TREASURE COAST
PROGRESS & INNOVATION

SPECIAL FEATURES: FAU'S HARBOR BRANCH • INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE • TREASURE COAST HOSPICE

ATLANTIC
Smart Technologies
EF20000372

INSIDE:

**TRANSFORMING THE TREASURE COAST
INTO THE RESEARCH COAST**

**PRE-SCHOOL TO POST-GRAD
LOCAL EDUCATION OPTIONS ABUNDANT, DIVERSE**

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES COUNCILS
IMPACT OUR PRESENT AND OUR FUTURE**

OPPORTUNITY
from 17

ogy in marine systems, aquaculture and the fundamentals of physical and chemical oceanography.

Dr. Dennis Hanisak, FAU's research professor and director of education at Harbor Branch, said this program has been available since 2001, before Harbor Branch's affiliation with FAU. "Almost all of the students are from FAU and are on the marine biology track.

In addition, Harbor Branch partners with St. Lucie County School Board at Westwood High School in Fort Pierce for its Oceanographic Academy. Harbor Branch educators teach a portion of those classes.

"The students get all their course work here, and their other activities, such as band, at Westwood," Dr. Hanisak said.

In addition to high school and undergraduate college courses, Harbor Branch also offers graduate-level courses, both on campus and via distance learning. Students work on advanced degrees in environmental sciences, biology, marine biology or on a doctorate in integrative biology at Harbor Branch. (See related story on Priscilla Winder, Ph.D.)

University of Florida

The University of Florida also has a presence on the Treasure Coast. UF's Indian River Research and Education Center (IRREC) is one of 13 Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Centers (IFAS) throughout the state which offers students the opportunity to pursue educational resources away from UF's Gainesville campus. Live labs combine with online lecture classes. There are two teaching gardens for horticultural students, teaching labs that support classes in horticulture, soil and water science, entomology and nematology as well as microbiology.

There are bachelor's degree programs at IRREC in a variety of specialties, including microbiology and cell science, environmental management and plant management. Master's degree programs include environmental horticulture agricultural education and community and entomology. The IFAS extension programs offers information to both those involved in the agricultural industry and to family gardeners. Continuing research helps those on the Treasure Coast learn of the best management practices to protect the unique environment of the area.

Florida State University

Florida State University also has a Treasure Coast program. The university's medical school offers clinical training to third- and fourth-year medical students at a regional medical school campus located at IRSC in Fort Pierce. Clerkship directors from the Treasure Coast direct the students' rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, surgery, obstetrics-gynecology, psychiatry, geriatrics and emergency medicine. (See related story on Dr. William Hood.)

Private schools

In addition to public schools, colleges and universities, the Treasure Coast is home to a number of private schools at all levels — Montessori schools, many schools run by religious organizations, preparatory schools such as the Pine School in Stuart and Hobe Sound and St. Edwards in Vero Beach, private universities and colleges such as Keiser University in Port St. Lucie and Virginia College in Fort Pierce.

HOBIE HILER

Local physician and Florida State University College of Medicine's William Hood, M.D., left, socializes with third-year Florida State University medical student Shlermine Aupont during a meet-and-greet for faculty and students at Florida State University's College of Medicine on Indian River State College's campus in Fort Pierce.

Bringing it home

Educated in Florida schools, Dr. Bill Hood now practices and teaches medicine in his hometown

By Kit Bradshaw
For Progress & Innovation

Dr. William Hood lets nothing get in his way when he has a passion and a goal.

Not the loss of a leg at age 13.

Not changes in his career goals — from serving on a Navy nuclear sub to working as a pharmacist to, ultimately, becoming a doctor of internal medicine.

Not coming from a hardworking agricultural family with limited means.

This 59-year-old doctor from Fort Pierce says the tractor accident that took his right leg in his teens changed his perspective on life.

"Goal setting was a primary issue. My perspective is that life deals you a hand of cards and how you play the cards makes all the difference. You need to push your limitations, and that is the perspective I have," Hood said.

After the agricultural accident Hood sustained while working for his family, he was in the hospital for a year, attended Indian River Academy, and then went back to public school in Fort Pierce. "I didn't want to be burdensome so I went back to the grove again and learned how to drive the tractor with one leg." He wore a prosthesis when he went to high school and while attending Indian River Community College (IRCC, now Indian River State College), the University of Florida (UF) and medical school at UF.

Going from 'there'

"Before I lost the leg the only thing I wanted to do was to be on a Navy nuclear submarine. When I lost the leg, it wasn't going to happen," the doctor said. "Dad said you have to do the thing you like to do and go from there. I liked chemistry quite a bit, but I couldn't see myself as a researcher. When I came across information on the pharmacy school at the University of Florida, it used chemistry but it was a practical application. I got my credits at IRCC then went to UF in my junior year, where I eventually got accepted at their School of Pharmacy."

"Fort Pierce was a small town, and I wondered how a small town boy would make it at the University of Florida. What I found when I transferred to UF was that I was extremely well trained. I have nothing but accolades for IRSC," he added.

Lot of hard work

Money for his education came from several sources: the Florida Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Sample Scholarship. He worked at the IRCC's cafeteria for two summers to help pay his way and eventually, he took out student loans and received some funds from his parents. Today, Hood sits on the Sample Scholarship Board to help other deserving students.

"In the first years of pharmacy school, you learn about biochemistry and compounding medications. The last year you learn why these drugs are made. I found the disease state more interesting than how you compound this and that," Hood said. "I began to think there was something else other than pharmacy I would be interested in. At the end of pharmacy school, my father died of a heart attack and my mother had a lot on her plate. I wasn't going to ask her for help."

Making adjustments

At first, Hood considered becoming an OB/GYN or a surgeon. "But then I realized, if I did surgery, I'd have to wear the artificial leg 24/7 for the rest of my life," he said. "Part way through my residency, a part broke in the artificial leg and it was two weeks before they could get the part. In the resident program, you can't take time off, so I went into the hospital on crutches and found that I could have better speed moving around on crutches than on the artificial leg. I don't use the new technology in prosthesis equipment. My health insurance doesn't cover it and I'd have to learn how to use it."

After a lot of thought, Hood became an internist. "I did the internal medicine rotation and really liked it. You do detective work and piece the puzzle together and then come up with what the real issues are when you are in internal medicine."

As part of his responsibilities, Dr. Hood directs the clerkship for his internal medicine specialty. He recruits other physicians to be faculty members and also works with the students every week.

Home again

He came back to Fort Pierce where his mother, who died eight years ago, was still living. And, he admits, there was the ocean.

"In high school, I spent time at the ocean and here we are right on the ocean," he said. "I didn't have any desire to go anywhere else. I was lucky. I interviewed with Dr. Hayes, who was 15 years older than I was, and we hit it off, so I went to work with him," Hood said. Hayes retired a couple of years ago and Hood is now a sole practitioner.

> This 59-year-old doctor from Fort Pierce says the tractor accident that took his right leg in his teens changed his perspective on life.

Heavy involvement

Over the years, he has been the medical director of the Port St. Lucie Nursing and Restorative Care Center, was president of the St. Lucie Medical Society and is associated with Lawnwood Medical Center.

Recently, he became involved with medical students from Florida State University spending their third and fourth years of medical school at the FSU medical campus at IRSC.

FSU campus at IRSC

"Most medical schools have a medical school and teaching hospital on the university campus, like UF and Shands Hospital," Hood said. "FSU's model is different. The first two years, the students are on the FSU campus, but then they go to college campuses throughout the state for their rotations.

At IRSC, FSU uses the first floor and the other floors have biomedical labs and classes for IRSC students. The FSU medical students do their clinicals at Treasure Coast hospitals."

As part of his FSU responsibilities, Hood directs the clerkship for his internal medicine specialty. He recruits other physicians to be faculty members and works with the students every week. The courses and procedures are uniform throughout all the campuses where the FSU medical students attend their last two years of school.

Hood has his individual practice, and has enjoyed all his affiliations with local nursing homes and medical societies, but he says that working with these young doctors-to-be is one of the best things he's done.

Excitement of learning

"I enjoy internal medicine and, with every job, there is part of it that is a hassle. In this case, it is the insurance. So when I work with the medical students, there is still the excitement of learning and it is very rewarding to not only teach them, but to give them a chance to see what is going on in the real world," he said.

"I've had the right things come along at the right time, like geriatrics and the FSU program, which is very rewarding. And it all started in local public schools," Hood said.