

FSUMED



**Her title is new, but
Dean Alma Littles, M.D.,
has a long, rich history with
the College of Medicine**

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FSUMED

THE MAGAZINE FOR FSU'S
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

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Alma B. Littles, M.D.
Dean

Patrick J. Crowley
Director, Public Affairs &
Communications

Bob Thomas
Editor

Audrey Post
News & Public Affairs Specialist

Jack Rizzo
Marketing & Design Manager

Photography
Creative Services
Colin Hackley



FSU

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

DEAN'S MESSAGE



We sometimes refer to our College of Medicine as a “young” school, established in 2000 by the Florida Legislature with our first class graduating in 2005. However, as you look through these pages, you will find that in a very short time, our students and alumni have built a culture of community and rich traditions that binds us together — a common bond we share.

I have had the privilege of being a part of this college almost since its beginning, having formally joined the faculty in 2002. Since then, I’ve served in a number of roles and have witnessed the growth of this College of Medicine and the positive impact our alumni are having on the lives of individuals and entire communities.

Growing in tandem with our medical education program are our research and clinical enterprises. In September, FSU Health broke ground on a new 140,000-square-foot academic health center on the campus of Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare. Once completed in 2026, this facility will include clinical research space, a family medicine residency practice, lab facilities and simulation spaces.

When you read the article about FSU Health in this issue, you’ll soon realize that FSU Health is more than a building — it spans an entire health care ecosystem encompassing our educational programs, patient care and research activities. It’s quite exciting, and the College of Medicine, in partnership with FSU’s Office of Research and other FSU colleges, is taking a lead role in the ongoing evolution of this initiative. Stay tuned, as I am certain you will hear more about it.

Having been appointed dean of the College of Medicine in July, I can’t help but reflect on all the successes and achievements I’ve witnessed here. And, at the same time, I look with excitement toward the future of our college. I hope you join me in this sense of pride and accomplishment and share in the promise of what is yet to come.

With Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alma B. Littles, MD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Alma B. Littles, M.D.
Dean, FSU College of Medicine

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GROUNDBREAKING

FSU ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER GROWING THE FOOTPRINT OF FSU HEALTH



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FSU Health

GROUNDBREAKING

FSU ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER

Taking part in the groundbreaking of FSU Health's Academic Health Center are, from left, Jay Smith, president of Ajax Building Co.; Kyle Clark, FSU senior vice president for Finance and Administration; Alma Littles, M.D., dean of the College of Medicine; Stacey Patterson, FSU vice president for Research; Peter Collins, chair of the FSU Board of Trustees; Richard McCullough, president of FSU; Jai Vartikar, FSU First Lady; Mark O'Bryant, president of TMH; Jason Weida, secretary of the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration; and Jim Clark, FSU provost. The center was made possible when the Florida Legislature and Gov. Ron DeSantis awarded FSU \$125 million to build the facility on the campus of TMH.



Florida State University College of Medicine leads the charge in the future of FSU Health



By Patrick Crowley
FSU College of Medicine

FSU Health — the driving force that binds research, medical education, patient care, the business of health care and public policy — is a unique and all-encompassing approach that defies the common definition of a health care system. It is charting a new path that will define education in the health care professions, as well as research and patient care, in the years ahead.

By bringing a laser focus to the tremendous impact the university has in improving the lives of individuals and the quality of life in entire communities, FSU Health strengthens the work currently being done — with the goal of harnessing that synergy for future growth.



“FSU Health is an initiative — really a philosophy — of how and what FSU is doing or will do to improve health and health care in Florida and beyond,” said Stacey Patterson, Ph.D., FSU vice president for Research. “It’s anything and everything that fits into that bucket from the business of health and the policies that regulate health care to research, innovation, and education for all health professions to the clinical practices themselves. From my perspective, FSU Health is bigger than any one individual, institute, or project.”

Although many of the university’s colleges have a role in this initiative, the College of Medicine is at the forefront.

“This is an exciting time to be at the College of Medicine”

- *Dean Alma Littles, M.D.*

“With the collaborative approach FSU Health offers, we can more easily leverage the strengths of not only our college, but also that of others. For example, we are partnering with the College of Nursing to explore ways we can combine our efforts to improve health and patient care in our region — and, more specifically, in the new medical office building in Panama City Beach and soon, a new hospital being built there in partnership with Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare and The St. Joe Company.”

Already, the College of Medicine has developed partnerships that further the FSU Health cause. Its ongoing relationship with Mayo Clinic Florida, based in Jacksonville, has led to new opportunities for faculty and students alike. This past summer, seven FSU medical students spent 10 weeks in Jacksonville, where they were paired with Mayo physician mentors (three of them FSU College of Medicine alumni) to gain hands-on experience on specific research projects. Also this year, Mayo Clinic Florida donated a liver scanner now housed

at FSU PrimaryHealth™, which is already helping patients.” Although many of the university’s colleges have a role in this initiative, the College of Medicine is at the forefront. Partnerships are the keys to success. The College of Medicine’s six regional campuses expand FSU’s footprint in Florida and its ability to partner with providers and others to meet the unique needs of their respective communities — advancing patient care and research statewide and beyond.

“The growth of our Graduate Medical Education program is another example of how beneficial partnerships can be,” Littles said. “Florida, like most states, is facing a shortage of physicians and other health care professionals. To address this, we are working with hospitals and others to grow our GME program — adding more residency slots and fellowship opportunities. Evidence shows that physicians tend to stay in the state or city where they complete their residencies, so we must continually find ways to partner with others and grow the program to not only improve patient care, but also access to it. This includes building on our Physician Assistant program and other programs within the college.”

According to Patterson, through its programs and partnerships, the College of Medicine is uniquely poised to play the lead role in the continued growth and success of FSU Health.



Stacey Patterson

FSU Vice President, Research

“I see the College of Medicine as the foundation, the core of FSU Health”


- Stacey Patterson, Ph.D.

“The College of Medicine really does demonstrate all three components of what we would consider to be an academic health center model, which is what we’re trying to develop. It has research and innovation focused on ‘bench to bedside;’ it has an educational program for medical students, PA students, graduate students and even undergraduates; and it provides quality clinical care, which is the other leg of that stool.”

But it’s not just the College of Medicine that plays a role in FSU Health. According to Patterson, many of FSU’s 17 colleges have programs that fall under the FSU Health umbrella. For example, the College

of Communication and Information has the School of Communication Science and Disorders; the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences has myriad programs such as Dietetics and Exercise Physiology.

“FSU Health is university-wide,” Patterson said. “People across the FSU community should be able to see themselves within it. The goal is for people to self-identify and to declare they are part of FSU Health. This is our opportunity to show the world what FSU is already doing, but also to grow in areas like the Pediatric Rare Diseases Institute, and it allows us to focus on areas where we have foundational strengths and grow those areas into internationally recognized programs.”

An architectural rendering of a modern, multi-story building with a facade of vertical panels and rectangular windows. Two palm trees are in the foreground. In the lower right, a man and a woman are walking on a paved path. The background shows a parking lot with cars and a clear blue sky.

Although FSU Health is more than just brick and mortar, its first physical manifestations are taking shape in Tallahassee and farther west in the Panhandle's Bay County.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held Sept. 12 on the Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) campus for a four-story, 140,000-square-foot academic health center that will include clinical research space, a family medicine residency practice, laboratory facilities and other resources designed to bridge the gap between academic research and patient care. It will house about 30 principal investigators and is expected to attract \$40 million in grant funding annually.

In July, the first medical office building opened on a planned 87-acre medical campus in Panama City Beach. The St. Joe Company offered the land to TMH, which in turn is partnering with FSU to grow the site, eventually to include a hospital, ambulatory surgical and urgent care centers, and additional services.

The site is located near the Latitude Margaritaville Watersound active adult community, which when fully built will have 3,500 homes. The university has plans for future research facilities at the campus and will study successful aging, senior living technology and other topics to improve quality of life. Currently, the college is partnering with the College of Nursing to offer services in the new facility.

Photo courtesy of TMH.

Growing the footprint of FSU Health





Her title is new, but Dean Alma Littles, M.D., has a long, rich history with the College of Medicine

By **Bob Thomas**, FSU College of Medicine

A physician and educator at heart, Alma B. Littles, M.D., can trace her interest in administration to a request that predated the birth of the Florida State University College of Medicine.

“The medical school administration bug bit when I was asked to serve on the focus group formed to determine if FSU should have a full four-year medical school,” said Littles, who at the time was director of the Family Medicine Residency Program at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare. “I was already hooked on the rewards of medical education at the Graduate Medical Education level, and the excitement expanded with the idea of helping create a medical school in the same town as the residency program and just a few miles from my hometown.”

Twenty-two years after joining the college to chair the Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health in August of 2002, the Quincy native is its dean.

Her ascent, including a 17-month stint as interim dean that officially ended July 1, has paralleled the college’s growth.

Today, there are 154 full-time faculty at the College of Medicine, compared to 54 when she signed on, advancing the college’s mission through a wide range of education programs. They include: 14 graduate medical education residencies or fellowships, a Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences, M.S. degrees in Physician Assistant Practice and Biomedical Sciences – Bridge to Clinical Medicine, as well as the undergraduate Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences bachelor’s degree.

Each of those programs was launched since Littles, after just six months, moved from Family Medicine and Rural Health to the dean’s suite to oversee the complete development of the college’s education program, including its accreditation.

“At that point, as it did for several others, the FSU College of Medicine became my baby, and I was determined to do all I could to see that it became

and remained successful,” Littles said. “That’s also when I realized that this was a calling for me.”

She was also in place when the initial three regional campuses – Orlando, Pensacola and Tallahassee – welcomed the first group of third-year medical students to begin their clinical education in 2003. Additional campuses in Sarasota (2005) and Daytona Beach and Fort Pierce (2007) followed to further accommodate the college’s enrollment as it expanded from 30 students in its inaugural class to its maximum and current class size of 120, which arrived in 2007.

There are now nearly 3,000 physicians across the state of Florida providing hands-on clinical instruction as residency, preceptor and clerkship faculty, fulfilling the innovative, community-based model of one-on-one education which made the College of Medicine unique from the outset.

Then, again, so is its leader.

THE MOTIVATION

The youngest of Willie Brown Sr. and Mattie Mae Brown’s 12 children, Littles was born into a family of rural farm workers, where family, community, church and education were prioritized. She would go on to become the first in her family to attend and graduate from college, attending the University of Florida, where she later earned her Doctor of Medicine degree.

There were several significant people and events that influenced her career path, beginning with her second-grade teacher, Hazel Jones, who planted the seed that would germinate into a medical career.

“I never forgot her words, ‘Alma, when you grow up, I think you should be a doctor,’” Littles said.



Gadsden County's Dr. Pat Woodward (third from right) has been influential in Dean Littles' life from an early age. The Woodward family supports the College of Medicine with a scholarship endowment in his name to ensure that underserved counties, like Gadsden, have the physicians they need. From the left are Littles, sons Edward and Daniel Woodward, wife Mary Jane Woodward and sons Fred and Pat Woodward Jr.

Those words would take shape over her formative years, as she began to recognize the limited or lack of access to health care within her own home and her community.

Littles' first encounter with a physician, as a patient, was with Quincy pediatrician Pat Woodward. Unbeknownst to her at the time, the connection with "Dr. Pat," as he was known, would be one of the most influential in her career.

As a freshman at Carter-Parramore Junior High School, Littles and a few of her classmates visited Woodward's office for advice in preparation for a research project.

"We sat down and talked about what it was to be a practitioner in the field of medicine and basically what the options were and what it was like," said Woodward, who along with his wife, Mary Jane, and one of their four sons, attended the September "Meet the Dean" celebration to commemorate Littles' appointment.

The touchpoints between the two continued. Woodward was Littles' role model for his approach to medical care, a mentor when she became a resident under his watch at TMH, and eventually a partner at their Quincy medical practice. Now 88, Woodward retired from practice in 2001.

In 2014, the Pat M. Woodward, M.D. Legacy Scholarship Endowment at the FSU College of Medicine was established to ensure that underserved Gadsden County has the physicians it needs in the future. It provides scholarship support for deserving third- and fourth-year students committed to practicing

pediatrics or family medicine in Gadsden and other underserved or rural North Florida communities. It also provides scholarship support for Gadsden High School students considering medical careers who have been selected to attend the college's Summer Institute.

"Even though Dr. Woodward is not on our faculty, he embodies everything we attempt to teach our students," Littles said at the time of the scholarship endowment. "His knowledge, skill, gentleness and compassion are key ingredients of patient-centered care. His patients loved him. Those of us who learned from him – and future Gadsden physicians who get a boost from this endowment – can only try to measure up to his example."

Sadly, the lack of medical access was a reality in Quincy and Gadsden County, especially for minority families like the Browns. One of Dr. Littles' sisters died as the result of a blood clot after giving birth to twins, one of whom died a short time later. Her father died of a heart attack when she was 14 and she saw many others dealing with illnesses that were going unnecessarily untreated.

As a gifted math and science student who also captained the volleyball team, played basketball and participated in 4-H, she fixed her attention to fulfilling her second-grade teacher's prophecy.

She returned to Tallahassee for residency following graduation from the University of Florida College of Medicine in 1986, where she reconnected with Woodward.

“She stepped right through those steps,” Woodward said. “She was quite capable as a resident of almost working independently of me.” Littles was chief resident of the Family Medicine Residency Program, graduated in 1989 and opened her rural practice in Gadsden County the same year. There, she began precepting medical students and residents, and she realized the impact she could have educating the next generation of physicians to fill voids in communities like her own.

She joined the faculty of the Family Medicine Residency Program at TMH in 1996, became its director in 1999, and held that position until the College of Medicine came calling in 2002.

Littles jumped at the opportunity to be the founding chair of the Family Medicine and Rural Health department at the nation’s first new medical school of the 21st century.

“The College of Medicine mission statement, it resonated with me,” Littles said. “The college’s priorities and my goals as a physician mirror each other.”

“It’s amazing,” Woodward said, reflecting on Littles’ career arc. “The transition from private and group practice into management of the family medicine residency program, then transitioning to the medical school – the extent of what she was involved with in the development of all the campuses around the state – it’s just incredible in what she has done.”

Even more amazing has been Littles’ immersion in a wide range of local, state and national medical organizations, further advancing her leadership skills.

Locally, she has chaired the board of directors at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare and Big Bend Hospice and served as president of the Capital Medical Society. She’s been a vice president, council chair and board member for the Florida Medical Association (FMA), president of the Florida Academy of Family Physicians (FAFP), as well as a committee chair and delegate for the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and the academic physicians section chair for the American Medical Association (AMA).

Those organizations are merely a sampling of Littles’ involvement beyond the scope of her College of Medicine responsibilities.

‘AN INDEFATIGABLE WORKER’

Within the halls of the college’s John Thrasher Building – and the portable units that housed it prior to its October of 2004 occupancy – Dr. Littles has worked closely with each of her predecessors, from first acting dean and mentor Myra Hurt, Ph.D., through a 15-year run with John P. Fogarty, M.D., who passed the torch with his February 2023 retirement.

Those relationships, as well as the ones she has cultured within the Council of Florida Medical School Deans and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Council of Deans, “made it clear that this is what I needed to do” Littles said.

And Littles’ work among her peers led many to applaud her selection.

University of Miami Miller School of Medicine Dean and Chief Academic Officer Henri R. Ford, M.D., MHA, has worked alongside Littles for more than six years, on both the Council of Florida Medical School Deans and more recently, the AAMC Council of Deans.

“She is a dynamic leader whose valuable insight is highly sought after by her peers,” Ford said. “She is an indefatigable worker whose analytical skills and pragmatism are unparalleled. She is a champion for medical education and medical students. FSU could not have selected a more highly qualified leader.”

As adjectives go, “indefatigable” is most-fitting, given Littles’ involvement in every facet of the College of Medicine’s activities, as well as on the university, local, state and national levels.



She has been actively involved in the ambitious FSU Health initiative and its goal of improving health care throughout the state, with a focus on the Northwest Florida region. The college's partnership with Tallahassee Memorial Health-Care and the construction of an academic health center on the TMH campus, which will offer advanced medical training and translational research, has been at the forefront of Littles' attention.

"I can think of no one better suited to guiding FSU's role in developing the health care research and delivery ecosystem in our region than Dr. Littles," FSU Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Jim Clark wrote in a message announcing Littles' July 1 appointment.

Her ability to not only simultaneously balance a multitude of responsibilities, but also excel across all areas, is equal parts inspirational and astonishing. Her dawn-to-dusk, color-coded daily calendar of meetings and activities resembles a rainbow. On most days, her vehicle is the first one in the staff parking lot – often before 6:30 a.m. – and the last to leave. Late-night email responses from her address are common.

Her husband, Gentle Littles III, remains a constant presence and source of support. He's remained active in retirement, shuttling her between regional campuses and various other meetings throughout the state and enabling the dean to keep up with her many responsibilities from the passenger seat while on the road.

"I have known Dr. Littles for more than a decade during my tenure at the University of Florida as department chair of Emergency Medicine and interim dean," said Joseph Tyndall, M.D., dean and executive vice president of the Morehouse School of Medicine. "She is one of the distinguished alumnae from the University of Florida and over the years has demonstrated extraordinary effectiveness as a leader with incomparable equanimity."

Littles' emotional calmness under what many would consider a stressful set of responsibilities serves her, and those who count on her, well.

"I cannot imagine what her every day is like," Woodward said. "It's got to be complex for most people, but I've never known her to be out of sorts or incapable of managing what she was doing."



Dean Alma Littles, M.D., and her husband, Gentle Littles III

"I have been able to witness Dr. Littles' leadership skills at the state level in our specialty organization," said George Bernardo, M.D., president of the Florida Academy of Family Physicians and dean of the College of Medicine's Daytona Beach Regional Campus. "She is a tireless advocate for family medicine and her consistent dedication is obvious to anyone that knows her."

"As a regional campus dean, I have to look to her for guidance and wisdom, as I know many others do."

More than 250 people attended the September "Meet the Dean" celebration of Littles — including Gadsden County family and friends; students, faculty and staff from the college and university; and community leaders in medicine and beyond. Many in attendance could be overheard sharing stories about their personal connections to her.

The turnout and those shared stories are testimony to the impact Littles has on so many levels, which is rooted in both her compassion and her passion for serving others.

"Ultimately, it is the joy of graduations and the successes of our graduates as they care for patients all over the globe, fulfilling our mission of providing patient-centered care to individuals who otherwise might not receive it, that let me know I'm in the right place," she said.

PA pipeline program delivering Panhandle providers to those in need

By **Bob Thomas**

FSU College of Medicine

Like many college students, Kristin Quina entered the University of West Florida in the fall of 2016 as an undergraduate with an idea of what she wanted to pursue as a career, only to change directions. Eight years later, she is a first-year student at the Florida State University College of Medicine's School of Physician Assistant Practice, thanks in part to the UWF Physician Assistant Pipeline Program (PAPP), which married her passion for serving the underserved with the ability to do just that in the Pensacola area, where she was raised.

PAPP was launched in the spring of 2017, thanks to \$1 million in Florida legislative resources, distributed annually over a 10-year period. Split between UWF and FSU, the pooled resources were essential to get the mission-based program started and maintain its operation with a one goal:

To recruit and train qualified Florida Panhandle students to become physician assistants, caring for the elderly, rural, minority and underserved populations in Florida.

Admission to the program requires students to be permanent residents in one of 15 Panhandle counties, stretching west from Leon County all the way to Escambia County, which borders Alabama. Applicants must also meet academic requirements, be admitted to the School of Physician Assistant Practice and agree to complete all clinical rotations at the Pensacola Regional Campus.





Danielle Burk
Class of 2019
Physical Assessment Practitioner
FSU College of Medicine

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
1851
College of Medicine



Kimberly Berggren, DMSc, PA-C
Associate Clinical Education Director, Pensacola

Many have begun their journey taking an undergraduate or continuing education introductory course to the PA profession on either the UWF or FSU campus.

Through its first five graduating classes, 25 of the 42 PAs who completed their clinical training at the college's Pensacola campus are currently practicing in the Panhandle. Those numbers are almost certain to improve with the PA classes of 2024 and 2025 totaling 15 pipeline students.

"I had plans to become a pharmacist," said Quina, who worked as a delivery driver and later a technician for a pharmacy as she completed her Biomedical Sciences degree at UWF in 2020. She first heard about PAPP from the pharmacist where she worked.

It wasn't until December of 2021 that she made a last-minute decision to enroll in the Introduction to the Physician Assistant Profession as a continuing education student at UWF beginning in January 2022.

The change of direction came after two years as a volunteer and later a medical assistant at Health and Hope, a free clinic serving the underserved, while gaining clinical experience as a medical transcriptionist at the family

medicine office of Dr. Robert Flurry. There, she also scribed for a PA.

"The only PA I had known [entering the class] was the one I worked with, and I loved everything about what she did," Quina said. "Meeting another one who kind of had the same passion in the educational setting drew me toward the profession."

Kim Berggren, DMSc, PA-C, has been the College of Medicine's associate clinical education director in Pensacola since the spring of 2022. A practicing PA in the Panhandle for 15 years – 20 years overall – she teaches the introductory course and serves as a Pre-PA advisor on campus at UWF – her alma mater – while managing the program.

"A lot of my role in this position is finding people who might be interested," Berggren explained. "Sometimes it's finding students who know they want to be a PA. Sometimes it's people who have never heard of a PA, so they can learn more about it. I help guide them, and the faculty at UWF, to understand how to get to that ultimate goal."

Quina said Berggren's class helped fill gaps.

"I didn't know all of the history behind the PA profession. Seeing how they bridge the gaps in health care resonated with me. I want to be that person to step up and be able to help."

Educating future PAs in Pensacola, home to Naval Air Station Pensacola – one of eight military bases in the Northwest Florida region – has some historical connectivity, as well. The profession was born from Vietnam War medics returning home with skills and no place to apply them in a civilian workforce.

"Some very insightful people married that together with this idea that we needed more health care providers, and thus the birth of the PA profession, which occurred almost 60 years ago," explained Ben Smith, FSU's School of Physician Assistant Practice program director and associate dean. "It's a fascinating story."

Berggren knows it well. Her husband is retired Air Force, with three stops in the Panhandle – twice at Tyndall Air Force Base (AFB) near Panama City, and once at Eglin AFB, equidistant between Panama City and Pensacola. She is also a practicing Pediatric PA at Eglin.

Smith added that nearly 180,000 practicing PAs nationally today are “making a difference in health care delivery, quality care, patient satisfaction and quality outcomes.”

In addition to Smith’s leadership roles, he wrote the curriculum for the pipeline program’s introductory course and instructs a class of 50 undergraduates each fall and spring on the College of Medicine’s central campus.

Smith is thrilled with the growth of the pipeline program, along with the competitiveness for the 10 slots allotted from each class. Berggren has conducted 45 student interviews this year alone and narrowed that to 15 finalists.

“The students who entered this pathway program have foundational roots,” Smith said. “They lived in the Panhandle, come to FSU and complete their clinical training in the Panhandle and then they become employed in a place that is home. There’s a lot of sticking power with that. That’s why the program is successful and will continue to grow.”

And there’s no person to provide a better gauge moving forward than Pensacola Regional Campus Dean Paul McLeod, M.D., who has been a fixture in the community since arriving in 1975 at Naval Hospital Pensacola for family practice residency.

“He’s the cog in the pipeline,” Smith said of McLeod, who has a pulse on the community and how the College of Medicine graduates – physicians and PAs – are both received and performing.

“Success is measured by what kind of impact we can have in the community,” said McLeod. “That’s our goal. That’s our mission...Having high quality PAs practicing in our community as a result of the pipeline – those are the results we are getting.”

McLeod has seen a pendulum swing in how College of Medicine practitioners have been received, based on his interaction with the students coming through his campus and working alongside medical community partners, including those who provide clinical instruction as clerkship faculty to his PA and M.D. students.

“A lot of these faculty members who had some skepticism have trained our students and now they are believers,” he said. “They’ve seen the high-quality students we have produced...That’s exactly what needed to happen and exactly what has happened. You have to give the

students a hat-tip for that. They’ve sold themselves.”

Berggren noted that recent College of Medicine Alumni Hall of Fame inductee Jada Leahy, M.D., has recently hired three UWF PAPP graduates to work in her practice.

That’s the type of evidence that should carry weight with the Florida Legislature when it takes up the next round of funding for the joint program. FSU and UWF have been working together to educate health care providers since the 1970 founding of the Program in Medical Sciences (PIMS).

So, too, should the endorsement by students drawn to the mission and providing compassionate care.

“The pipeline helped solidify my decision in choosing FSU because it guaranteed my return to Pensacola for clinical rotations,” said Quina, who will begin her final year there in January. “It allows me to return to an area that means so much to me and see the additional pieces of our community’s health care system that need more assistance...make connections and seek different opportunities to provide care and help fill in those gaps in the future.”



Kristin Quina (PA '25)

Geriatrics Department awarded \$5 million grant for 'age-friendly' workforce training

By Audrey Post, FSU College of Medicine

Older Americans are steadily becoming more dominant in the population, and nowhere is the pace increasing faster than in Florida. By 2040, the Sunshine State is expected to have almost 7 million older adults, with more than 1.2 million of those age 85 or older.

The Department of Geriatrics at the Florida State University College of Medicine continues to lead efforts to reshape health care to serve older patients' unique needs. It was recently awarded a five-year, \$5 million grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

HRSA's Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) funds only two programs in Florida, and this is the third grant for the FSU-based North and Central Florida GWEP (NCF-GWEP) since its inception in 2015. Florida has the highest percentage of older adults of any state in the U.S., and the number of older adults moving to Florida from other states continues to increase.

"Nationally, geriatrics experts have been putting their heads together, knowing there will never be enough geriatricians to go around, to find out 'What are we asking all health care services to do related to care of older adults?'" said Professor Lisa Granville, M.D., a nationally renowned geriatrician, chair of the College of Medicine's Department of Geriatrics and principal investigator.

What resulted was the concept of an age-friendly health system, of which a key component is incorporating the 4M's: What Matters Most to older adults; Medication; Mobility; and Mentation, or mind health.

Through partnerships across the health care professions as well as with community, state and national organizations, GWEP specifically focuses on developing age-friendly health systems and dementia-friendly communities by training the geriatrics workforce and community to better meet the needs of older adults. The Geriatrics Department in the College of Medicine is uniquely positioned to coordinate and lead this effort; part of the college's mission is to train exemplary physicians to provide patient-centered care for the underserved, particularly elder, rural and minority residents.

"When you agree to be age-friendly, you put into place systems where you are diligent about addressing all four of those M's," Granville said. "You may have

screening systems in place where you are routinely asking older adults, 'Have you fallen in the last year or since our last visit?'"

Falling is the fifth leading cause of death for older adults, she said. "Many people don't realize that half of older adults who fall can't get back up by themselves, and it's not because they were injured necessarily; it can be limited strength and flexibility that existed before the fall."

Other processes may screen for cognitive impairment and depression, look for opportunities to reduce medications and identify other ways to improve quality of life. A goal is to avoid health care-related harms an older patient may be more vulnerable to.

The most recent grant is funding four projects, which among them have about a dozen programs and partnerships:

- **Dementia outreach expansion and supportive care worker training through statewide partnerships with state agency initiatives.** Individual programs include dementia sensitivity training for transportation providers, rural-focused planning for dementia-friendly programming, family care partner education and outreach, and training opportunities for health care professionals.
- **Career advancement for supportive care workers and nurses.** Programs include specialized training for certified nursing assistants (CNAs), medical assistants and undergraduate nursing students in health care issues of older patients, developing a geriatrics certificate pathway for hospice CNAs, creating a 4M's geriatrics care curriculum for nursing students and medical assistants, and developing a post-baccalaureate geriatrics nursing certificate.
- The next phase of **transforming federally qualified health centers into age-friendly health systems**, which was started with previous HRSA grant cycles beginning in 2015. Programs emphasize the 4M's of geriatric patient-centered care across all levels of staff with environmental enhancements. Data collection identifies care gaps and monitors improvements, trainings focus on evolving needs of longer-lived populations, and specific quality improvement initiatives will occur. Another goal is to connect partnering clinics with outside resources to increase access to services and supports for older adults.



The Geriatrics Grant Oversight Team, from left, Professor Lisa Granville, M.D., principal investigator; Nicolette Cartagna, LMHC, MPH, CDP, NCF-GWEP community engagement and health systems manager; Professor Paul Katz, M.D., co-principal investigator; and Tiffany Holcomb, MSW, GWEP coordinator. Not pictured, LaVon Goodwin, M.S. program manager.

- **Enhanced longitudinal geriatrics training for physician assistant (PA) students, family medicine residents and post-doctoral psychology fellows during their formative training**, to ensure they have the skills to help fill the gap of trained clinicians to care for geriatric patients over the continuum of care and respond accordingly.

The FSU College of Nursing is one of the partners in the project to train nurses. Assistant Dean Steven J. Palazzo, Ph.D., agreed that Florida faces an urgent need for skilled geriatric care.

“By integrating 4M’s geriatric training into Bachelor of Science Nursing programs, we can equip future nurses to provide high-quality, compassionate care to older adults,” he said. “A post-bachelorette certificate in geriatrics will further empower

students with specialized skills, positioning them as leaders in transforming long-term care systems for seniors across the state.”

One of the community-based partners is PanCare of Florida, a non-profit with 16 Federally Qualified Health Center locations in North Florida, 12 of which are primary care medical clinics. The College of Medicine team will work with PanCare to transform its clinics into age-friendly sites, beginning with its largest clinic, located in Panama City, and eventually reaching all of them.

“It’s really beyond training,” said Nicolette Castagna, LMHC, MPH, CDP and NCF-GWEP community engagement and health systems manager within the Department of Geriatrics. “We’re building relationships with their leadership and getting to know their providers and staff, and together we’re

basically looking at what is the experience of the older patient. We’re helping their staff to see that a little more clearly.”

The work funded by the grant is being coordinated under the umbrella of Resources & Education for Aging, Community and Health (REACH). For more information, go to its website at reach.med.fsu.edu.





From left, front row: Mary Mayhew, president and CEO of Florida Hospital Association; Heather Flynn, Ph.D., chair of the College of Medicine's Department of Behavioral Science and Social Medicine; Stacey Patterson, Ph.D., FSU vice president for research; and Alma Littles, M.D., College of Medicine dean. Back row, Richard Galbraith, M.D., Ph.D., then interim associate dean for research and graduate programs.

Understanding the art, science and business of health care

By Audrey Post, FSU College of Medicine

To be a good physician, one must master both the science and the art of practicing medicine. Medical and PA students hear this repeatedly, from orientation through graduation and beyond.

On Sept. 23, students learned that understanding the business of practicing medicine is just as important.

Mary C. Mayhew, president and CEO of the Florida Hospital Association, delivered a comprehensive overview of the state's health care system. Presented by FSU Health and the Florida State University College of Medicine, the data-packed, hourlong lunchtime lecture talked about some of the most pressing challenges facing health care providers today, and the opportunities that exist to change the way the system operates.

Professor Heather Flynn, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Behavioral Science and Social Medicine, explained the scope of the situation as she introduced Mayhew, who before taking the helm at FHA in 2020 was secretary of the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration.

Providers in Florida "see 11 million patients a year. They create 300,000 jobs. And they pump \$177 billion into

the state's economy each year," Flynn said.

Mayhew made the case that in health care, as in any other business, providers who can't make money can't stay in business. And there are plenty of threats to making money and plenty of reasons why it's harder now than ever, including artificially low reimbursement rates from the federal government for Medicaid and Medicare that haven't kept up with the cost to provide that care. Crime is another factor.

"Health care is the No. 1 target of cyberattacks," Mayhew said. She cited an attack on United Health Care, the largest health insurance company in the country whose claims clearinghouse was hacked. The company made it sound like it just involved "the back office," she said, but it was devastating for small to medium providers.

"If you can't submit claims for the care you provided, it affects your ability to make payroll."

She also talked about the July hacking of One Blood, which supplies 80% of the blood needed by Florida's hospitals.

"We have a lot of vulnerability in this country's blood supply," she said, noting that hackers had zeroed in on a "single point of failure." Response to the hack wasn't handled well, she said, which made things worse. It happened on a Sunday night. On Monday, there were no blood deliveries. Surgeries had to be canceled.

"They didn't disclose it to the public until Wednesday," Mayhew said.

There are positive changes happening, she said, "but it takes time to prime the pump."

The event was a hybrid of in-person and distance-learning models that although geared toward students was also open to College of Medicine alumni. The event was co-sponsored by the following student organizations: Business & Medicine and Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Orthopedics and Surgery Student Interest Groups.

To hear more about the state of the business of health care in Florida, watch the entire presentation on the College of Medicine's YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSvQjll_oQ.

Latino Medical Student Association hosts fiesta

By Audrey Post, FSU College of Medicine



Members of the Latino Student Medical Association serve fellow students, faculty and staff during its fiesta in the atrium.

As part of Hispanic Heritage Month, the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) sponsored Hispanic Heritage Fiesta at lunchtime Tuesday, Sept. 17, in the College of Medicine atrium.

More than 100 students enjoyed a tasty and healthy lunch of beef or chicken tacos with all the fixings and horchata, a favorite Mexican drink made with rice, milk, vanilla, cinnamon and water. DJ Heat, aka second-year PA student Kenny Morales, kept the crowd dancing as the long line wound its way to the food.

“Being a DJ for many years, I’ve witnessed how music unifies people. Even in a non-Hispanic audience, Spanish music is a universal genre that always gets the party started! After joining LMSA, this is the party I wanted to bring to the College of Medicine,” he said.

The goal, he said, was not only to showcase Latin culture through food and music, but also to show fellow cohorts a great time. “As COM students, we study so hard that we forget how important it is to have fun and provide an opportunity for our minds to rest for our mental health.”

LMSA President Mariela Vega Arreola agreed. “It was so much fun, and I think everyone had a good time.”

The organization sponsors a number of events throughout the year, including Salsa Dancing Nights, mentoring programs for pre-med students, and an annual health fair in Quincy for migrant workers and their families, which includes blood pressure screenings, dental hygiene tips and sunscreen education.

National Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 each year, celebrates the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. It started in 1968 under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded during the Reagan administration to a month, beginning Sept. 15. The date is significant because it is the anniversary of Independence Day for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18, respectively.

Roselane Ramirez said being a part of LMSA is “profound honor.”

“It allows me to share my culture and heritage with my non-Latino colleagues,” she said, “which builds understanding and collaboration as we strive to provide compassionate care for all and build a richer, more inclusive medical community.”

Regional Campus News



Daytona Beach

George Bernardo, M.D.

Dean, Daytona Beach
Regional Campus



Students make a positive community impact

Helping to touch the lives of more than 1,700 school-age children in Volusia and Flagler County schools, fourth-year medical students Jacob Myhre, Brady Culpepper and McKenzie Seitz, along with third-year student Lauren Hopson Frankel, took part in a Community Health Night for Food Brings Hope, a local not-for-profit, with the goal of creating a community where underprivileged schoolchildren discover their full potential.



Fourth-year medical students Catherine Maige, Vivian Tanios and Shwetha Shetty volunteered their time to make special backpacks with essential hygiene and cold-weather items for the homeless and those in need. The packs contained shampoo, soap, feminine products.

A new space welcomes students

For those of you who haven't been to the Daytona Beach Campus in a while, you will notice some big (and welcome) changes!

The Renegade Student Center has been remodeled to be more student-centered and is now outfitted with the latest technology and amenities. The room features dedicated spaces for virtual meetings, student study and meeting areas, a flex room and living room. The renovation was made possible by a generous gift from an anonymous donor.



"It's really exciting to see our students in the newly remodeled student center," said George Bernardo, M.D., dean of the Daytona Beach Campus. "It's a comfortable, inviting space in which our students can work, collaborate and relax. Our students and I are grateful for the donor support that made this possible."

The campus chose Amber Clore Morales, an FSU alumnus and CEO of A.Clore Interiors, to design the new space.





Fort Pierce

Juliette Lomax-Homier, M.D.
 Dean, Fort Pierce Regional Campus



Community service (and a lot of fun, too!)

Not only are students and faculty busy with clinical coursework and teaching, but they also find time to have fun and give back to their community.

This past spring, members of the Class of 2025 collected feminine hygiene products and donated them to the PACE Center for Girls Treasure Coast in Fort Pierce. Class of 2025 student Taylor Blount organized the initiative. The Chapman Community Health Program funded the supplies, and the students purchased, sorted and filled gift bags and distributed them to the center.



As part of the campus' March Wellness Wednesday activities, the Class of 2025 enjoyed archery at the Ox-bow Eco-Center & Preserve in Port St. Lucie, organized by Erika Balazs. The event was funded jointly by the Jules B. Chapman, M.D., and Annie Lou Chapman Private Foundation and the Fort Pierce Regional Campus Foundation.



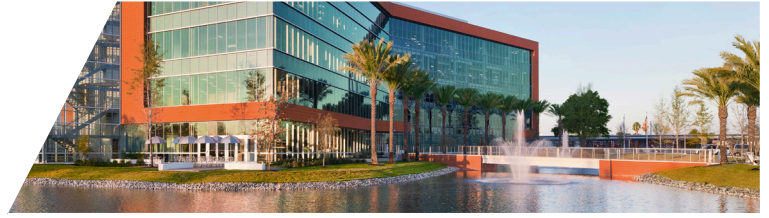
George Fyffe, M.D., clinical assistant professor in Obstetrics & Gynecology, received the 2024 Hippocratic Award for his commitment to medical education, patients and the practice of medicine. Fyffe, pictured with Juliette Lomax-Homier, M.D, campus dean, has been a faculty member since the campus' inception in 2007. His current practice is at the Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital in Vero Beach, where he has served as the department chair and, currently, as the assistant chief medical officer. This is not the first award for Fyffe. In the past, he received the Guardian of the Mission Award from students.



Orlando

Mark Chaet, M.D.

Dean, Orlando Regional Campus



Healing mind and body

Student Spotlight: Aanchal Shaw

Aanchal Shah (M.D. '25) continuously fosters relationships to further the College of Medicine's Arts in Medicine program, which strives to bring evidence-based art practices to the community.

Thanks to the support of Orlando Ballet and Shah's "Movin' with Mommas" initiative, a series of videos has been developed to promote wellness among mothers during the postpartum period. The videos can be found at <https://med.fsu.edu/aim/video/aim-database>

As an aspiring child and adolescent psychiatrist, Shah has focused her talents on creating mental health resources for children by writing and publishing a children's book, *Dr. Didi's Guide to Anxiety*. The book incorporates evidence-based art activities to help alleviate anxiety in the pediatric population.

While rotating in Inpatient Child Psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine in August, Shah led a children's



group therapy session utilizing her book and one of the associated art-based activities.

"I am incredibly grateful to be learning at a rigorous program that also supports and encourages student-led initiatives," said Shah.

Before leaving Yale, Shah donated copies of her book to the inpatient child psychiatry unit and Yale's Child Psych Bibliotherapy book reservoir.



Pensacola

Paul McLeod, M.D.

Dean, Pensacola Regional Campus



Angela Ziebarth, M.D., Obstetrics/Gynecology clinical faculty member, was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. The criterion for selection includes outstanding teaching, scholastic achievement, demonstrated professionalism, leadership capabilities, adherence to ethical standards, fairness in dealing with colleagues, achievement in medicine and/or research, and a record of service to school and community.

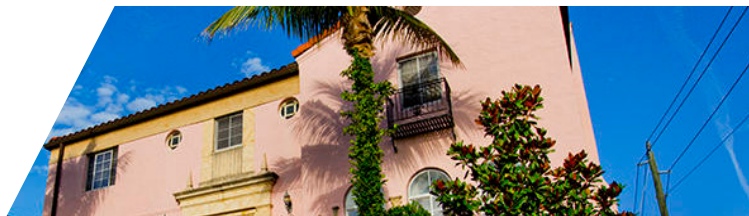
Ziebarth has been a member of our community clinical faculty since 2013. Over the years, she has mentored many of our medical students. Her teaching evaluations are always exceptional and address her commitment to her patients, to health care quality, access and evidence-based medicine. Ziebarth has constantly made time during her busy clinic and surgery days to educate medical students and provide firsthand experience in the field of gynecologic oncology.



Sarasota

Nicole Bentze, D.O.

Dean, Sarasota Regional Campus



Accessing both sides of the brain can help providers improve patient health

By Audrey Post, FSU College of Medicine

A collaboration among the Sarasota Regional Campus, the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art and Sarasota Memorial Health Care System's Community Specialty Clinic is teaching future physicians empathy, understanding and better communication and leadership skills by having them interact with art.

Third-year medical students spend half a day in early January learning about Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS). The Ringling's education director, Katie Nickel, Ed.D., guides each cohort's exploration of art, beginning with how it makes each person feel. She helps them discover nonverbal cues, notice initially overlooked small details and then challenges them to use all five senses to experience a painting from within.

Nickel said doctors who value art are more likely to recommend it for their patients' well-being, as well as their own. And it's good for their careers to learn the "soft skills" associated with the right side of the brain, because medical training tends to focus on the analytical left side of the brain. Nicole Bentze, D.O., dean of the Sarasota Regional Campus, agreed.

"While all patients want a well-educated physician, a vast majority also want humanistic qualities including compassion, empathy, trust and respect. Patients want to be listened to and share in the decision-making process, thus building a true patient-physician relationship," Bentze said. "Museum education helps medical students consider other world views and to appreciate how each patient may experience illness differently."

Students also complete a rotation through the Community Specialty Clinic, a free clinic for adults 18 and older in Sarasota County who are uninsured or under-insured. Thirty volunteer physicians see patients there, and 100 specialists will take their referrals pro bono.

Clinic director Rodica Vasilescu, Ph.D., who is also clerkship faculty in internal medicine, said the students see patients and volunteer physicians modeling interconnectedness, which teaches them critical thinking, respectful bedside manner and servant leadership.

"The arts teach skills that encourage medical students to take risks and help prepare them to become courageous leaders," Vasilescu said. The program will soon expand to include PA students at the Sarasota Regional Campus.

Bentze, Nickel and Vasilescu presented an overview of their collaboration at the annual Association of Academic Museums and Galleries 2024 Conference. They have been invited to present at the February 2025 meeting of Society of Teachers of Family Medicine.



From left, Katie Nickel, Ed.D., Rodica Vasilescu, Ph.D.



Tallahassee

Sandeep Rahangdale, M.D.
Dean, Tallahassee Regional Campus



Walk with me – talk with me!

Capital Health Plan and Amy Neal, M.D. ('08), Family Medicine clerkship faculty, host the ever-popular Walk with a Doc program, a monthly event where members of our community come together to speak with physicians on various topics as they stroll through parks and greenways in Tallahassee. Past topics included weight loss, heat awareness, mental health, the importance of sleep, and mindfulness.

Visit WalkWithaDoc.org for more information.



Making the holidays brighter

FSU College of Medicine students have been working with the Panhandle Area Education Consortium's school-based clinics and Migrant/English Language Learners Summer School clinics for the past 19 years to collect and provide holiday gifts to children in these communities. It is our students' hope that this project will make the season a little brighter.

The group sought gently used children and adult clothes, new or gently used toys, small books and \$25 Walmart gift cards. It's not too late! Donations can be made online at floridalearnsfoundation.org.





College of Medicine Dean Alma Littles, M.D., (second from right) Dr. Rashmin Savani (far right), chair of the University of Florida's College of Medicine Department of Pediatrics, as well as Physician-in-Chief for UF Shands Children's Hospital, and Darcy Sullivan (left of center), Dance Marathon at FSU's executive director, pose for a celebratory photo with the rest of the DM@FSU executive committee after it was revealed that the program raised \$571,584.16 for College of Medicine pediatric outreach programs this year.

Students raise more than \$1.2 million through Dance Marathon

Orchestrated by the largest student-run organization at Florida State University, more than 1,800 students participated in the 29th annual Dance Marathon. This year, students raised more than \$1.24 million, split almost evenly between Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and the College of Medicine.

The dance-fest itself spans 30 hours over three days at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center, closing out on the first Sunday in March each year. But the planning, fundraising and devotion to the "Miracle Kids" and their families goes on year-round.

The College of Medicine received \$571,584 this year, which it will use to support its pediatric programs at FSU PrimaryHealth™ and school-based clinics in Gadsden County, as well as community organizations such as Bond Community Center, Big Bend Hospice, Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare, the FSU Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy's Early Head Start Program and the Hang Tough Foundation.

Donate, or learn more about the program at dmfsu.org.



A team from Big Bend Hospice explains to a group of students the free grief counseling that is available to children and youth in the region who have experienced the loss of a loved one.



Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Myeshia Carroll tells the crowd about the partnership among the College of Medicine, Gadsden County Schools and the Gadsden County Health Department that provides primary health care to children at five Gadsden schools.

CLASS NOTES

2024

M.D.

Cuneyt Ozkardes, M.D., is completing an ophthalmology residency program at Emory University in Atlanta.

2023

M.D.

Mark Jackson, M.D., is completing an anesthesia residency program at Johns Hopkins. He is a navy vet and married with one child.

Elizabeth Tremblay, M.D., is completing an anatomic and clinical pathology residency program at Yale New Haven Health.

PA

Alicia Bisplinghoff, PA-C, is practicing family medicine in Sarasota.

Monique Colley, PA-C, is practicing urgent care in Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Sydney Cox Joyce, PA-C, moved back to the North Atlanta area earlier this year to start her career as a PA-C with Peachtree Immediate Care. In April of 2024, she married her college sweetheart, Alex.

Jackie Faust, PA-C, is practicing urgent care in Tampa.

Olivia Foley, PA-C, is practicing plastic surgery in Tallahassee.

Kaitlyn Grice, PA-C, is a cardiology hospitalist at Heart Specialists of Sarasota. She is expected to wed in March of 2025.

Allison Herman, PA-C, is practicing at Dermatology Specialists of Florida in Niceville.

Catherine Hurley, PA-C, is practicing urgent care in Sumter, South Carolina.

Montanna Jenkins, PA-C, is practicing OBGYN at UF Health in Gainesville.

Sydney Kirby, PA-C, is in a pediatric critical care fellowship at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in Tampa.

Kristin Kuntz, PA-C, is practicing at Urgent Care TGH powered by Fast Track.

Hannah Lipsch, PA-C, resides in Sarasota, where she is practicing aesthetic and regenerative medicine.

Logan Lipsch, PA-C, resides in Sarasota, where he is practicing endocrine and gastroenterology with AMA Health Providers.

Jarrett McWhorter, PA-C, is practicing emergency medicine at Advent Health in Daytona Beach.

Felicia Miller, PA-C, is practicing interventional cardiology in Winter Garden.

Karen Post, PA-C, is practicing pulmonary/critical care in Tallahassee.

Madeleine Prieto, PA-C, is practicing dermatology at TruErm in South Florida.

Zach Roberts, PA-C, is practicing urgent care in Port Orange.

Addie Searcy, PA-C, is practicing at Pediatric ENT of Atlanta.

Julia Staddon, PA-C, is practicing internal medicine at Halifax Medical Center in Florida.

Jenna Steininger, PA-C, is practicing ICU/critical care at Lung Associates of Sarasota with Sarasota Memorial Hospital.

Brent Summers, PA-C, is practicing at Southern Medical Group Cardiac Electrophysiology in Tallahassee. He and his wife have a baby boy named Quinton.

Amber Winton, PA-C, is practicing psychiatry at Reserve Health in Charlotte, North Carolina. She works with incarcerated individuals, as well as patients from the community.

Calvin Yann, PA-C, is practicing cardiology at Orlando Regional Medical Center.

Madison Young, PA-C, is practicing general gastroenterology at Orlando Health.

Allison Zito, PA-C, is practicing pediatric neurology in Lake Mary.

2022

PA

Kaylee Cofield, PA-C, is practicing OB/GYN at North Florida Women's Care in Tallahassee.

Alexandra Gadzinski, PA-C, is practicing urgent care in West Palm Beach.

Nicole Gorospe, PA-C, completed TeamHealth's Emergency Medicine APC Fellowship Program in 2023. She is practicing at AdventHealth East Emergency Department.

Kimberly Graff, PA-C, is a PCM, urgent care and emergency physician assistant for over 5,000 sailors and squadrons aboard the USS Carl Vinson (CVN70) Ship. She was recently accepted to the Army/Baylor Doctorate of Science Physician Assistant Surgery and Critical Care Fellowship Program. In May of 2024, she married Joshua Seawright.

David Green, PA-C, is a hospitalist physician assistant at HCA Florida in Sarasota and an emergency room physician assistant in Bradenton. He specializes in accountable inpatient medicine.

Jessica Guevara, PA-C, is practicing pediatric urology at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, Texas.

Lindsey Johns, PA-C, is practicing at Shands with the critical care medicine team across five ICUs. She is expected to wed in October of 2024.

Paola Macias, PA-C, is practicing family medicine at AdventHealth in Tampa. She got engaged in the summer of 2024.

Sierra Maguire, PA-C, is practicing at Dermatology Southeast in Saint Johns.

Stephanie Prieto, PA-C, is practicing pediatric neurology at Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Florida.

Sabrina Sabel, PA-C, is practicing pediatric emergency medicine at Advent Health in Daytona Beach.

Ashley Sasser, PA-C, is practicing at Central Florida Spine Institute in Ocala.

Nicole Seiter, PA-C, is working in outpatient psych and welcomed her first daughter shortly after graduation, who is now 1 year old.

Sarah Sims, PA-C, is practicing family medicine in Marietta, Georgia.

Patricia Taylor, PA-C, is practicing at The Surgery Group in Pensacola, which is a part of North Florida Surgeons. She assists in general, plastics and bariatric surgeries.

Marina Von Zimmerman, PA-C, is practicing at Halifax OBGYN in Daytona Beach.

2021

M.D.

Alexander VanFleet, M.D., is practicing emergency medicine in Louisville, Kentucky. He completed his residency at the University of South Florida - Tampa General Hospital, where he served as chief resident. On March 2, 2024, he married Yasmine Humeda, a fellow graduate of the M.D. Class of 2021.

PA

Camilla Brito, PA-C, is practicing primary care in St. Petersburg. This year, she welcomed a son named Henry.

Andrew Darvin, PA-C, is practicing pediatric neurology at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children in Orlando.

Kendyll Jones, PA-C, is practicing at Tallahassee Medical Group Primary Care.

Amanda Mazzella, PA-C, is practicing endocrinology at Northeast Florida Endocrine and Diabetes Associates (NEFE-DA) in Jacksonville. She recently bought a house and added two Sphynx kittens to her family.

Cassandra Meyers, PA-C, is practicing at Florida Urogynecology Specialists in Tampa. She got married in 2023.

Michelle Miller, PA-C, is practicing internal medicine at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa.

Samantha Perez, PA-C, is practicing at Gynecology Oncology PA-C.

David Reyna, PA-C, is a hospitalist physician assistant in Florida.

Cali Wilson, PA-C, is practicing orthopedic spine surgery in Shalimar, Florida.

2020

M.D.

Haley Parsley, M.D., is a trans, nonbinary family medicine physician, who has a special interest in gender affirming care for all ages, reproductive access, and social justice through medicine. In 2023, they completed residency at Swedish Medical Center – First Hill. They are currently practicing at HealthPoint Community Health Centers in Renton, Washington, as a locums/float provider and providing healthcare to all, regardless of insurance or immigration status.

PA

Meghan Albano, PA-C, is a clinical assistant professor at Florida State University and preceptor for surgical PA students in Pensacola. She welcomed a daughter in July of 2023.

Sydney Barrington, PA-C, is practicing urology oncology at Urology of Virginia.

Alex Cervantes, PA-C, got married this year and is practicing emergency medicine at Baylor Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas.

Cassidy Clark, PA-C, is a critical care APP in the medical ICU and medical oncology ICU in North Carolina.

Amanda Geiger, PA-C, is practicing at Interventional Radiology Associates of Tallahassee. She got married in 2021 and welcomed a baby boy in 2022.

Elisa Gomez, PA-C, is practicing inpatient neurology at Atrium Health in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Denise Hardy, PA-C, is practicing cardiology in Florida.

Alexander Montayre, PA-C, is practicing cardiothoracic surgery at Tampa General Hospital.

Cortney Rausch, PA-C, is practicing in the emergency department at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital.

2019

M.D.

Amy Amornmarn, M.D., is a pulmonary/critical care fellow at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston Salem, North Carolina.

Stephanie Hurwitz, M.D., is a physician-scientist and assistant professor, specializing in hematopathology, with the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at Indiana University.

PA

Nicole Aguilera, PA-C, is a member of the rapid response team and infusion center APP with Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa. She welcomed a baby boy, named Aiden, on Dec. 7, 2022.

Thomas Bialkowski, PA-C, is practicing at Tallahassee Orthopedic Clinic. He got married on Sept. 3, 2024.

Jake Boyd, PA-C, is practicing at Holy Cross Emergency Room in Fort Lauderdale. In 2023, he married Christy Boyd. They are expecting their first child in 2025.

Alexa Camunas, PA-C, is practicing general surgery at Lakewood Ranch Medical Group in Florida.

Andrea Castano, PA-C, is practicing facial plastic surgery in Jacksonville.

Stephanie Cook, PA-C, is practicing plastic and reconstructive surgery at the Miami Cancer Institute.

Danielle Burke, PA-C, is practicing at Surgical Locum Tenens.

Holly Daniel, PA-C, is working in a GI practice in Gainesville. She recently wed in the fall of 2023.

Mary Lauren McCauley, PA-C, is practicing at Northside Breast Surgery in Atlanta.

Colleen McGonagle Pszczolkowski, PA-C, is practicing at Ear, Nose & Throat Specialists of Florida.

Meghan Monroe, PA-C, is practicing at Dermatology & Skin Cancer Center in Coral Gables. She welcomed a son named, Jax earlier this year.

Michele Purkey, PA-C, is practicing at the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Kelley Stern, PA-C, is practicing OBGYN at North Florida Women's Care in Tallahassee.

Michael Tan, PA-C, is practicing at Nephrology UF in Orlando.

2018

M.D.

Alexia Eiges, M.D., is a neonatologist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

Mauricio Parra-Ferro, M.D., is practicing at ENT Sinus & Allergy of South Florida in Fort Lauderdale.

2017

M.D.

Lindsay Gardner, M.D., is a hematologist and palliative care specialist at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa.

Jennica Hagberg, M.D., is in private practice as an OB-GYN in Mobile, Alabama.

Jonathan Hester, M.D., is an active-duty air force psychiatrist at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and an assistant professor at Wright State University Department of Psychiatry.

Matthew Khayata, M.D., is a pediatric neurologist at Prisma Health in Columbia, South Carolina. He is also a clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine – Columbia. He completed a child neurology residency program at Duke University Medical Center in 2022. In March of 2024, he married Jessica Morris.

Juan Lopez, M.D., is a child and adolescent psychiatrist for the San Francisco County Department of Public Health. He is a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society and is a Stanford University American Psychiatric Association SAMHSA Minority Fellow.

PA

Daniela Salazar, PA-C, is practicing family medicine in San Diego, California.

2016

M.D.

Jordan Bilezikian, M.D., is in private practice at Coastal Cosmetic Center in Jacksonville.

Cesar Garcia-Canet, M.D., is an assistant professor of pediatrics for the Division of Pediatric Critical Care and Division

of Pediatric Complex and Palliative Care at the University of Texas at San Antonio Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long School of Medicine.

John Kanter, M.D., is a clinical instructor in the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of California, San Francisco. He completed a neurocritical care fellowship in 2022 and residency in 2023. Dr. Kanter is currently completing a fellowship in neurotrauma.

2015

Anish Raj, M.D., is a child abuse pediatrician at the SAFEchild Advocacy Center in Raleigh, North Carolina. He also practices adolescent health in WakeMed Children's Hospital Pediatric Primary Care.

2013

Elizabeth Ault, M.D., opened her own private outpatient psychiatry practice, Southeastern Psychiatry Specialists, in Knoxville, Tennessee, earlier this year.

2011

Katherine Rodby, M.D., is a plastic surgeon, specializing in complex reconstruction, breast surgery, limb salvage, and microsurgery at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

1996

PIMS

Paul Hart, M.D., currently resides in Niceville, Florida, with his wife of 27 years, Doreen. They have three children. Dr. Hart is the owner of Southland Medical Solutions – Apalachicola, Florida; Chipley, Florida; Madison, Florida; Ozark, Alabama; and Eufaula, Alabama.

Do you have an item to share for our next issue of Class Notes?

If so, email it to alumni@med.fsu.edu. We'd love to hear from you!



Cyneetha Strong, M.D., co-medical director of FSU PrimaryHealth™, conducts a liver scan on a patient, using the new liver scanner donated by Mayo Clinic Florida.

DID YOU KNOW?

Through the Florida Medical Practice Plan Inc., which serves as the faculty practice plan for the FSU College of Medicine, people who live in Tallahassee and surrounding areas have access to a wide array of clinical services.

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Accepting new patients of all ages, FSU PrimaryHealth™ is located 2911 Roberts Ave., Tallahassee. From wellness visits and well-child care to the diagnosis and management of acute and chronic diseases, FSU PrimaryHealth™ offers a wide range of care. For information, call 850-644-1543 or visit PrimaryHealth.fsu.edu.

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Now accepting new patients with or without a physician referral, FSU BehavioralHealth™ offers outpatient mental health services including psychiatry for adults and psychotherapy for adults and children as young as 5. Specific conditions treated include depressive and anxiety disorders, bipolar and related disorders, obsessive-compulsive and related disorders, trauma and stress related disorders and others. In-person and telehealth appointments are available. For information call 850-644-6543 or visit BehavioralHealth.fsu.edu.

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FSU SeniorHealth™ is dedicated to managing the care of older adults. Our providers focus on health problems that affect aging patients such as memory loss, incontinence, medication side effects and fall prevention. As increasing access for the aging population is a big focus, FSU SeniorHealth™ not only has outpatient appointments but also meets patients where they are: in multiple assisted living facilities and nursing homes in the area. For information, call 850-645-5050 or visit SeniorHealth.fsu.edu.

FSU NEUROMODULATION™

FSU Neuromodulation™ is committed to improving the lives of patients by providing high-quality Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) treatment. TMS is an effective and safe, non-invasive treatment that is FDA-cleared for Major Depressive Disorder. This innovative treatment has shown effectiveness with patients who haven't responded well to typical treatments for depression. To make an appointment or for more information, call 850-644-5600 or visit Neuromodulation.fsu.edu.

Five Selected to FSU Medical Hall of Fame

By **Bob Thomas**, FSU College of Medicine



Myra Hurt, Ph.D.

Two iconic leaders in the College of Medicine's history and a trio of distinguished physicians entrenched in their respective communities make up the five-member FSU Medical Alumni 2024 Hall of Fame class. While its September induction ceremony was canceled because of Hurricane Helene, plans are underway to recognize

put everything she was into ensuring its success."

Hurt served as first acting dean in 2000 when the college was signed into law by Gov. Jeb Bush, and later she became dean of student affairs and oversaw admissions. She also conceived the pathway SSTRIDE and Bridge to Clinical Medicine.

Van Durme came to the college in 2004 as chair of the Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health and in 2018 became senior associate dean for Clinical and Community Affairs. In addition to his skills as an administrator and educator, he embodied the college's mission of service to the underserved.



Daniel Van Durme, M.D.

"Dan considered himself a servant leader, and I truly believe he was," wrote his wife, Pat Van Durme. "His belief was simply this: if we take care of everybody, regardless of race or financial status or sex or any of the other ways to define people, we can make the world a better place."

He led mission trips to developing countries, mentored stu-

dents, advised numerous student groups and was the founding advisor of the Chapman Chapter of the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

As the college's chief medical officer, he led the university's response to the COVID pandemic. He was most proud of his role in making FSU PrimaryHealth™, the clinic serving Southwest Tallahassee's underserved population, a reality.

The facility now carries his name.

the honorees during the May 17, 2025, M.D. Commencement Ceremonies.

Myra Hurt, Ph.D., and **Daniel Van Durme, M.D.**, both of whom died in 2023, are the first non-alumni selected for Hall of Fame inclusion by vote of the Alumni Board. They exceeded the board's selection criteria of service to the community, profession and the College of Medicine in ways that shaped its future.

"Dr. Hurt is literally referred to as the 'Mother of the College of Medicine,'" said Dean Alma Littles, M.D.

Hurt was named director of PIMS in 1992 and a year later authored a white paper that would provide the foundation for her nearly decade-long fight to create a four-year medical school at Florida State. Her dogged persistence eventually won over the Florida Board of Regents, the Florida Legislature and eventually, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and its accrediting body, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).

"Often, Dr. Hurt said that creating the medical school was harder than giving birth," wrote her husband, Julian Hurt, M.D. "She called the medical students her babies, but the medical school itself was her baby, too. She gave it life and nurtured it carefully. It was a true labor of love and Dr. Hurt

Hurt and Van Durme are joined in the class by the following:

Geden Franck (M.D., '14), a member of the inaugural, 10-member Bridge to Clinical Medicine graduating class (2010), is a double board-certified physician and is the head sports medicine physician at Memorial Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine in Fort Lauderdale.



Geden Franck (M.D., '14)

The son of Haitian immigrants, the Miami native gives back to his community by serving as physician to the powerhouse Northwestern High football team, for whom he played. He also serves as the head doctor for Florida Memorial University athletics and has previously worked with the Miami Dolphins, Miami Marlins and University of Miami athletic teams.

Shoshana Hallowell (M.D., '10) is a minimally invasive and robotic general and bariatric surgeon at Ascension St. John Hospital in Detroit, who literally practices what she preaches. A breast cancer survivor, she turned her attention to advocacy, starting with her sister and mother. Like herself, they had dense breast tissue, elevating their risk. MRI results revealed both had breast cancer.



Shoshana Hallowell (M.D., '10)

In 2022 Hallowell launched the 501c3 nonprofit, Operation Breast Density, with a mission of educating patients, health care providers and physicians about the importance of

appropriate screening modalities for individuals with dense breast tissue. In addition, the organization offers financial assistance for supplemental screening to remove existing barriers.

Joseph Camps (PIMS '79) retired from private practice in 2024 after 34 years as a urologist and urological oncologist in Tallahassee and has deep roots in its medical community, as well as Florida State University. Captain of FSU coach Bobby Bowden's inaugural 1976 football team, he began his medical education at FSU before graduating from the University of Florida College of Medicine, completing residency at the University of North Carolina followed by a fellowship at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Texas.

He has been a board member of Seminole Boosters and FSU Board of Trustees, was on the presidential search committee which hired FSU President Richard McCullough in 2021 and was a commencement speaker at the university's April 2024 graduation ceremony. Camps currently serves on the Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) Board of Directors as vice president and chief academic officer and is actively engaged in the development of the new medical initiative between FSU and TMH.

With the addition of the five new inductees, the FSU Medical Hall of Fame now counts 40 among its ranks, which includes 12 who were recognized between 2014-2019 with the Distinguished Alumni Award.



Joseph Camps (PIMS '79)





Congratulations to our graduates!

Above, the School of Physician Assistant Practice graduated 58 new PAs in December 2023, the fifth graduating class in the program's history that brought the number of PA alumni to more than 250.

At right, the College of Medicine graduated its milestone 20th M.D. class in May 2024, adding 110 physicians to its alumni ranks and bringing the total M.D. alumni to 1,956. Here, class President Nick Thomas reflects on his journey through medical school in his commencement speech at Ruby Diamond Concert Hall.



At left, the Department of Biomedical Sciences graduated one new Ph.D., Grace Hammel, in August 2024. Dean Alma Littles, M.D., joined Hammel's professor, Yi Ren, Ph.D., for the hooding ceremony and a reception at the College of Medicine later in the day.



M.D. Class of 2028 White Coat Ceremony

It is a College of Medicine tradition to have one of our M.D. alumni deliver the keynote address at the White Coat Ceremony, held after the new M.D. students complete their first semester and welcoming them to the medical profession. The keynote speaker for the M.D. Class of 2028's ceremony Aug. 2 was Shlermine "Shea" Aupont Everidge, M.D., Class 2016.

Last year, Everidge became the Big Bend region's first fellowship-trained breast surgical oncologist after completing a one-year fellowship at the prestigious MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. It accepts only four physicians each year. She had previously completed her residency in general surgery at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare, where she now practices, and she also joined the clerkship faculty at the College of Medicine's Tallahassee Regional Campus.

Everidge shared several lessons she has learned in her journey, beginning with perseverance, hard work and compassion from her mother, a Haitian immigrant single mom of four who also taught her to dream. Her mother was in attendance for her speech; "it never stops," the speaker said. "The support never stops."



Shlermine "Shea" Aupont Everidge, M.D.



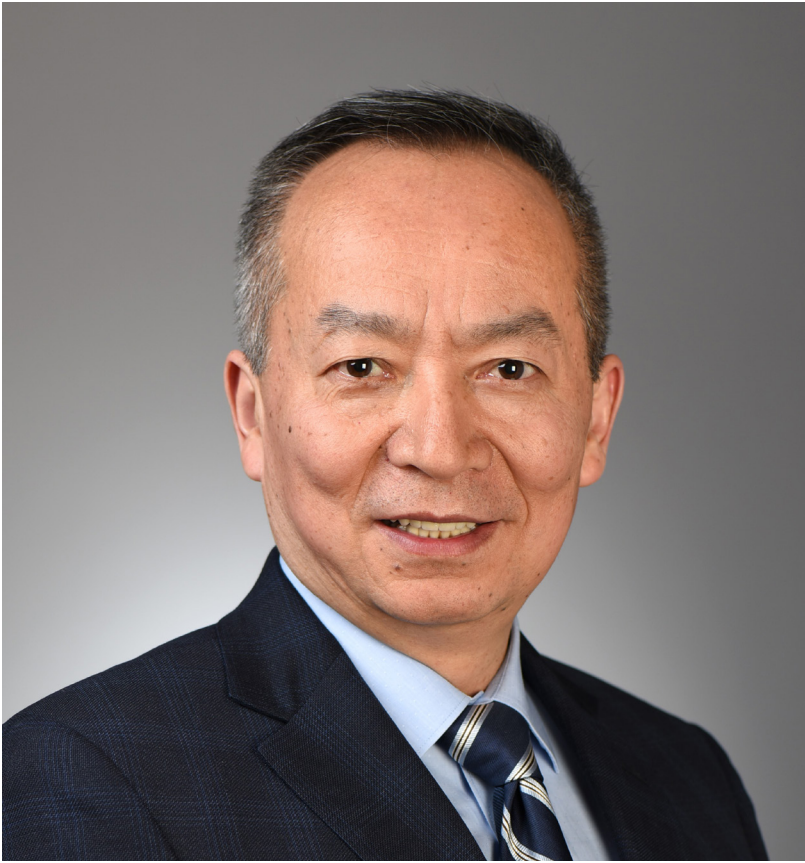
Associate Professor Ewa (Ava) Bienkiewicz coats William "Will" Cotter.

"The white coat you are about to wear is more than a garment; it is a symbol of trust. Patients will look to you for guidance and reassurance during the most vulnerable moments of their lives," Everidge said. "This coat represents your commitment to uphold the highest standards of medical ethics, to practice with integrity, and to show empathy and compassion in every patient interaction."

Earlier in the ceremony, 12 members of the M.D. Class of 2025 were inducted into the FSU Chapman Chapter of the Gold Humanism Honor Society for embodying "the service calling of medicine." Dean Alma Littles, M.D., told the first-year students the inductees are "an example of what we hope you will strive for."

Membership in GHHS is limited to 10-15% of each graduating class.





Distinguished educator, researcher Xian Jin Xie leads research, graduate programs

By Audrey Post, FSU College of Medicine

Xian Jin Xie, Ph.D., a distinguished educator and researcher whose work has advanced fields across the health care spectrum including biomedicine, nursing, dentistry, public health and data science, has joined the College of Medicine faculty as senior associate dean for research and graduate programs. His first day was Oct. 28.

He brings extensive experience as an academic administrator, as well as an accomplished researcher and an interdisciplinary collaborator. For the past 17 years, he has held multiple leadership positions at two flagship universities, the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and, most recently, the University of Iowa, where he was associate dean for research at its College of Dentistry & Dental Clinics. He also was a professor of cancer epidemiology and population science at Iowa's Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center at the Carver College of Medicine and professor of Biostatistics at the College of Public Health.

"We are thrilled to have attracted a research leader of Dr. Jin Xie's caliber to lead the Florida State University College of Medicine's research efforts," Dean Alma Littles, M.D., said. "His experience in strategic planning, professional and graduate curriculum development, community engagement and securing external funding sources has given him the exact skill set we need.

"In addition to his strong qualities as a scientist, he is also skilled in the art of medical and research education that is so integral to our medical school model, with an emphasis on mentoring, nurturing and empowering students and colleagues alike," she added. "He is simply a good fit for us, the right person at the right time."

Xie succeeds Jeffrey Joyce, Ph.D., who oversaw tremendous growth in the College of Medicine's research portfolio. Joyce returned to the private sector in summer 2023.

Under Xie's leadership, the University of Iowa's College of Dentistry experienced similar research growth, with annual external funding doubling since 2020, and its national ranking for National Institutes of Health/ National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIH/NIDCR) funding improved from 31st in 2018 to 12th in 2023.

Throughout his career, he has directed quantitative biomedical research on 60 peer-reviewed grants and 40 clinical trials, which were supported by agencies as varied as NIH, NASA, the American Cancer Society and the Department of Defense. He has published more than 175 peer-reviewed articles, led and contributed to securing more than \$100 million in external research funding, and collaborated with and mentored more than 100 clinical, translational and basic science investigators.

Xie said he is "thrilled" to join the College of Medicine community, where he was impressed by "the palpable sense of community and shared purpose among faculty, staff and students."

"Through serving, collaborating and empowering, my vision is to create a vibrant, collaborative research ecosystem that harnesses our collective strengths across various disciplines. I believe that by emphasizing interdisciplinary partnerships, focusing on areas of strength and strategically developing new research programs, we can drive groundbreaking discoveries that directly benefit our communities," he said. "Together, we'll not only enhance our graduate programs but also position the FSU College of Medicine as a national leader in impactful research that transforms health care for all."



OUR DONORS MAKE GREAT THINGS HAPPEN

From helping deserving students fulfill their dreams of earning a degree to funding outstanding medical education programs and groundbreaking research, our donors make an impact. Following are just a few examples of how our donors help us advance our mission.

The Jules B. Chapman, M.D., and Annie Lou Chapman Private Foundation has been a longtime supporter of the College of Medicine. Most recently, the foundation committed \$100,000 to create the Jules B. Chapman, M.D., and Annie Lou Chapman Private Foundation Cultivating Human Excellence in Health Care Fund. This generous gift will provide support to cultivate and enhance humanism in the care of self, colleagues and future patients. It will support opportunities to nurture, emphasize and teach humanism in health care utilizing artificial intelligence.

Community Hospice & Palliative Care committed \$30,000 to support the ACTS2 Project, based in the College of Medicine, for African American Alzheimer's Caregiver Training and Support. ACTS2 provides free, faith-based skills training and support to African American dementia caregivers.

The Haq Family Foundation committed \$15,000 to support the ACTS2 Project, as well, to support free skills training for African American dementia caregivers seeking respite care that aligns with their faith, values and customs. Research has shown that African Americans are 2.5 times more likely to develop vascular dementia and twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's as the non-Hispanic white population, and they also tend to seek guidance from faith leaders before seeking health services. The donation was made in memory of Karen Haq.

The Karen Toffler Charitable Trust provided \$55,000 to support the 2024 Toffler Scholar and the college's Bridge to Clinical Medicine Program. Toffler Scholars are medical researchers working on early-stage, future-focused brain science. The Bridge program opens the door to medical school or a career in health care for applicants from medically underserved, rural and inner-city communities.

Interested in learning how you can make a difference through charitable giving? Contact Jim McNeill, assistant dean for Advancement, at 850-644-4389 or Jim.McNeill@advance.fsu.edu



Merryn and Richard Jolkovsky

After tragedy, a family's generosity keeps a memory and passion for medical education alive

By Patrick Crowley, FSU College of Medicine

It's human nature that, after our inevitable passing, we hope to be remembered by friends and loved ones, and for the good we did while living our lives. Wanting to preserve the memory of her husband and his passion for medical education, Merryn Jolkovsky, M.D., established the Richard Jolkovsky, M.D., Memorial Fund to support the FSU College of Medicine's Summer Clinical Practicum.

Richard, a cardiologist who graduated in 1983 from the Florida State University Program in Medical Sciences (PIMS), the forerunner to the College of Medicine, lost his life in a February 2022 small plane crash.

"Rick loved the PIMS program," said Jolkovsky, who worked with Alma Littles, M.D., dean of the College of Medicine, and Jim McNeill, assistant dean for advancement, to create the endowed fund. "He talked about it fondly over the years and was so thrilled when FSU was able to offer a full medical school program. Before he died, we were discussing finding a way to support the College of Medicine but had not finalized our giving plan."

During Summer Clinical Practicum, students who have completed their first year of medical school participate in community-based patient care activities in rural, urban underserved or geriatric locations throughout Florida and South Georgia.

"This program allowed me to connect the dots between medical lecture and clinical skills as we got to experience medicine in a real

environment that demanded real answers, and thus allowed a real opportunity to learn," said Sean Gabany, a fourth-year medical student and recent inductee to the FSU Chapman Chapter of the Gold Humanism Honor Society. "It showed me what my future could hold when I become an experienced clinician and how what I learn now could make my dream of serving the underserved a reality."

The real-world experience gained through the three-week program has had a profound impact on students. It provides an immersive, experiential learning environment where students, under the direct supervision of primary care physicians, can practice and improve their basic clinical skills and acquire experience working with a health care team. For Gabany, the experience at the college's Immokalee Health Education Site shaped the trajectory of his career.

"Summer Clinical Practicum allowed me to take the first major steps toward determining what my future as a physician will look like," Gabany said, who is setting his sights on pediatric and child psychiatry. "It reinforced my love of working with children but also introduced me to integrated care — a unique way for medicine to be practiced that . . . addresses the whole child, physically and mentally."

This is the kind of impact the program is supposed to have — helping future physicians choose meaningful career paths and exposing them to areas most in need of health care professionals — and it is one reason Jolkovsky chose to support it.

"I hope this endowment will allow medical students to gain experience working in their local communities and encourage them to consider practicing in those smaller towns and rural areas," Jolkovsky said. "In his career as a cardiologist, Rick was passionate about improving the state of health care in rural areas. He felt strongly enough about the need to improve the health care system that he pursued a Master of Medical Management degree through USC (University of Southern California), graduating in 2016. He felt we needed more physicians to practice in rural areas and needed to support those local practitioners and their patients with access to specialty services in their own communities."

Today, Dr. Jolkovsky — known as RJ — is remembered by family, friends, patients,

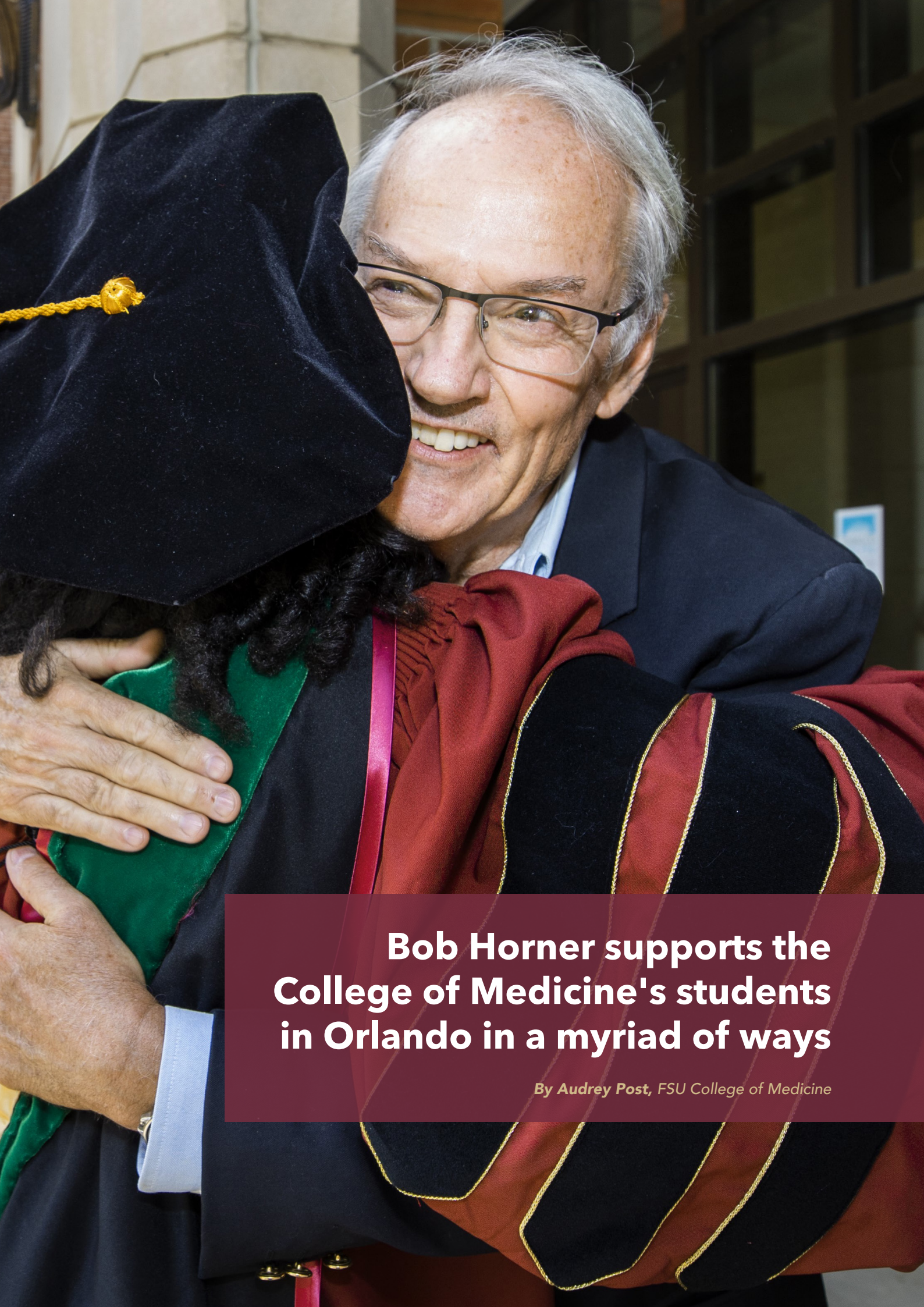
co-workers and the FSU College of Medicine community for his generosity and the good work he did as chief of cardiology at CentraCare in St. Cloud, Minnesota. He also served as that hospital's chief of staff and as a trustee on its board of directors. He was posthumously inducted into the FSU College of Medicine Alumni Hall of Fame in 2022.

Most importantly, his memory will be carried by his wife and children, Betsy, Emily and Ben. And now, thanks to the Richard Jolkovsky, M.D., Memorial Endowed Fund, he will touch the lives of future physicians in perpetuity.



CHANGING THE LIVES THAT CHANGE THE WORLD

If you would like information on how to build your legacy at the College of Medicine, contact Jim McNeill, assistant dean for Advancement, at 850-644-4389 or Jim.McNeill@advance.fsu.edu



**Bob Horner supports the
College of Medicine's students
in Orlando in a myriad of ways**

By Audrey Post, FSU College of Medicine

Over the past seven years, Bob Horner has played a key role in supporting the FSU College of Medicine's Orlando Regional Campus. A volunteer in the HOST – Help Our Students Travel – program, Horner has welcomed two dozen FSU medical students into his Orlando-area home for one-month stints as they rotated through specialized training.

"I barely knew what a residency was, much less a rotation, when I started, but the students are just a delight to be around," said Horner, who retired after 30 years with IBM. "I'm at a point in my life where I just want to help, so these students can focus on their clerkship rotations and their parents don't have to worry about where they're staying."

He began to share in his former guests' milestones, regularly attending Match Day and graduation ceremonies.

Orlando Regional Campus Dean Mark Chaet, M.D., said Horner was one of the first people he met after becoming dean almost three years ago.

"He was described to me as being a friend to the FSU College of Medicine who has been at every Orlando campus event and supported us any way he could. He even provides housing to visiting FSU medical students," Chaet said. "Well, that was just the beginning of the story. Bob is a friend, an advisor and a positive force to all he meets. We are fortunate to have him as a fan of the College of Medicine and I am grateful to know him as a friend."

As with most successful relationships, Horner feels equally fortunate. He created his own version of a "Wall of Fame" at his home, with a photo of every medical student he has hosted since 2017. The only time he ever declined to host a student was when he was going to be out of town when the student needed to arrive.



"I don't want any student to come into an empty house," he said.

Although HOST was created initially to provide lodging for students during interviews for residency programs, the COVID-19 pandemic meant those interviews be-

came virtual, and they have primarily remained that way. Because third- and fourth-year medical students can choose specialized clerkship rotations at regional campuses besides their home one, HOST has allowed many students to explore specialties they might not otherwise have been able to.

Horner often has two students at a time. He shows them where the bedrooms and bathrooms are, where the kitchen is so they can prepare their own meals, and they come and go on their own schedules.

"It's effortless for me, and there's no obligation for them to be home for dinner," he said. "They're on the other side of the house, but we do enjoy visiting. My 10-year-old granddaughter always goes and introduces herself to the new arrivals."

Earlier this year, fourth-year medical student Shwetha Shetty faced paying rent to keep her Daytona Beach apartment – plus rent on an Air B&B in Orlando for the month of her Orlando rotation. That's when Student Services Coordinator Peggy Bernardo told her about Horner, whom Shetty missed meeting when he visited the Daytona Beach Regional Campus because she was at a dental appointment.

"That \$1,500 would have been pretty steep, and I was concerned, but Peggy told me to call Mr. Bob. He was so easy to work with," she said. "He said, 'Don't worry.' He even let me bring my little cat, Luna, that I had adopted from the Tallahassee Humane Society."


Both Shetty and Luna were welcomed into the Horner family; Luna had the run of the house and often watched television with Horner and his longtime companion, Denise Sullivan, Shetty said.

While Horner has fond memories of all the medical students he has hosted, he and Shetty formed a particularly strong bond. "We could talk forever," he said.

"Yes, we could," Shetty agreed, laughing. Seeing his "Wall of Fame," with its photos of many of her friends and mentors, made Horner's welcome even warmer for her.

"He really believes in our mission, but he also lives the mission with College of Medicine students out in the community," Shetty said. "He's always volunteering his time at church, attending conferences nationally to learn and give back to vulnerable populations around us, and he's heading non-profit organizations combatting violence in foreign countries, as well."

"He's so unassuming and humble that you wouldn't know about all the work he does unless you see him in action or ask."



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CONTACT US
Main campus
1115 W. Call St.
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4300

850-644-1855 | info@med.fsu.edu | www.med.fsu.edu