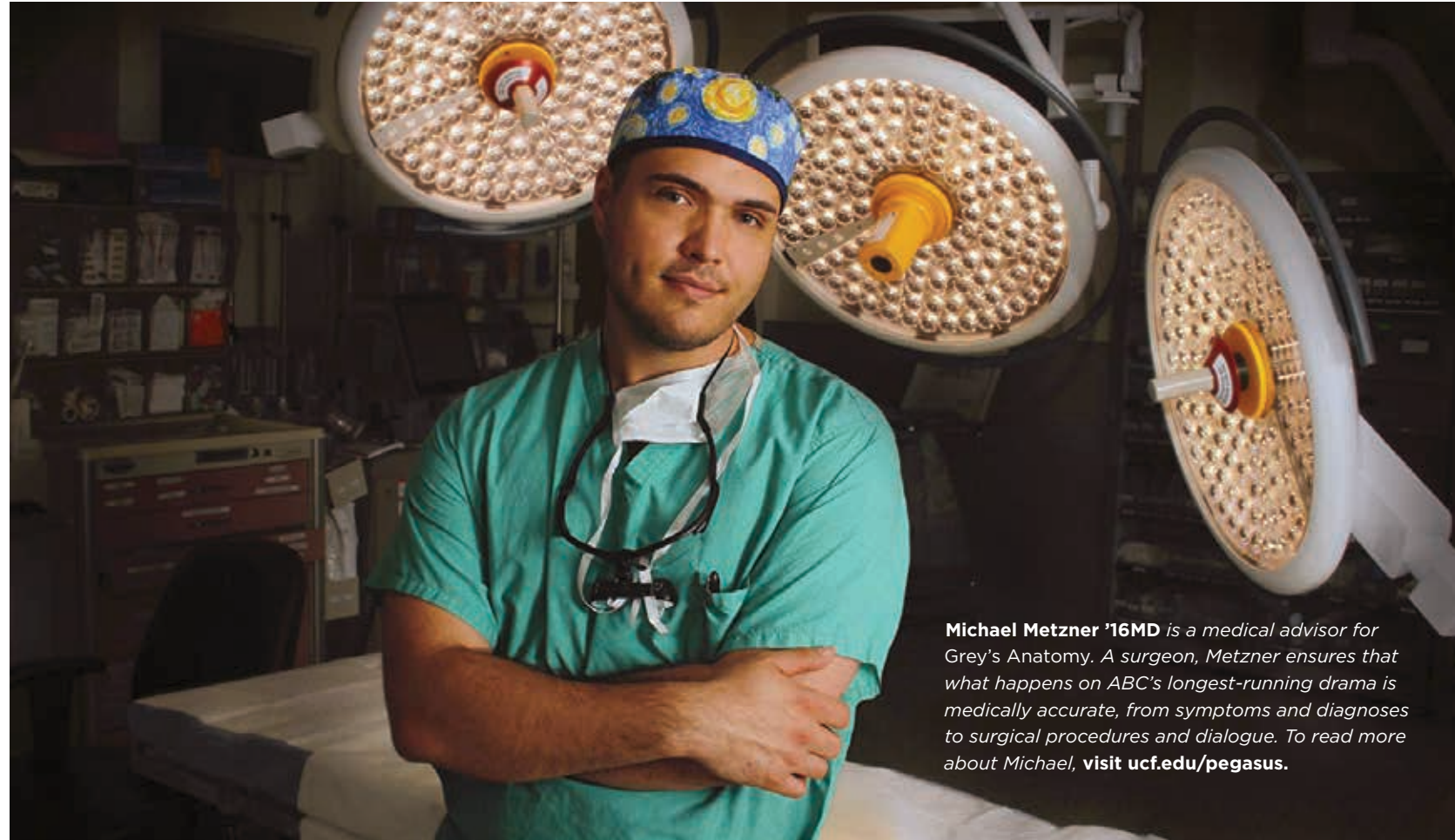
"In the long run, I want to definitely be involved in sharing my knowledge and finding some way to teach and pass along the things that I've learned. Maybe one day I'll have some kind of teaching kitchen."



INTRIGUING PAST AND FUTURE ICE CREAM FLAVORS:

- Hot Brooklyn Summer was made in collaboration with Mike's Hot Honey; it featured house-made local mulberry jam and pieces of corn cake with a spicy caramel swirl.
- Popular vegan flavors: Vegan Cookies & Cream, Vegan Strawberry Jam Cookie Crumble and Vegan Honeycomb, which is made with organic rice syrup and no honey at all.
- Vegan Couch Potato was created in collaboration with Plant People, a CBD/hemp product company in New York City. The cannabidiol treat features potato chip-infused sweet cream with chocolate-covered pretzels, marshmallows and caramel roasted peanuts.
- Flavors that Zitsman is working on now: Brooklyn Brown Sugar Chunk, which is brown sugar ice cream with brownies, cookie dough and candied walnuts; and Vegan Green Planet, a matcha tea ice cream with spirulina almond cake pieces that make it look like a planet.





Michael Metzner '16MD is a medical advisor for *Grey's Anatomy*. A surgeon, Metzner ensures that what happens on ABC's longest-running drama is medically accurate, from symptoms and diagnoses to surgical procedures and dialogue. To read more about Michael, visit ucf.edu/pegasus.

1971

Rich Nutter was selected as the Maine State Coach of the Year for girls' tennis for 2018.

1973

Art Meyers retired after 30 years as an industrial microbiologist at Eastman Chemical Company in Kingsport, TN, and is currently an adjunct professor at the University of Tennessee Center for Environmental Biotechnology in Knoxville.

1975

Jerry LaMaster retired after a 27-year career in governmental finance.

Steven Lee retired from IBM after a 40-year career in electronics, information technology, engineering and senior management.

1981

Ed Worley retired after 40 years working in governmental, public and congressional affairs, including 31 years with the U.S. Air Force.

1985

Zach Holladay was promoted to distribution assistant general manager of Synnex.

1986

William Donovan retired as an Orange County Public Schools teacher and behavior specialist after 27 years.

Caroline Shine earned a doctor of ministry from Emory University in Atlanta.

1987

Paula (Napolitano) Stevens is starting her 33rd year as a high school English teacher in East Haddam, CT.

1988

Mark Stevens is a mechanical design chief at Pratt & Whitney in Middletown, CT.

1989

Dawn Pantke opened Cameo Classic Candles in Sorrento, FL.

1990

Yvonne (Dujat) Roberts was promoted to chief donor relations officer for Whistlestop, an organization that promotes the independence of older adults and people with disabilities.

Jim Metevier '92MBA was named president and chief operating officer of Mountain Mike's Pizza, based in Newport Beach, CA.

1992

Robert Burke was promoted to vice chief of naval operations. A nuclear submariner turned vice admiral, he previously served as the Navy's 58th chief of naval personnel.

1993

Douglas Anderson was named president of Sempermed, which manufactures latex, vinyl and nitrile gloves.

David Cooke is a senior project manager at Dewberry, a professional services firm.

Sherry (Priester) Paramore is the president of Elevate Orlando, a nonprofit that provides underserved youth with in-school instruction, 24/7 mentoring and postsecondary preparation.

1996

Jeremy Wolcott is a civil engineer for the Florida Department of Transportation.

1997

Imar DaCunha competed on *Jeopardy!* on May 1.

1998

Gregory Kuzma, a colonel in the U.S. Air Force, is the future plans director at the headquarters of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for nearly three years of exemplary service as deputy inspector general.

Jayne Lammers '05MEd won a Fulbright Scholar award to study digital literacy practices in Indonesia. She is an associate professor of teaching and curriculum at the University of Rochester in New York.

2001

Dennis Sprengle was named vice president of human resources and administration for Inter Miami, a Major League Soccer team which begins play in 2020.

2002

James Proce was appointed city manager of Anna, TX.

2003

Chris Baeten was named a CEO Business Leader of the Year by *The Orlando Business Journal*. He is CEO of Knight Federal Solutions.

Jordan Rodriguez '06MA '13EdD was named principal of Seminole High School in Sanford, FL.

Jennifer (Vu) Morrill '08MBA is vice president of senior portfolio and company operations for Elevation Financial Group.

2004

Marcus Fernandez was named a Lightning Community Hero by the Tampa Bay Lightning. He was honored for his tireless commitment to local children's charities, especially his work with Make-A-Wish — Southern Florida.

2005

Freddy Arafet is the founder and CEO of MAATS, a cloud-based property maintenance application created for the hospitality industry.

Ashley (Dillman) Bruce was promoted to of counsel for Berger Singerman, a business law firm.

Joseph English is a showing specialist for The Miller Realty Group of Keller Williams.

Laurel Norman is the director of events and sponsorships at the Orlando Regional Realtor Association.

2008

Bryan Arnette '11MPA is the assistant healthcare system director of the VA Long Beach Healthcare System.

Jessica Wasserman earned an MBA from New York University. She is a management consultant with Accenture.

2009

Rafael Padron is the chief financial officer for Orchid Medical.

Amy (Robinson) Earl was named Riverview High School Teacher of the Year in Sarasota, FL. She was also nominated for the Congressional Teacher Award.

Amanda Wansa Morgan was awarded a 2018 Suzi Bass Award (recognizing Atlanta professional theater) for Outstanding Music Direction for *The Color Purple*.

2010

Isaiah Chavez has been promoted to a broadcast engineer at the Home Shopping Network.

Alycia (Christodoulou) Williams is a freelance TV producer and editor working on *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*.

Mara Gordon is the digital public relations specialist for BoardroomPR.

Michelle Gorka summited Mount Kilimanjaro on February 9, 2019.

Chad Mills is a reporter at WDRB.

Tim O'Reilly '14MBA is the chief financial officer for DelAir.

2011

Raphael Andrade is a certified financial planner with Fidelity Investments in Coral Gables, FL.

Ashley Baker was elected president of Central Florida Urban League Young Professionals.

Jacqueline (O'Brien) Le is a senior marketing specialist at Eddy Alexander in Roanoke, VA. Her team won 13 awards for superior marketing achievements in 2018.

2012

Lee Melvin is a systems administration engineer for General Electric in Atlanta.

Brandon Reeves is a principal for Lux Capital.

2013

Kenneth Berrios launched Trupoint Tax Service, an app that allows certified tax professionals to complete tax returns.

Christopher Garcia was named to Morgan Stanley's Pacesetter's Club, a global recognition program for financial advisors.

2014

Jerusha Cavaos is part of the original ensemble of Broadway's *The Prom*, a musical nominated for seven Tony Awards.

Teresa Falcone is a fix animator at Pixar and most recently worked on *Toy Story 4*.

Brittany O'Neill received an ATG Media Up & Comer Award.

2015

Dylan Borchert is a technical account manager at Yardi Systems.

Christie (Briscoe) McLeod is a co-owner and the director of marketing for The Inquisitor Wine.

Jennifer (Morgan) Stroud is a board-certified pediatrician at Orlando Health Physician Associates.

2018

Russell Ramsey is a substitute teacher for Orange County Public Schools.

LaSandra Robinson is a teacher at the Sunshine House Early Learning Academy.

Evan Rosato earned a Fulbright award to research sustainable printmaking techniques at the Academy for Visual Arts in Belgium.

Joseph Sleppy recently won \$26,000 in competition prizes for his startup Capacitech Energy.

Amari Smith is a patient access specialist at AdventHealth Winter Garden.

Lexus Smith Hale is a customer service agent for PNC Bank.

2019

Alexis Jahncke earned a Fulbright award to teach English in Montenegro.

Haley Lehw earned a Fulbright award to teach English in South Korea.

Noa Tann earned a Fulbright award to teach English in Brazil.

In Memoriam

Charles Moran '73 died on December 2, 2018.

Adrienne Brown '19EdD died on April 7, 2019.

John Bersia '77 died on March 21, 2019. He served as director of UCF Global Perspectives and was the

executive producer and host of a weekly WUCF TV show by the same name. Prior to joining UCF in 2001, Bersia won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for his work at the *Orlando Sentinel*.

Robert Porter '81 '10PhD died on March 21, 2019. Porter joined UCF in 2006 and later became director of the Executive Development Center. In December, he was named the president

and CEO of the Florida Virtual School.

Maribel "Mari" Ortiz-Pina '19EdD died on January 8, 2019. Since 2005, Ortiz-Pina helped students at UCF through various roles, including as director of academic support services.

Anthony Major died May 30, 2019. The recently retired film professor joined UCF in 1995. As

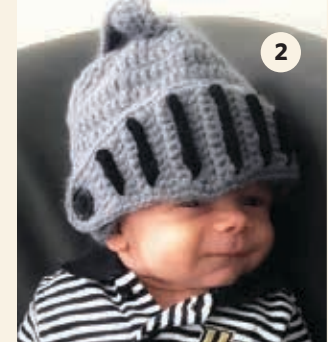
an actor, producer, director and documentary filmmaker, he spent more than four decades creating films.

Professor Emeritus **James Wright** died April 29, 2019. Wright joined UCF in 2001 as a sociology professor and was recognized as a Pegasus Professor and a Provost Distinguished Research Professor for his work to help understand poverty and homelessness.

Weddings & Births



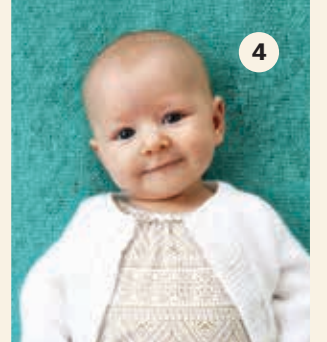
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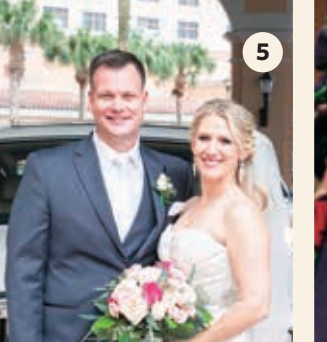
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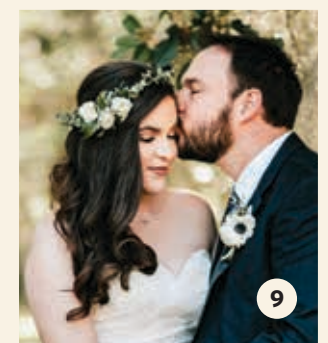
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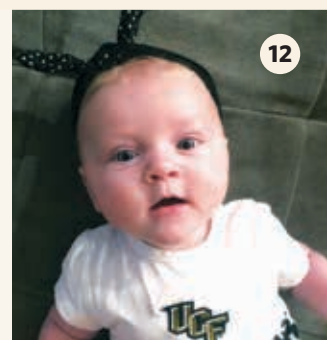
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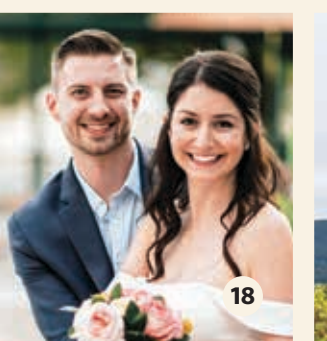
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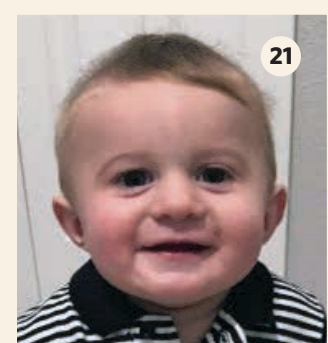
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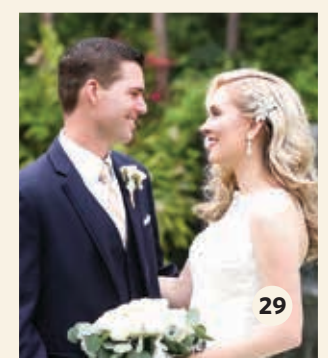
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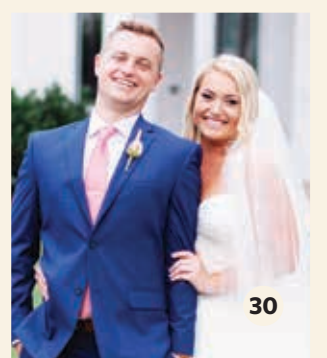
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31

Elizabeth Reid '92 married Edward Koch on July 21, 2018.

1 Alaina (Haddad) '02 and **Harold Kennedy '99** welcomed Everett on October 14, 2018.

2 Josh Mustachi '02 and wife Courtney welcomed Mason David on October 8, 2018.

3 Elizabeth (Baranik) '04 and **Luis Pardillo '04** welcomed Dominic Alexander on September 25, 2018.

4 Bonnie Ebner '04 '08MFA and husband David Brown welcomed Mia Liliana on September 7, 2018.

5 Julie Perkowski '04 '12MA married Kern Jennison on February 9, 2019.

6 Crystal (Garvis) '05 '06MS and **Jared Knight '05** welcomed Josephine Quinn on June 21, 2018.

7 Allison (Herzlich) Arce '05 and husband David welcomed Logan on October 20, 2018.

8 Joanne Wood '05 married **Joshua Bradley '03 '05MS '13MBA** on April 16, 2018.

9 Megan Crisp '06 married Michael Nichols on March 24, 2018.

10 Jennifer (Raposo) Quinn '06 and husband Matthew welcomed Cian Thomas on May 12, 2018.

11 Danielle (Rotolo) Caci '06 and husband Billy welcomed Nina Nicole on February 7, 2018.

12 Ciarra (Luster) '07 and **Robb Johnson '08** welcomed Sloane Luster on November 13, 2018.

13 Jessica Tojo '07 '11MA married **John Raible '05 '07MA** on January 6, 2019.

14 Jennifer Clifford '08 married Eric Pedersen on July 21, 2018.

15 Ashley (George) '08 and **Stephen Shea '09** welcomed Samuel Stephen on November 26, 2018.

16 Pattie (Maxwell) '08 and **Andrew Hall '03** welcomed Piper Charlie on February 8, 2019.

17 Cristina Simone '08 married Michael Cimmino on March 22, 2019.

18 Jessica Leibowitz '09 married **Derek Conn '09** on November 23, 2018.

Brandi Lewis '09 married Frederic Toland on January 12, 2019.

19 Jessie McGuire '09 '11MS married **Matthew Cohen '09** on October 14, 2018.

20 Natalie (Kasper) '10 and **Charles Maniatis Jr. '04** welcomed Elaina Marina on March 20, 2019.

21 Brittany (Moore) Pinkerton '10 and husband Jeremy welcomed Carter Joseph on February 16, 2018.

22 Victoria Root '10 married **Steve Ceballos '16** on January 24, 2019.

23 Erika (Handler) Bugaj '11 '13Med and husband Patrick welcomed Liam Grayson on December 12, 2018.

24 Bobby Nicolosi '11 married Kaitlyn on February 17, 2019.

25 Julio Amado '12 and wife Courtney welcomed Julian James on November 8, 2018.

26 Stephanie (Carbone) '12MS '16PhD and **Steven Bolyard '08 '12MS '16MS** welcomed Emma Anastasia on August 30, 2018.

27 Lindsay (Howley) '12 '14MA and **Richard Wellbrock '12** welcomed Reagan Elizabeth on January 22, 2019.

28 Allison Perry '12 '18Med married **Andrew Rosenzweig '11** on March 1, 2019.

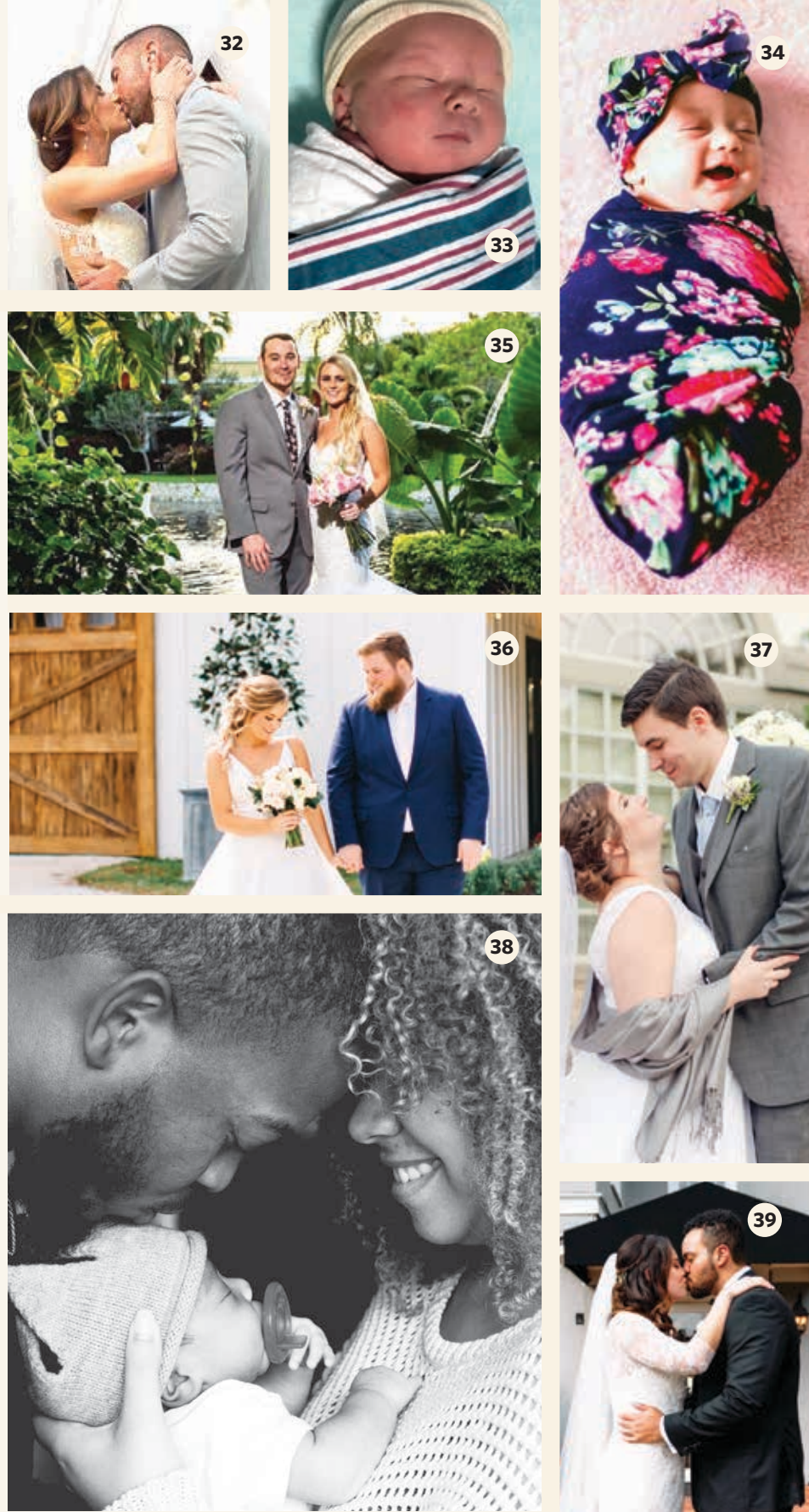
29 Kathleen Sakowicz '12 '18MBA married Michael Howley on May 26, 2018.

30 Kimberly Merrow '13 '17Med married Zac Chichinski on September 1, 2018.

31 Andrea (Zollman) '14 '18MA and **Bryan Simkanich '11 '12MS** welcomed twins Katie and Jason on February 15, 2019.

Weddings & Births

- 32** Jessica Fernandez '15 married Phillip Williamson Jr. '15 on March 9, 2019.
- 33** Jennifer (Morgan) Stroud '15 and husband Jonathan welcomed Jacob on September 29, 2018.
- 34** Lauren (Parslow) Page '15 and husband Benjamin welcomed Charlotte Grace on January 20, 2019.
- 35** Corei Pratt '15 married Logan Stealey '15 on December 15, 2018.
- 36** Katelyn Cowart '16 married Connor Kelley '15 on January 26, 2019.
- 37** Jill Misura '16 married Justin Clavet '16 on October 13, 2018.
- 38** Yohanna (Reis) Law '16MA and husband Gerald welcomed Gerald Micah III on January 30, 2019.
- 39** Victoria Weiss '16 married Eric Delgado '16 on February 17, 2019.



30 UNDER 30



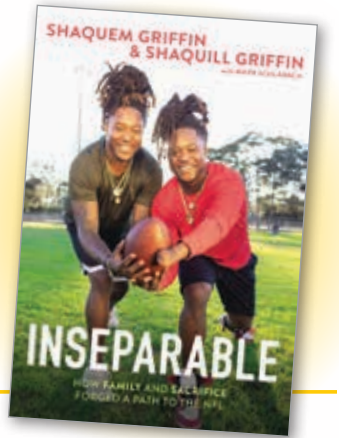
As a clinician, educator and advocate, Shainna Ali '10 '12MA '16PhD guides others in bettering their mental health, while raising awareness on the topic globally. "In many ways it feels like I'm contributing to something bigger that helps people," Ali says.

UCF's annual 30 Under 30 program recognizes alumni age 30 or younger who have made a significant impact in their profession or their community. We congratulate the 2019 award recipients.

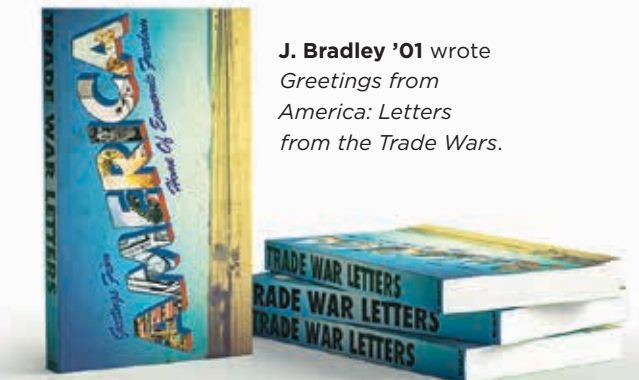
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Shainna Ali '10 '12MA '16PhD
Mental health clinician, educator and advocate | Dominic Piscitello '12
Senior attorney, Florida's 4th Judicial Circuit | Fawn Goldstein '14 '17MA
Counselor, Innovation Middle School |
| Ashley Rogan '10
Athletics director and civics teacher, River City Science Academy | Alyssa Tanaka '12 '13MS '15PhD
Research scientist, SoarTech | Abby Jaros '14
Actor |
| Tyler Egbert '11
Assistant state attorney, Florida's 12th Judicial Circuit | Kacie Escobar '13
Communications strategist, Curley & Pynn | Trevor Persaud '14
Physician |
| Jean Pierre Gilbert '11
Assistant public defender, Florida's 18th Judicial Circuit | Danielle Gelfand '13
Associate scientist, Janssen | Danielle Price '14
Training specialist, Florida Department of Agriculture, and Realtor, Keller Williams Realty |
| Darius Lana '11
Associate director of marketing strategy, Pearson | Meyonka Gray '13
Systems engineer, Northrop Grumman | Nicholas Simons '14
Attorney advisor, U.S. Small Business Administration |
| Jonathon Little '11
Media relations director, Lee Health | Jamie Gregor '13
Global marketing capabilities manager, UPS | Alvaro Velasquez '14 '16MS '18PhD
Research scientist, Air Force Research Laboratory |
| Chelsea Ball '12
Director of logistics, The Ability Experience | Ali Kurnaz '13
Creative director, Florida Democratic Party | Victoria Claypoole '15MS '18PhD
Postdoctoral research fellow, United States Air Force Research Laboratory |
| Andrea Bejarano '12
Project manager, ESPN | Valerie Moses '13 '18MBA
Senior relationship manager, Addition Financial Credit Union | Jenny Nguyen '16PhD
Co-owner, Vega Nguyen Research |
| Chris Garcia '12 '13MBA
Private client associate, Bank of America Private Bank | Kate Champnella '14
Associate director of student life, Midlands Technical College | Amanda Leyva '18
NICU registered nurse |
| Selina Mullenax '12
Account executive, Exhilarate Events & Marketing | Sarah Gates '14
Assistant director of game management, University of South California | Lee Perry '18
Chief operations officer, Ideas For Us |

ALUMNI AUTHORS

Shaquem Griffin '16 and **Shaquill Griffin '16** co-wrote *Inseparable: How Family and Sacrifice Forged a Path to the NFL.*



Anh Nguyen Phillips '94 co-authored *The Technology Fallacy: How People Are the Real Key to Digital Transformation.*



Mike Chase '07 wrote *How to Become a Federal Criminal: an Illustrated Handbook for the Aspiring Offender*, which satirizes lesser-known federal crimes.

Horacio Ruiz '07MBA '08MS wrote *The White Knight: Calvin Patterson and the Integration of Florida State University Football.*

Amanda Wansa Morgan '09 wrote a chapter for *So You Want to Sing Music by Women: A Guide for Performers.*

Gladys Jose '12 illustrated *Fresh Princess*, a children's book written by *New York Times*-bestselling author Denene Millner and inspired by *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.*



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Why I Embrace Adventure

BY GENE KRUCKEMYER '73

Adventure is often just around the corner.

When I was a kid growing up in Orlando, I'd explore with friends on what we called the Penny Bike Ride. We'd pedal to a corner, flip a penny and ride whichever way the coin directed: Heads, go left; tails, go right.

Some trips would unceremoniously end up right back on our street after circling the block. Other times our adventure would take us miles away into the unknown as we pedaled not sure where our expedition was heading or what we'd see. Abraham Lincoln was our guide — at least until it was time to head home for dinner.

I think these early explorations set the pattern for me to later embrace the draw of adventures when I wasn't sure where I'd end up or what would happen, such as canoeing through the sweltering Everglades, camping in the freezing Yukon Territory, backpacking through desert and mountain wildernesses, spending the night in an abandoned California mining ghost town, hiking sections of the Appalachian Trail, and being pulled into many other grand and eye-opening adventures.

Heading out on an adventure is not something to be *pushed* into. Nobody likes being pushed. It's more about being *pulled* into it. To me, that curious pull of anticipation is a strong draw to discover the unknown.

Going on an adventure is not only about finding out something about the world, but more importantly, it's about finding out something about yourself. While doing something that is out of the ordinary for you, you discover what you can face, endure, accomplish and overcome. Adventures teach us to see the world in a new light and may show us how resourceful or strong we are — or maybe aren't. You might find some answers, but they may not be the answers you're looking for.

Half the adventure is getting there.

I once went on a vacation road trip with my wife, Nancy, with no destination in mind — just the plan to drive until we decided to stop. In this case, that happened to be about 700 miles away in Appomattox, Virginia, near the site of a key Civil War battle and where generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant signed the paperwork to end that war. We stayed in the area a few days to explore the history, then headed out again to our next unknown destination stop — which turned out to be Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

We stopped because we didn't want to drive into the Atlantic Ocean.

Our destination wasn't the ultimate goal; our journey was.

I have no desire to parachute out of a plane, jump off a bridge tethered to a bungee cord, or eat chocolate-covered grasshoppers. And on the scale of things, some of the adventures I embark on pale in comparison to what some other people may approach.

Not everyone's definition of adventure is the same, but everyone should at least have that next adventure to look forward to — and it doesn't have to be expensive, distant or dangerous. Sometimes it is just taking the time to understand where you are. It has been said that if you don't know where you are, you don't know who you are.

Even little Opie Taylor, son of Sheriff Taylor on *The Andy Griffith Show*, saw the allure of adventure. When he was nearly displaced from his bedroom by a visitor coming to Mayberry, he looked forward to sleeping on the family's ironing board propped between two chairs. He called it "adventure sleeping."

Opie had the right attitude. He took something simple — even mundane — and turned it into his own personal and exciting adventure.

I — we — need to interact with the world to understand it. That's why I still like to set out on adventures large and small, such as exploring Boston, Philadelphia, Portland, the Florida Panhandle and Charleston, South Carolina, in the past few years. But I also embrace the adventures of make-believe in a backyard treehouse with my imaginative grandson, finding shells and interesting driftwood along the beach, and discovering that some of the best things are the simple things.

Even writing this turned into an adventure — when I started, I didn't know where it would take me or how it would end. And that is what adventure is all about. ♦

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Gene Kruckemyer '73 took the adventure of enrolling at the new and uncharted Florida Technological University in 1969 — long before it was known as UCF. After a newspaper career, he now serves as the university's news editor.



ILLUSTRATION BY TIM BOWER



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OUR NEXT GREAT ADVENTURE

Beginning this fall, UCF students will have the opportunity to live, learn and work in downtown Orlando in close proximity to internships and field-related work. Our 15-acre campus in Orlando's Creative Village will become the home base for digital media, communication, public service and healthcare technology degree programs. Classes begin August 26. ucf.edu/downtown