

THE TORCH

FSU ANNE'S COLLEGE MAGAZINE

SPRING 2025



A LEGACY OF GREATNESS
Alumna Sandy Schultz



Greetings from Anne's College!

The fall semester has been a busy but exciting one at the Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. Our faculty members are working hard teaching our wonderful students and engaging in important research. Our students are learning the information they need for successful careers, and our alumni are doing amazing things in their respective fields. As stressful as our everyday lives can be, it's important to pause and reflect on the community we are all a part of, and remind ourselves of the special connection we all share with one another through Florida State University.

In this issue of the Torch, we spotlight one of our most generous and accomplished alumnae, Dr. Sandy Schultz, whose career as both a coach and an educator touched countless lives — and her gift will impact countless more. We also caught up with two alumni who have the unique distinction of being the only husband and wife to have received Distinguished Alumni Awards from the college, Drs. Trish and Arthur Clements. Finally, we celebrated the budding career of Brooke Brennan, who is the social media content producer for the Oklahoma City Thunder professional basketball team. Alumni like these show our students the endless possibilities of what they can accomplish with a degree from Anne's College, and we are proud to highlight their careers.

In addition to our alumni, we talked to our current faculty members pushing the boundaries in their respective fields. Dr. Garret Hall is exploring ways to improve the reliability of math assessment, while Drs. Ayesha Khurshid and Lama Jaber, their students and FSU colleagues are looking at the way other cultures approach education — and how we might incorporate that knowledge in American classrooms.

There is always so much going on at Anne's College, but we want to hear from you. We hope you'll take the time to reach out with the latest updates by emailing us at annescollege@fsu.edu.

I wish you all the best, and as always, go Noles!

Damon P.S. Andrew, Ph.D., FNAK, FNAKHE
Dean and Professor
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THE TORCH

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Cover photo by Muñoz Photography

\$1.1 MILLION

In scholarships awarded in 2025-26

3,676

Graduate and undergraduate students

81

Staff members

200

Full-time faculty members

2:5

Staff-to-faculty ratio

18:1

Student-to-faculty ratio

#4

In the nation for research expenditure
(U.S. News & World Report)

#6

In the nation for journal article citations
(Academic Analytics, amongst peer colleges)

#7

In the nation for number of journal articles published
(Academic Analytics, amongst peer colleges)

#18

Education-related college in the nation
(U.S. News & World Report)

#5

Sports Management program in America
(Niche)

#7

Kinesiology and Physical Therapy program in America
(U.S. News & World Report)

#8

Education program in America
(U.S. News & World Report)

A LEGACY OF GREATNESS

ALUMNA SANDY SCHULTZ

By Josh Duke

Photo by Muñoz Photography



Schultz and Billie Jones



Schultz and Janet Wells with the Garnet and Gold Guys



Schultz getting hooded by Billie Jones

Dr. Sandra 'Sandy' Schultz (Ph.D. Physical Education/Movement Science, '85) is a modern-day Renaissance woman, a leader in the world of collegiate softball and volleyball, an avid world traveler, and an accomplished writer. Get to know her more, and you will discover her passion and talent extend even deeper into a variety of interests. In fact, plenty of people know Schultz as an accomplished horticulturist, an avid horse show judge, or an animal rescuer.

At Florida State University, however, she is known for her generosity above all else. One of the most generous supporters of the Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, Schultz has transformed the future of the college with a generous gift that will endow the college's deanship, providing support to multiple faculty positions. In addition, Schultz recently pledged generous support to FSU's Unconquered Scholars Program, which provides services to students who have experienced foster care, homelessness, or other hardships. So, while there are many ways to have met Schultz, there are a few constants regardless of context: passion and talent for whatever she does, and her generosity.

FSU WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

Schultz chose Florida State University for her doctoral studies after meeting two Anne's College faculty members who were already legends in FSU women's sports: Drs. Janet Wells and Billie Jo Jones. Schultz recalls meeting them at a conference, and the exchange was so positive that she knew FSU was the right place for her.

As a student, she loved FSU Football and studying at Strozier Library. More than anything, though, she loved her professors. "I had the best professors," Schultz said. "They were all just incredibly good, every single one of them. I loved going to class."

Wells and Jones would go on to play a role in Schultz's doctoral studies, as well. Jones served as her major professor on her doctoral committee, and Wells was both a committee member and proofreader for her dissertation. "There were no errors," Schultz said proudly. "None. Not one single typo in 200 and something pages, and Janet had an eagle eye."

Beyond their role as mentors and educators, Wells and Jones also generously opened their home to Schultz to help her finish her dissertation. "One time, I had to come back for a semester and work on my dissertation, because living in Miami and trying to teach at Miami Dade College, I could not get it done," Schultz recalled. "I said, 'Okay, I'm going to take a semester off at Miami Dade and go up there,' and they let me stay in their house for a whole semester in their spare room. It was so incredibly nice. They were just wonderful."

MAKING A NAME IN MIAMI

As she wrapped up her dissertation, Schultz was making a name for herself in a different way: as an up-and-coming softball and volleyball coach at Miami Dade College. Her time as coach actually began shortly after the first year of her doctoral studies. When the former Miami Dade College softball coach left for UCLA, Schultz saw an opportunity.

She interviewed, and, given her background playing volleyball and softball, she was offered the position and decided to talk to Jones. "I said, 'Do you think I should come back, or should I take the job at Miami Dade?' She says, 'Take the job. Don't blow that.'" That encouragement turned into 34 years as a successful coach and professor at Miami Dade College.

Schultz's time at Miami Dade College was marked by major changes at the institution. For starters, it became a four-year degree-granting college. Under her leadership, the softball and volleyball teams became highly competitive and would often travel to play some of the best teams in the country, including Florida State, University of Florida, University of Central Florida, University of North Carolina, and more. During her time, Schultz also wrote five textbooks that explored concepts of fitness and wellness.

Despite these tremendous successes, Schultz is also fondly remembered for smaller accomplishments and personalized attention. Arlene Colson was a softball pitcher at Miami Dade College under Schultz. Colson recalls the transformative impact Schultz had on her life. "I played softball all my life, and she, by far, was my favorite coach," said Colson. "She was just so kind and caring. She was a big part of my life, so much so that she went to my wedding when I got married."

Colson was amazed at Schultz's understanding of softball. "She knew her sport," she said. "She taught it well — she taught us a lot, taught me a lot, and I thought I knew softball by the time I got there, but she definitely taught me some skills."

She also recalls Schultz going above and beyond routinely for her players and students, but one memory stands out particularly. Colson, covering third base, broke her thumb when an opposing player slid into the base. Schultz personally took Colson to nearby Shands Hospital. After treating the break, the doctor instructed Colson to keep her hand raised above her heart, her hand splinted in a gesture that looked like waving hello. Schultz took Colson from the hospital to team dinner, and when they arrived, Schultz had the entire team raise their hands in the same gesture in solidarity.

BEST OF THE BEST

Schultz made an impact at Miami Dade College, and as testament to her incredible talent, she was named the 2009 Florida Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The award recognized faculty members for their teaching prowess, scholarly contributions, institutional impact, and peer references. Schultz undoubtedly set a high standard in each of those categories during her time at Miami Dade College.

Jenny Krugman, longtime friend and former vice president for the southern region at The College Board, believes that the award was well deserved. "She was recognized by Miami Dade College and received an endowed teaching chair award from the college four times. That doesn't happen, not in my experience," Krugman said. "But she's not an elitist, and she felt the mission of [Miami Dade College] was worthy of a lifetime of work, and so she gave the college that lifetime of work."

Even after 25 years of friendship, Krugman says she still learns new things about Schultz that amaze her. She reflects on Schultz rescuing an abandoned dog in the middle of the Florida Turnpike. The dog, named Mickey because it resembled a mouse, is deaf and blind, but Krugman says Schultz will walk it every morning, first thing. "Her three adopted cats walk with them, too. I think that's a testimony to the kind of person she is."

FLORIDA STATE LEGACY

Beyond her myriad talents and accomplishments, her generosity and love for FSU puts her in a league of her own. To Schultz, supporting Anne's College just makes sense. "When I finished my tenure at Miami Dade College, I did work with the Dade County Public Schools as a consultant, and so I did see in Dade and Broward Counties a lot of graduates from Florida State College of Education, and there was not one of them that was bad," said Schultz. "Every one of them was just incredible. So basically, my gift, I hope, will help attract more good administrators and good professors in our college."

Assistant Dean for Development at Anne's College Kevin Derryberry said, "Sandy has long been a leader in giving at Florida State University, serving two terms on the FSU Foundation board during the FSU Connect campaign that wrapped in 2006.

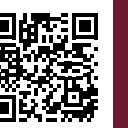
"She was one of the very first donors to record a \$1 million estate commitment to Anne's College. As her estate has grown in value, she has revisited her conversations with Florida State University Foundation and Anne's College to include additional programs such as a generous faculty support fund, an endowment that represents the first named deanship commitment at FSU, and, most recently, a generous \$1 million commitment to support the Unconquered Scholars Program. Sandy's total estate commitment to Florida State University is now more than \$6 million."

"Sandy's gift is historic, not just for Anne's College but for the entire university," said Anne's College Dean, Damon Andrew. "Her support for FSU is unwavering, and knowing that a woman as amazing and accomplished as Sandy believes in us is an indescribable feeling. This is the kind of transformational gift that will make an impact for generations to come."

Reflecting on her lifetime of achievements, Schultz added about her gift, "I was rewarded, and others should be rewarded, too. I hope the gift helps the college be excellent — even more excellent. I think that there's no question, it's the best, and one of the best in the United States, in my opinion. I want to keep it the best. That's my legacy."

VIDEO FEATURE

Learn more about the journey and impact of Sandy Schultz in our video feature: annescollege.fsu.edu/sandy



PLANNED GIFTS

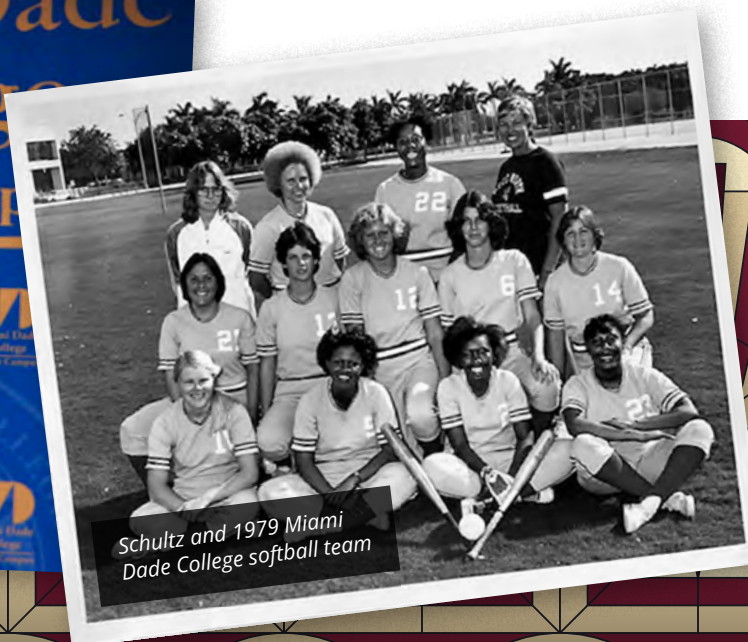
Planned gifts and estate commitments are an incredible way to establish permanent support for Florida State University. Documenting an estate gift with Anne's College allows us to plan for the future and provides benefits to donors whose ultimate charitable contributions may not be possible within their lifetimes.

Schultz' contribution via her estate follows in the model of her friends and mentors Dr. Janet Wells and Billie Jones whose estate commitment to the Janet Wells and Billie Jones Endowed Scholarship was first documented in 1999. After their passing in 2021, the Janet Wells and Billie Jones Endowed Scholarship received over \$500,000 in support from their estate.

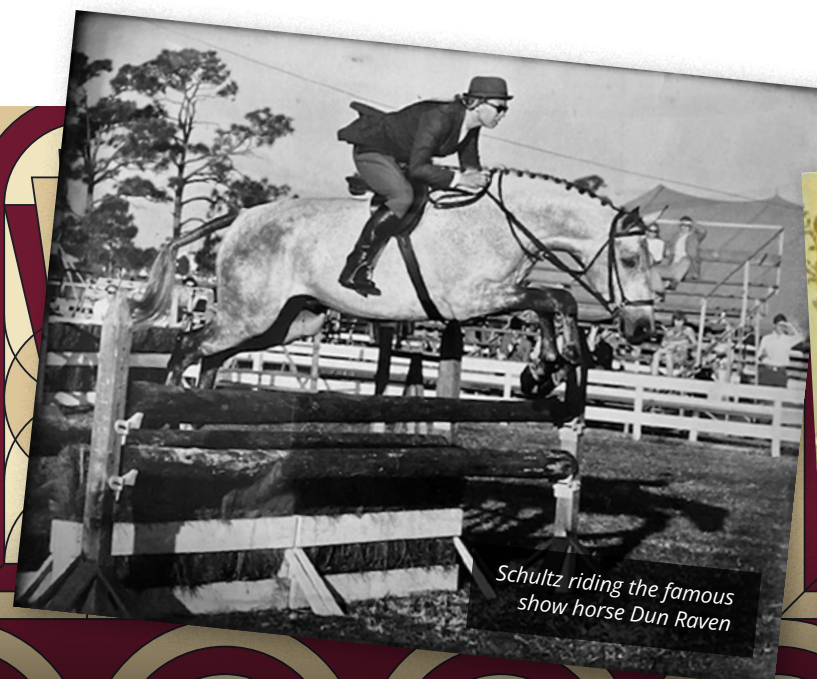
Documenting a planned gift with FSU allows donors to designate the area that will best honor their legacy and includes membership in the Westcott Legacy Society, with annual invitations to campus events, board activities, and more. To learn more about planned gifts to Anne's College and FSU, please contact Assistant Dean Kevin Derryberry (850) 644-0565; kderryberry@fsu.edu.



Schultz speaking at Miami Dade College



Schultz and 1979 Miami Dade College softball team



Schultz riding the famous show horse Dun Raven



Schultz at the Professor of the Year Ceremony in Washington with Miami Dade College President Dr. Eduardo Padron



TITLE

A MODEL FOR MATH SUCCESS

DR. GARRET HALL INVESTIGATES WAYS TO IMPROVE MATH ASSESSMENT

By Josh Duke



Solve for the variable in the following equations.

- 1.) $1 + 1 = a$
- 2.) $10 + 9 = y$
- 3.) $x/5 = 20$
- 4.) $27 = \frac{-29 \pm \sqrt{29^2 - 4(18c)}}{2(18)}$

For those who humored this impromptu assignment, you might have noticed a sudden ramp-up in difficulty, and unless you typically use the quadratic formula, you probably struggled a bit more on the last question. Maybe you didn't attempt to solve it at all, or maybe you mentally jotted down a random answer for c . Regardless, you probably got it wrong, and that's okay! From a teaching perspective, a wrong answer is simply a data point to identify gaps in knowledge and what material needs to be taught or revisited.

However, **Garret Hall** wants to go deeper and provide more information to educators and evaluators. Hall, an assistant professor in the School Psychology Program and the Combined Counseling and School Psychology program, has spent his career exploring how students develop their academic skills, especially in the field of mathematics. Hall believes that applying novel statistical methods to math assessment can open up a whole new level of understanding of the way that students approach math problems.

NEED FOR BETTER MATH ASSESSMENT

Using the examples above, math clearly encompasses a wide range of concepts and difficulty. After all, it's expected that everyone except for the youngest students should be able to figure out the answer to $1+1$. However, solving the quadratic formula requires a great deal more prior knowledge, from arithmetic to order of operations. By the time students learn the quadratic equations, educators hope they can quickly and accurately solve simpler problems. Traditional evaluation, like a test, might weigh those math problems differently to factor in their difficulty — on a test, $1+1$ might have a point value of 1, whereas the quadratic formula might be worth 10 points, for instance — but how should those points be determined?

"That's a decision that's kind of made ahead of time," said Hall. "And then it's kind of an assumption. Like, 'Oh yeah, we think this problem is twice as hard or worth twice as many points as the other, so then it's weighted more in the overall score.'"

Hall, however, thinks there is a better way. Using students' response time in answering math problems, teachers and evaluators can better understand students' response processes and eventually make testing more reliable and valid. Psychometrics is the field of evaluating the reliability and validity psychological assessments, and while the concept is far from new, Hall is taking more advanced psychometric methods and applying them in a much more practical context.

NAME

LAST

FIRST

MIDDLE

SUBJECT

DATE

HOUR/DAY

IMPORTANT

USE NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY

- MAKE DARK MARKS
- ERASE COMPLETELY TO CHANGE
- EX.

MEASURING ABILITY

Hall wants to measure latent ability, which is not an easy thing to do. Latent ability in this context refers to the ability that an assessment is intended to measure, but that ability is not directly observable. The probability a person will correctly solve a simple math calculation problem is assumed to be caused by the person's latent math ability, but we only observe the actual answer they give. "Theoretically, we don't directly observe math calculation fluency," he said. "We give a measure, and we get a score, and whether we calculate that score by hand or we do fancy statistics like I'm doing, either way we're saying this score is coming from an ability that we did not directly measure."

The problem, Hall says, is that trying to figure out this ability score requires a lot of assumptions. Just because one child scored better or worse on a test compared to her peers might not necessarily indicate her ability. "My argument is that when you calculate the score by hand using a paper and pencil measure, that's an even rougher proxy for ability than if we capture response time and accuracy together."

RIGHT AND WRONG

In Hall's mind, there is a difference between being fast and wrong on some math problems and slow and accurate on other problems. While there are plenty of models that evaluate speed and accuracy of performance, Hall is specifically looking at applying the drift diffusion item response theory model.

Hall explains the basics of the model. "You're sitting at a computer, and a calculation problem pops on the screen. There's a very brief time in which you're encoding the stimulus and you're recognizing like, 'Oh yeah, that's 17×32 .' That time between it popping up on the screen and you recognizing it is called the non-decision time. Once you recognize it, then you start to execute a decision on what that problem solution is or the product of that particular problem."

The model illustrates the differences in problem difficulty with the concept of boundaries. The upper boundary represents the correct answer, while the lower is the incorrect answer. An easy question like $1+1$ might have little space between the boundaries because it takes very little time for a person to know (or not know) the answer. More complicated problems may have wider boundaries as learners figure out how to solve the problem and come to the correct solution, and those who quickly reach the correct answer might have very high math calculation fluency compared to those who did not answer correctly.

SENSE AND DATA

In many ways, Hall is challenging longstanding standards of math assessment: there is more to being right and wrong. As such, he understands the skepticism of needing more data and more information. The potential contribution of this project, he says, is that math teachers understand the patterns of results they get on specific types of math problems.

"I think that's really what's helpful to teachers," Hall said. "A teacher could implement a worksheet, score all these themselves and realize, 'Wow, students are really having trouble on this type of problem,' but many factors could have contributed to them getting the problem wrong. Some students might have just breezed over the problem because they don't understand, filled in an answer, and moved on. Other kids might have deliberated on it for a disproportionate amount of time. Those are two very different ways of getting the wrong answer, but we don't capture those differences."

Eventually, he hopes that these more advanced assessment models can shed insight into larger trends, such as certain problems being more difficult for particular grade levels than others. He also hopes that the statistics-supported model can better inform evaluation concepts like weighting point values.

At the end of the day, though, Hall hopes that his research supports students and teachers. "Through all of this fancy statistical stuff, we are really trying to get better qualitative information about the items and how kids are performing on them." If all of this seems complicated — as complicated as solving a quadratic formula — then let the takeaway be this: better data to help educators do their job better. ■

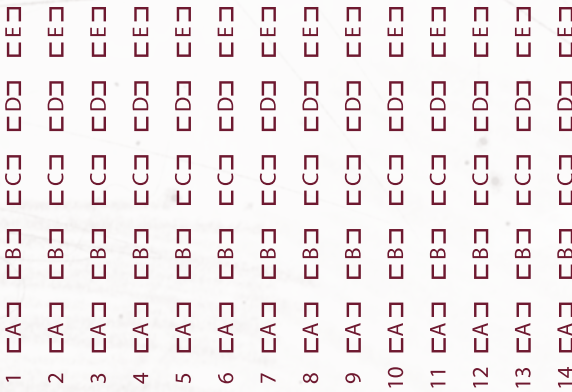




Photo by Adam Cohen

A COMMON THREAD

DRS. PATRICIA AND ARTHUR CLEMENTS ADVANCE THE STUDY OF WOMEN'S HISTORY AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

By Melissa Powell

In Tallahassee and across Florida, a historical preservationist conserves women's voices and a physician-educator builds teams that advance women's health. Together, Patricia "Trish" and Arthur Clements have spent a lifetime making an impact in the fields of women's history and women's health.

Their story began at the University of Florida as undergraduates. They met on a tennis date, which was the idea of a mutual friend who suspected they'd connect. It turned out she was right.

Arthur, in his own words, "went to the court and practiced like a maniac," and Trish showed up ready to play. It's a fitting scene for a partnership built on preparation, purpose, and shared focus. Arthur was awarded the Anne's College Distinguished Alumni Award in 2025, and Trish received the same award in 2018. The Clements are the only couple in Anne's College history to both receive Distinguished Alumni Awards.

When Trish and Arthur talk about their work, they share a similar outlook: build, preserve, lead, and listen. The habits they admire in each other, like preparation, integrity, and steadiness, are evident in everything from Trish's statewide textile collection of Florida's first ladies' gowns to Arthur's modern team-based model for a women's healthcare medical practice.

After getting married in Miami, Trish's hometown, they came to Anne's College for graduate school. Trish earned her Ph.D. in Higher Education. Arthur earned his Ph.D. in Clinical Nutrition from the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Food Science.

Both Trish and Arthur are largely successful in their own right. Trish taught at El Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey as well as the University of New Orleans, then built a career as a historical preservationist. She has spent over three decades preserving Florida's political history and documenting the stories of women who helped shape it. She served as Chair of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women and was a member of the Founding Committee for The Women's Park in Miami-Dade County, the first park dedicated to women in the United States.

Arthur founded North Florida Women's Care in 1985, which is the largest women's healthcare provider in the Big Bend. Arthur served twice as chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, was president of the Florida Obstetrics and Gynecology Society, and was president of Section 6 of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Most meaningful, he says, has been his work with the FSU College of Medicine since its inception in 2000.



Arthur & Trish Clements with Dean Damon Andrew at the Anne's College Distinguished Alumni Awards (2025)



Trish & Arthur Clements at their engagement party in Tallahassee while they were both graduate students at FSU

THE NUTRITION SPARK

Arthur's path to Nutrition and Food Science at FSU began with a jolt in an undergraduate clinical nutrition classroom at UF. "I had a high-energy professor who jumped on his desk. It was like we were in a movie. I thought the course was unbelievable," Arthur said. "Nobody in biology was talking about nutrition or homing in on modern-day health. I thought, 'This is it, this is a career.'"

"The department ... was just a machine – everybody was sticking together and working on their goals, which produced some outstanding results."

He credits his Ph.D. experience with "catapulting" him toward his focus on women's health, longevity, and quality of life. "The Department of Food and Nutrition was outstanding and supportive. It was just a machine – everybody was sticking together and working on their goals, which produced some outstanding results."

During graduate school, he worked at an extended care facility, further sharpening his focus on women's health. "I noticed that about 90-plus percent of people there were female and outliving the men, and I thought, 'What's going on here?' So, I started to look at the longevity of the women there, and many were struggling with osteoporosis and sarcopenia, and nobody was really talking about that except FSU."

A HOME IN HEALTHCARE

After FSU, Arthur went to the University of Monterrey for medical school, and then to Tulane's Charity Hospital for residency, where he served as chief resident in Obstetrics and Gynecology. When he returned to Tallahassee, he joined his father, Dr. Merritt R. Clements, an OB/GYN and one of the founding physicians of Tallahassee Memorial Hospital.

Arthur was born and raised in Tallahassee, but he never anticipated following a similar path as his father. Growing up, he saw firsthand the intensity of the demand required to work in labor and delivery.

"The technology we have today was inconceivable, especially in terms of synchronous communication via smartphones, yet the immediate access to physicians was just as strong of a demand decades ago as it is today," he said. "No one in our family was allowed to speak on the phone for more than about four minutes in case someone was calling my father, and this was particularly hard for my sister," he laughed. "But then you go through the rotations in medical school, and it's just a natural gravitational pull."

BUILDING A MEDICAL SCHOOL

When the Florida legislature authorized a new medical school at FSU in 2000, Arthur saw an extraordinary opportunity to shape how future physicians learn about women's health, healthcare teams, and disease prevention.

"At the time, it was the most outstanding, unthinkable thing," he said. "Here we are in relatively small Tallahassee, and we're opening the country's first new medical school in 20 years."

Arthur was actively involved in the creation and opening of the FSU College of Medicine. Dean Ocie Harris and Dean Alma Little charged him with developing the third-year medical student OB/GYN clerkship curriculum. Arthur was responsible for recruiting and hiring local faculty. "Those were some of the most outstanding memories of my career. I enjoyed developing future clinicians who would be leaders in medicine, especially those whom I mentored to pursue OB/GYN."

While maintaining his private practice, he served as the founding OB/GYN Clerkship Director for five years, then was asked to serve as the interim OB/GYN Education Director across the medical school's six regional campuses, a position he held for two years.

Inside the clinic and the classroom, Arthur initiated a culture shift toward a team-based medical model that he views as his legacy at North Florida Women's Care.

"Every person on the healthcare team matters and has to feel like they're making a difference," he said. "From the front office, the people who greet you, nurses, doctors, the cleaning crew, everybody has to show respect for each other."

Trish describes Arthur as a clear-eyed natural leader who prioritizes the well-being of all. "He considers his entire medical practice, the needs of the medical team, and the students he's taught before he contemplates his personal goals," she said. "Sometimes, when he tells me things, I'll say, 'Arthur, what about Arthur Clements? You haven't even told me anything about you in this huge plan that you're going to execute,'" she said with a smile. "So that is something I admire immensely."

Fittingly, his clinical North star is deceptively simple because it centers on listening to others.

"One of our lead professors in surgery at Tulane used to say, 'if you listen to a patient long enough, they will tell you what their diagnosis is, and if you listen even longer, they will tell you how to treat them,' so I do, and they'll acknowledge that you're actually hearing what they're saying."

AN ENDURING PASSION FOR NUTRITION

Throughout his career, the nutritional thread that began at FSU was integral to the way he practiced medicine. People are now more aware of the importance of nutrition, he says.

"Research suggests it takes about 30 years for health-related trends or habits to change, such as with smoking or using seat-belts. We've been consuming high-fructose corn syrup since sugar was rationed during WWII, and now nutritionists finally have an audience," he said. "The impact of gut health and the microbiome has been a topic of discussion among health professionals for 15 years or more. And now it's receiving real public attention. Changes are taking place." He believes nutrition will continue to rapidly evolve and make a significant difference in women's health.



Arthur Clements and FSU College of Medicine Dean Ocie Harris at the med school's first commencement ceremony (2005)

PRESERVING WOMEN'S VOICES

While Arthur advanced the science and practice of women's health, Trish worked to elevate women's history within Florida's history, making sure that the women who built, influenced, and sustained communities are not lost to time.

"I view women as the prime movers of society," she said. "They inspire and encourage those around them to achieve and reach their greatest potential."

"Women have safeguarded the generational records of the family's accomplishments ..."

"Women have safeguarded the generational records of the family's accomplishments by preserving critical documents, photographs, artifacts, and sentimental clothing from the milestones of life. It's logical to work with them to obtain accurate data that often didn't appear in archives, libraries, or museums prior to this interest in scholarship."

FROM RHETORIC TO RESEARCH

Trish began her academic journey studying rhetoric and public address, earning her master's degree with a focus on how people use speech to persuade, inspire, and lead. "Then I transitioned into education, thinking it would offer me a wider range of choices. I wanted to analyze other people's work as well as have an opportunity to do my own."

That decision to create rather than critique became a defining theme.

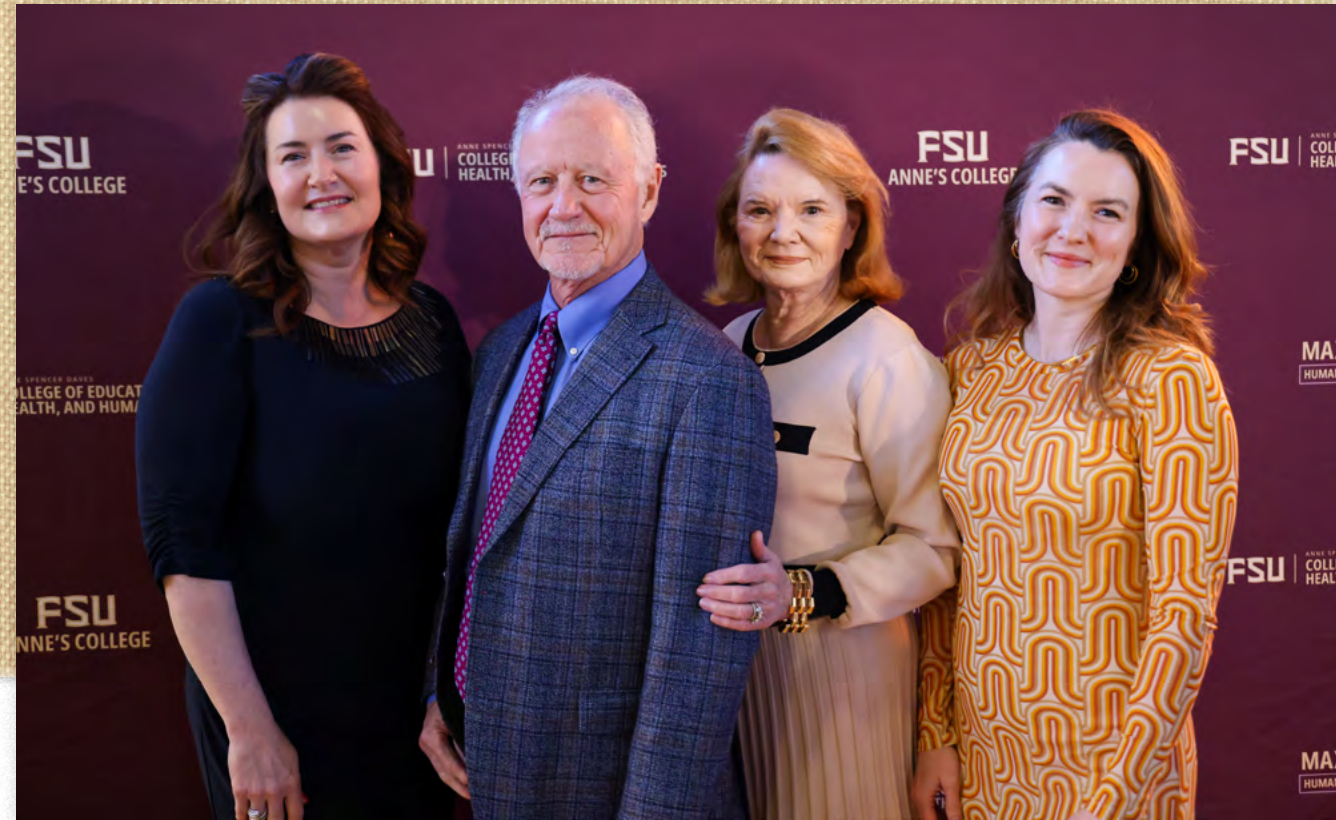
"The skills I developed while conducting my dissertation research enabled me to become a critical thinker. I apply this critical analysis as I gather facts, data, and statistics from The Florida Archive and the Florida State Library," she said. "The process gives me a non-sentimental view of whatever problem I'm trying to assess."

Trish's impact on Florida's historical record is tangible and profound, spanning interviews with world leaders, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist, and curating artifacts for future generations.

In addition to serving as Chair of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, she served as Chair of the Florida Women's Hall of Fame. "I realized there are so many women who are not recognized for what they've done. The Hall of Fame inspires young women and girls by recognizing and celebrating diverse achievements of women from all walks of life."



Trish Clements receiving the inaugural gown of First Lady Maude Hardee



From Left to right: Claire, Arthur, Trish, and Meredith Clements

One of her proudest initiatives is the Florida First Ladies' Gown Collection, founded in 1996 and now permanently housed at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee. Donating her own research, personal time, and resources, Trish served as the appointed history liaison to the Florida Department of State. The collection comprises more than 100 artifacts that trace the evolving role of women as political partners.

Her motivation wasn't about fashion, but symbolism. "It's not just about gowns. It's about culture. Clothing is an integral part of cultural rituals. As individuals and as a collective, women work to reinforce or challenge certain cultural norms. You're supposed to wear something specific to a funeral, a wedding, a campaign event, or an inauguration, for example. Each culture defines what is appropriate, and women have driven the decision-making process."

THE POWER OF VOICE

In 2005, she authored *A Legacy of Leadership: Florida Governors and Their Inaugural Speeches*, which stands as Florida's oldest oral history project. The book also serves as a time capsule for the evolution of rhetoric, governance, and civic ideals in the state.

Her oral history work has captured the voices of Florida's first ladies and governors as well as Cuban exiles who attempted to free their country in a 1961 invasion known as the Bay of Pigs. "Contemporary history told by those who experienced an event has true gravitas. Hearing first-hand accounts promotes intellectual curiosity," she said.

Her philosophy of preparation and balance extends to every part of her life. Arthur describes her as "righteous, steadfast, consistent," and always "overprepared." She nods and agrees. "When you've given your best, you have no more to give," she says with a smile. "So, there's no reason to wonder. If you really threw down, then that's it, right?"

They applied a similar sense of steadiness to the way they balanced their careers and family raising two daughters, Claire and Meredith. "Your job is not your life. Work hard, but put your family first," she said. Claire Clements is a grant writer for Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, and Meredith Merlau is an associate professor of communication at the University of Tampa.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

When asked what advice they would give to today's students, Trish stresses the importance of continuity. "Pick a field in which you excel. Plan your goals in one-year increments. You can go in many directions, but maintain a thread of continuity," she said. It's advice rooted in her own journey, one that has linked rhetoric, research, preservation, and leadership into an enduring legacy. "Make accurate assessments of your abilities, and of those who work with you," she said.

Conviction ties together the lives and legacies of Trish and Arthur Clements. In their work, teaching, and service, they remind students that a lasting impact is cumulative: choose your lane, do the work, mentor others, and maintain a common thread. ■



Ayesha Khurshid
Associate Professor
International and
Multicultural Education



Melba Marin-Velasquez
Research Assistant
Learning Systems Institute

REIMAGINING LEARNING THROUGH GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

By Melissa Powell

How do communities define education beyond the walls of a classroom? Researchers at Anne's College are leading a collaborative effort to answer that question and advance understanding of the different ways people learn across cultures.

Specifically, researchers are exploring how Indigenous Maya youth communities in Belize connect their traditional knowledge with formal education systems. The interdisciplinary team is also examining how learning can be reimagined to bridge classroom instruction with more immersive learning experiences.

The project's roots stretch back to 2021 when **Ayesha Khurshid**, associate professor of International and Multicultural Education in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and **Melba Marin-Velasquez**, research assistant at FSU's Learning Systems Institute and Anne's College alumna, began working together in Mexico.

FROM MEXICO TO BELIZE

Khurshid and Marin-Velasquez's initial work focused on a Maya Muslim community in Chiapas, Mexico, which has traditionally been excluded from formal education systems. "We wanted to understand what it means to be educated and what knowledge production systems and transfer processes within the community looked like," said Khurshid, whose research strives to connect communities and families to formal schooling. "It started as a life history ethnographic project, but over time, we were very interested in collaborating with the community and building relationships."

Through shared dialogue, they identified a need within the Maya Muslim Community to preserve ancestral medicinal knowledge that uses food as medicine.

"We partnered with a group of Maya women to course design and implement workshops led by an experienced Maya teacher to teach this knowledge. It is ancestral knowledge that they have preserved and transferred over centuries, but it is being lost because the community is moving to the city," said Khurshid.

With guidance from an experienced Maya healer, the women participated in intensive workshops on identifying, preparing, and teaching traditional plant-based treatments. Eight women received advanced training in this detailed medicinal system, including different models of diagnosis and treatment, Khurshid explained. "Now they're designing and teaching workshops to pass that knowledge back to their broader community."

EXPANDING GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

That experience in Mexico laid the groundwork for how the team now approaches its research in Belize, with a focus on community needs and recognizing that learning flows both ways. Trust- and relationship-building guide their efforts to understand how Maya youth and families in Belize experience education.

The team now includes **Lama Jaber**, associate professor of science education in the School of Teacher Education, mathematics education doctoral graduate **Anairis de la Cruz Benito**, and doctoral student **Jessica Qian**.

"There are more natural ways of engaging in teaching and learning through the environment, through more emplaced ways of being ..."

According to Jaber, the project challenges traditional notions of what counts as education. "There's been a trend to separate these ways of learning as if formal schooling happens only in confined physical spaces within schools or institutions," she said. "But there are also more natural ways of engaging in teaching and learning through the environment, through more emplaced ways of being, like walks in nature. Our project asks why this distinction exists, and what alternatives might look like."

For Marin-Velasquez, the project has also rekindled a personal understanding of how learning happens beyond the classroom. "When we look at the way we've been doing school, it's often isolating; we sit in a room, we observe, we listen," she said. "But when I think about how I was taught as a child by my grandmother, every walk was a lesson in life. She would point out plants and say, 'This one will bloom tonight, and this is what it's good for.'"

That early connection between knowledge and the natural world now shapes her view of education and research.

"It's about connecting the past, the present, and the future," Marin-Velasquez explained. "How can learning be whole if you separate the spiritual and emotional from the physical? Every place we walk holds something to teach us."

Those experiences have prompted the team to rethink what learning means, both within communities and within higher education itself. "As we got to know these Maya college students, we realized how thoughtful, creative, and insightful they were about being indigenous people within their own communal spaces of higher education," Khurshid said. "They're asking what could make higher education more conducive for Indigenous students."

LESSONS FROM GLOBAL RESEARCH

For the researchers themselves, the project has been transformative. "I've been involved in many research and professional development projects throughout my life, and I don't think I've been as transformed in any project as much as I've been in this one," Jaber said. "It helped me face myself more and interrogate assumptions and biases I hadn't questioned before. It's changing the way I think as a scholar, an educator, and a person."

De la Cruz Benito shared a similar reflection after a recent visit brought together Maya women from Mexico and Belize for shared discussions, university visits, and cultural exchange. "Just having that space and seeing how open they were, it moved me deeply, and I have so many beautiful memories from that trip," she said. "As a Mexican and Indigenous woman, I thought about my own community and family. It made me want to go back and have those conversations, to connect and learn in new ways."



Lama Jaber
Associate Professor
Science Education



Anairis de la Cruz Benito
Doctoral Graduate
Mathematics Education



Jessica Qian
Doctoral Student



For Khurshid, those moments exemplify the power of international research and the importance of trust in collaboration. "It's not merely data, it's a connection. And that connection can make research valuable not only to academia but to the community itself," she said.

Marin-Velasquez also noted that trust and language matter deeply when working internationally. "Even when you're asking for their permission verbally, you have to be careful about what words you're using and how they're understood," she said. "You can't just insert yourself into a research site. You have to build those relationships so you can see with what Indigenous research calls 'two-eyed seeing,' where Western and Indigenous lenses combine."

While the team's work spans borders, its takeaways and findings extend directly back to Anne's College. By building relationships rooted in trust, reciprocity, and shared knowledge, the researchers are strengthening what it means to partner with international communities.

The insights gained from Belize and Mexico are already shaping the team's approach to designing learning environments that are more responsive, empathetic, and connected to students' lived experiences.

LOOKING AHEAD

Plans are also underway for a symposium at Florida State, where the team and Maya youth researchers from Belize will present their reflections and findings.

Khurshid emphasizes that institutional support has been crucial throughout the process. The team credits **Josh Newman**, associate dean for research at Anne's College, and his team, and **Andrew Frank**, director of FSU's Native American and Indigenous Studies Center, for making global research efforts possible.

Meanwhile, **Katherine Yaun**, senior editor within the Anne's College Office of Research, continues to support the research project in Chiapas, Mexico. **Eugenia Millender** from the FSU School of Nursing was also involved in the Chiapas project from 2023 to 2025.

"Our collaborations began here. Internal partnerships opened doors for international ones."

"This work wouldn't have been possible without the college's support," Khurshid emphasized. "Our collaborations began here. Internal partnerships opened doors for international ones."

The internal collaboration is part of what has made the project so meaningful, Jaber says "We came to know each other through FSU. Ayesha and I met through serving on a student dissertation committee, and we really clicked and were interested in each other's work. That's the gift of the institution, creating spaces for connection." ■



CHIOMA OPRA

Chioma Opara, a doctoral candidate in the Human Development and Family Science program, draws on her background in home economics education and teaching in Nigeria to study how cultural and psychological factors influence well-being and family dynamics.

Can you share some background on your personal and academic journey and what brought you to FSU?

Growing up in Southeastern Nigeria, my early interest in family sciences was ignited by my passion and empathy towards the welfare of individuals, especially children and the elderly. I derived joy in being close and taking care of children and the aged, even when I had little or no material means to help them. As I grew older, ready to go to college, at first, I wanted to be in a medical line where I could have enough opportunity to care for people; however, due to financial challenges, I decided to defer this interest. I started searching for a course that, although it may not fall in the medical line, must be in line with caring for people. As a result of a thorough search, I discovered the course, “Home Economics”

While studying home economics, I learned about the holistic nature of humans in relation to their physical, biological, social, intellectual, aesthetic, and psychological well-being. I learned to integrate knowledge from various areas to determine the best solution to problems in a given situation. As home economics comprises diverse areas, my studies on these areas provided me with a deeper understanding of how to improve the health of individuals, families, and society at large.

I earned both my bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Nigeria. Then, I worked as a high school home economics and food/nutrition teacher for five years. I gained useful insights on human growth and education from my teaching experience.

My desire to obtain a Ph.D. is born out of my passion and goal to help individuals and families who face health- and family-related challenges. Taking classes from and working alongside leading scholars in the field was my greatest desire.

What has been the most rewarding part of your time at FSU so far?

Transitioning to a new environment brought its set of challenges, from adjusting to different academic expectations to navigating cultural differences and the sheer distance from home. However, as time went on, I discovered that Florida State University does not only offer an enriching academic environment but also fosters a supportive atmosphere for effective teaching, learning, and research activities. Pursuing my studies at FSU has blessed me with extensive knowledge and abundant opportunities for personal and professional growth. I developed an even stronger enthusiasm for my program through the experiences I gained. The wonderful support I received from the faculty and colleagues truly transformed the Human Development and Family Science Department into a home.

Are you working on any specific projects or research as part of your program?

My research examines the relationships between minority stress, self-compassion, mental well-being, happiness, and academic performance among international students in the United States. This study examines how international students deal with cultural stressors in academics and foreign environments and how self-compassion and cultural models of well-being function as protective factors. Hence, my dissertation highlights the cultural

mechanism students adopt to sustain academic success and personal resilience. I am also looking into parental aggravation as a mediator between parental physical and mental health status and mental health in children. Additionally, I am working on the moderating effect of mindfulness on parental stress, aggression, and mental health in both U.S.-born and foreign-born parents.

What advice would you give to someone interested in the Human Development and Family Science program?

Come with genuine curiosity about people, relationships, and social factors that shape family life. Be prepared to think critically about how individuals develop across the lifespan and how families function in diverse cultural, social, and economic contexts. Being an interdisciplinary program and drawing from psychology, sociology, and public health, you must stay open to different perspectives and research methods. Also take advantage of any opportunities for research and community engagements early on so that they will enhance your understanding of how theory applies to real-world family and society at large.

What are your long-term goals after you graduate?

My long-term goal after graduation is to become a professor and researcher. I want to contribute to scholarship and the body of knowledge that promotes family well-being, mental health, and social equity while also mentoring future scholars. I also want to build a career that fosters care and humanity, using research teaching and community engagement to support families and societies. ■



2025 Anne’s College Scholarship Breakfast



BILLY BATES

Billy Bates is an undergraduate student in the Dietetics Program at Anne’s College. On top of being an accomplished student in the program, he is also the president of the Student Dietetic Association.

What made you choose FSU?

I loved the culture of FSU, the look of the campus, and the feel I got from people I knew who attended here.

What inspired your interest in dietetics?

I knew that I loved food and people. Dietetics/nutrition is what bridges people to their health and fitness goals.

What has been your favorite part of the program so far?

My favorite part of the program is how close-knit the dietetics community and classes are. You get to know your classmates better and your professors as well. I've basically had the same group of students in my classes all four years, so it's nice always having classes with familiar faces.

Do you have a favorite memory of your time at FSU so far?

The Student Dietetic Association had a potluck event this semester on Landis, and it stands out in my head for sure. There was a good turnout, people brought fun/healthy food, we had music, and played a little volleyball. It's one thing to feel more comfortable with people in your major, but it's a lot cooler to provide that for other, younger people coming in.

What advice would you give someone interested in the dietetics program?

I would recommend following the FSUSDA Instagram (@fsusda) to see the kind of events the Student Dietetic Association puts on, and maybe come to one and ask those in the major any questions. Dietetics students are pretty social and will tell you anything you'd like to know, and it would also be great to reach out to any of the dietetics professors, too.

What are your goals after you're done with the program?

I'd like to have seen and experienced enough to know what specializations in dietetics I can or would like to work in. The possibilities are pretty vast, and until graduation, I would just like to keep learning what more there is to do. ■



Billy presenting to delegates from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with a classmate

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

Every year since 1977, Anne's College has recognized and honored its outstanding alumni who have gone above and beyond in their respective fields. The College honored five alumni during its 2025 Distinguished Alumni Awards Celebration held in FSU's Dodd Hall on February 28.

TRAILBLAZER AWARD

Dr. Ashlee T. Fontes - Sport Management B.S. '04, Ph.D. '24. A visionary leader in women's soccer, Fontes has transformed the sport from grassroots to the global stage, founding TLH Reckoning and co-founding The Girls Academy to expand opportunities for female athletes.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

Mr. Keith Anderson - Sports Administration M.S. '03. With more than 17 years of leadership experience in university research administration, Anderson oversees key research and innovation initiatives at the University of South Florida, helping to strengthen innovation and integrity across higher education.

Dr. Arthur S. Clements - Food and Nutrition Science Ph.D. '74. Founder of North Florida Women's Care, Clements has shaped women's healthcare in Tallahassee for more than four decades while mentoring future physicians through his long-standing involvement with the FSU College of Medicine. Read more about Clements on page 12.

Dr. Mary E. Rudisill - Movement Science Education Ph.D. '85. Director of Auburn University's School of Kinesiology, Rudisill is a National Academy of Kinesiology Fellow and award-winning scholar known for her groundbreaking research in children's motor development and motivation.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Dr. Yun-Hwa Peggy Hsieh - Food Science Ph.D. '87. A global innovator in food science, Hsieh developed rapid test kits that have transformed food safety and quality control, making her one of FSU's most influential researchers. Watch a video about her life, research, and influence at annescollege.fsu.edu/hsieh.



RESEARCH SHOWCASE

The annual Anne’s College Research Showcase was held on March 28, 2025, in the Stone Building. The event highlights groundbreaking projects by both students and faculty, showcasing the College’s commitment to fostering a vibrant research environment that tackles critical contemporary issues. This year’s event marked a record-breaking milestone for Anne’s College, with 246 participants presenting work from across all six academic departments, laboratory research schools, and community partnerships.

The 2025 Robert M. Gagné Research Award recipients were also announced at the showcase.

Ph.D. candidate **Saurabh Kadyan** from the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Food Sciences received the top student honor for his presentation, “How Prenatal Diet Shapes Offspring Microbiomes and Metabolic Health.”

On the faculty side, **Dr. Yeo-eun Kim** from the Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems received the top faculty award for her project, “Dynamic Interplay of Motivational Regulation Strategies and Achievement: Insights from Intensive Longitudinal Data.”

97
15-minute research presentations given by faculty members and students

120
Posters presented by students

78
Other conferences attended by presenters to further amplify their research



SUNSHINE STATE RECEPTION AT AERA

In April, alumni, faculty, staff, and students from Anne's College joined colleagues from across Florida's public universities for the annual Sunshine State Reception, held in conjunction with the American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual meeting in Denver. Co-hosted by FSU's Anne's College and institutions within the State University System of Florida, the event offered an evening of networking and celebration among education researchers and professionals.

" Building connections with one another is essential. While there might be some friendly competition between our institutions, we are all part of the Florida higher education system, which has been ranked as the best system in the nation by U.S. News & World Report for the past eight consecutive years."

— Dean Damon Andrew



ELEVATED TORCH AWARDS

The annual ElevatED Torch Awards, held on May 1, 2025, celebrated educators and leaders who shape the future of education.

PATHMAKER AWARD

The Pathmaker Award recognizes school principals who mentor FSU’s educational leadership students. This year’s recipient, **Dr. Brian Pollitt** of Strawberry Crest High School in Hillsborough County, was described by his nominator as “an educational leader in every sense of the word.”

COOPERATING TEACHER AWARDS

Brittany Hutto of Hawks Rise Elementary School was recognized for her intentional mentorship and for consistently helping her student teacher understand the “why” behind each classroom activity.

Tonya Givens of Swift Creek Middle School was honored for her deep commitment to the success of her student teachers, assisting with interview preparation, serving as a reference, and continuing to offer support after her students’ internships concluded.

Ryan Webb of Florida State University Schools was selected for the high school award for his ability to model resilience and grace in the face of the demands of the profession.

SCHOOL LEADER AWARD

Ilea Faircloth, a longtime administrator in Bay County currently at Hiland Park Elementary School, was recognized for fostering a welcoming and supportive school environment.

MEREDITH HIGGINS DISTRICT PARTNER AWARD

Suzanne Wilkinson of Florida State University Schools, was praised for her mentorship, her support of FSU student teachers, and her uplifting presence. “She always has a smile on her face and is ready to roll up her sleeves at a moment’s notice,” said Dean Andrew. “We know how much she cared about Meredith, and we know Meredith is smiling down as Suzanne accepts this award.”

Learn more about the ElevatED Torch Awards at annescollege.fsu.edu/torch-awards.



SEMINOLE SMASH AT ACSM

The Seminole Smash social took place alongside the American College of Sports Medicine's annual meeting in Atlanta at the end of May. The social event brought together more than 50 alumni, faculty, staff, and students from the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Food Sciences and the FSU Institute of Sports Sciences and Medicine for an evening of networking and celebration.



NASSM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Nearly 50 alumni, faculty, staff, and students from Anne's College gathered in San Diego at the end of May for a social event held in conjunction with the North American Society for Sport Management's (NASSM) annual conference.

In addition to the social, **Dean Damon Andrew** delivered the Earle F. Zeigler Lecture at the conference. The Earle F. Zeigler Lecture Award is bestowed upon an individual who has made significant contributions to sport management through scholarship, research and leadership.





BROOKE BRENNAN

AN FSU SPORT MANAGEMENT ALUMNA’S PATH TO THE NBA CHAMPIONSHIP

By Melissa Powell

When the Oklahoma City Thunder defeated the Indiana Pacers 103–91 in Game 7 of the NBA Finals to win the 2025 NBA Championship, the Thunder’s Social Media Content Producer, Brooke Brennan, had one of the busiest nights of her professional career.

“The big moments aren’t for us to celebrate; they’re for us to capture.”

“Working in social, we don’t get to enjoy the big moments. When they happen, that’s our time to do our job,” said Brennan, who has worked on the Thunder’s social media team since January 2023. “Winning games, winning the championship, winning awards, we understood what was happening, but we didn’t get to live in the moment. That’s the nuance of working in social media. The big moments aren’t for us to celebrate; they’re for us to capture.”

For Brennan, who earned her master’s degree in Sport Management from Anne’s College in 2022, the moment was surreal. It was also a reminder of just how much her time at Florida State prepared her to thrive in one of the most competitive and niche areas of sports.

“About two weeks after the parade, it really hit me,” said Brennan. “I sat there reflecting and sent probably 10 thank-you texts to people who helped me get to where I am, and they were all from Florida State.” Brennan reached out to professors, mentors, former supervisors, and former coworkers. Since graduating in December 2022, she had kept a list of people to thank “one day.”

“Who knew when ‘one day’ was going to come,” she said, “But that was a full-circle moment reflecting on the season and realizing the impact of people who help you get to where you want to go.”

FINDING FSU

Brennan is originally from Aurora, Illinois, and first arrived at Florida State in 2017 after being drawn to the university’s First-Year Abroad program. “Coming to such a great university, having the opportunity to get in-state tuition and study abroad for a whole year was absolutely a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” she said.

She earned her bachelor’s degree in communication and media studies. “I always had a knack and wanted to do social media, PR, media communication studies,” she said. “But I always found myself writing papers about sports, researching sports. That was my personal interest.”

The intersection between communication and sports became the perfect foundation for her graduate studies, and ultimately, her career.

At the end of her junior year, Brennan learned about FSU’s Sport Management program and connected with Dr. Katie Flanagan, teaching faculty in the Department of Sport Management, to learn more. Ultimately, Flanagan inspired Brennan to stay and pursue her master’s.

“It was like a whole new world,” Brennan said. “All my classes were about sports. We were doing things interesting to me, things I cared about so much. My master’s took hard work, but it didn’t always feel like school. It felt like passion projects.”

ENTERING THE FIELD

Her classroom knowledge was bolstered with plenty of hands-on opportunities. During her senior year in Fall 2020, Brennan began working with FSU’s athletic communications and sports information team, giving her a chance to discover her niche in social media and digital storytelling.



“I was so lucky to work under Steve Stone in athletics because he said, ‘What do you want to do? What do you want to learn? Let’s make sure you can do all of the above,’” she said. “He gave me so many opportunities to explore within sports media and figure out what direction I wanted to go.”

Brennan helped manage media efforts, PR, social media, photography, and other digital content for various athletic programs at FSU, namely women’s volleyball, women’s basketball, and men’s basketball. Brennan also credits her Sports Media and Rhetoric class and Sport Management faculty, including Dr. Katie Flanagan, Dr. Kylee Studer O’Daniel, and Dr. Jason Pappas, with fueling her drive and ability to pursue a job in the NBA.

“My professors were the absolute best and helped us get connected to resources, shared jobs with us, and connected us with alumni,” she said. “Your work experience, network, and professional development matter just as much as the classroom work, and they really emphasized those things. It pushes you outside your comfort zone and prepares you for the sport industry, which is hard to get into and stay in.”

Her early experiences in the sports industry also included an internship with SLAM Magazine.

“For me, SLAM was the pinnacle of professional basketball media. They’re all about the culture, and the culture of events in sports is what I’m most interested in,” Brennan said. She found the internship through an FSU alumna, Camille Buxeda, who encouraged her to apply and interview.

“The semester I graduated, I was working for SLAM and FSU men’s basketball at the same time. The dominoes were falling into place, and balancing both of those internships was the moment I thought, ‘I might really have a chance to do this,’” she said. “Social media and photography in the NBA are so sought after, but I really felt like I could.”

BREAKING INTO THE NBA

That drive and experience carried her into professional basketball. Just days after commencement, Brennan moved to Oklahoma City to begin her role with the Thunder.

“I started in January 2023. I moved out on a Wednesday — it was a quick transition from Tallahassee to Oklahoma City,” she said. “That first half of the season was learning, getting my feet under me. First season, first real job, trying to figure things out. My second season, 2023–24, was possible because I’d built that foundation.”

By her second year, Brennan was running social media on game nights, traveling with the team, and expanding her responsibilities in photography and video production. As if covering 82 games per season in addition to preseason and postseason isn’t enough, her role also extends to the Thunder’s G League team, the Oklahoma City Blue, which won a championship in 2024.

“All your hard work goes toward something really cool,” she said. “Getting to this place of being comfortable and confident, while applying knowledge from the classroom, job experiences, and Florida State network — that’s been a big combination. I even cross paths with FSU alumni on the road.”

FULL-CIRCLE REFLECTIONS

For Brennan, the Thunder’s championship win wasn’t just about being a part of basketball history; it was about seeing her persistence pay off.

“The goal was always basketball. People laughed at me, told me I wouldn’t make it, all those things,” she said. “But basketball has always been my favorite sport to be around, and you have to grow, you have to be willing to hand out credentials at games and do scoring tables at soccer to work your way through sports information.”

And though she doesn’t play a role in what happens on the court, she’s grateful to be part of the organization’s success. “When you set goals for yourself, winning a championship is never on them because I don’t control what happens on the court,” she said. “I never thought it would happen. I never wanted to think that and risk the disappointment if it didn’t.”

From her first year abroad as a student to hoisting a championship banner with the Thunder, Brennan’s journey thus far has been fueled by resilience, gratitude, and the connections she made at FSU.

“The alumni base is so strong within Sport Management. It’s something I would never take for granted.”

“The people I’ve seen in the NBA, it’s been great to reconnect with them, but I also keep in touch with a lot of other people — if we had classes together, studied abroad together, worked together,” she said. “The alumni base is so strong within Sport Management. It’s something I would never take for granted. I also don’t think, when you’re at Florida State, you realize how impactful that will be.” ■



Brennan with Honesty Franklin (M.S. Sport Management)



JAMES EGGERS

FSU GRADUATE STUDENT NAMED MCCAIN GLOBAL LEADER

By Stephen Stone

Florida State University graduate student James Eggers, in the Instructional Systems and Learning Technologies program at the Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences (Anne’s College), has been named one of 22 McCain Global Leaders for the 2025 cohort.

The McCain Global Leaders program is a 12-month fellowship named after Senator John McCain that supports emerging leaders dedicated to democracy, human rights and freedom. It provides skills and knowledge to help them tackle global challenges and affect positive change in their communities.

“Being selected as a McCain Global Scholar is a significant achievement and a testament to James’s sustained engagement as a servant leader,” said Keith McCall, assistant director for the Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards. “As a former Fulbright recipient, an active-duty Coast Guard officer and now a McCain Scholar, James exemplifies the integration of academic excellence and globally focused public service.”

Eggers, a dedicated Coast Guard officer, has a rich background in service and education. Before enrolling at FSU, he participated in Teach for America and held a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in 2015. His commitment to service and mentorship is evident in his career and educational pursuits.

“I am deeply honored to be selected as a McCain Global Leader and grateful for the opportunity to join a cohort of rising leaders that value Senator McCain’s legacy of service and integrity,” Eggers said. “The program invests in the development of 20-25 principled leaders annually across the globe. Senator McCain’s example of character-driven leadership reminds me of the responsibility we all share to put principle above partisanship and do our part to make the world a better, safer place.”

Eggers will join a group of various countries and backgrounds, participating in a series of intensive training sessions, networking opportunities, and collaborative projects.

“We are incredibly proud to see James Eggers recognized as a McCain Global Leader,” said Damon Andrew, dean of Anne’s College. “James’s commitment to making a global impact aligns perfectly with our mission at Anne’s College to cultivate transformative leaders, and we eagerly anticipate the positive change he will undoubtedly bring to the world.”

Applications for the next cohort will open in early 2026. For more information about the McCain Global Leaders program and its mission, visit mccaininstitute.org.

For more on FSU’s Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards, visit ogfa.fsu.edu. ■

DR. JAMES LAMAR “JACK” GANT

AUGUST 8, 1927-AUGUST 8, 2025

By Melissa Powell

Dr. James Lamar “Jack” Gant, former dean of what was then the Florida State University College of Education, passed away on August 8, 2025, due to illness at the age of 98. A trailblazing educator, mentor, and community leader, Gant made history as FSU’s first African American dean and the first alumnus of the College of Education to serve as its dean.

“Dr. Gant was not only a pioneering leader in education but also a mentor who believed deeply in the potential of others,” said Damon Andrew, dean of Anne’s College. “His life’s work reminds us that progress in education is built on courage, compassion, and service, which are qualities he embodied every day. We are honored to continue building upon the legacy he left here at FSU.”

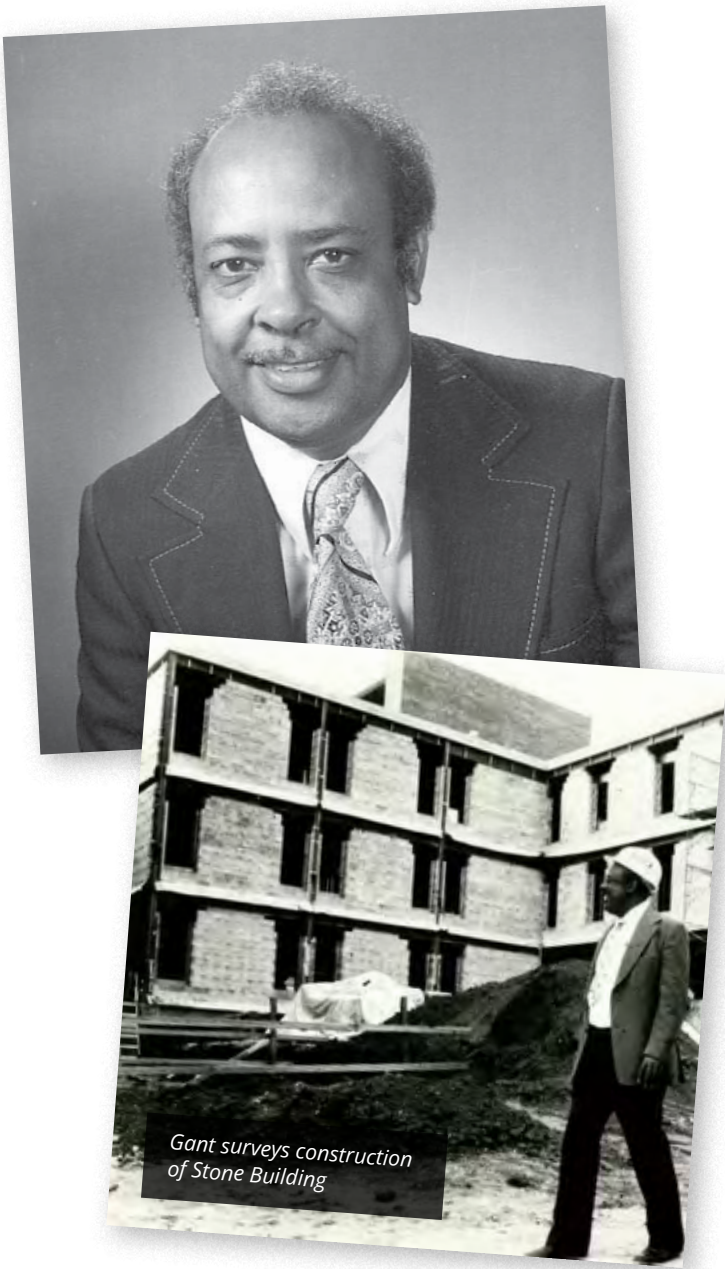
Born in Bainbridge, Georgia, in 1927 and raised in Telogia, Florida, Gant graduated from high school at age 15 and earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Florida A&M University at just 19 years old. He played football at FAMU and was later inducted into its Athletics Hall of Fame. Gant also earned a master’s degree in educational administration from Indiana University before attending FSU for his Ph.D.

He was also a member of “The Pioneers,” a group of 42 African American scholars who earned their doctoral degrees from FSU between 1965 and 1975, breaking barriers and laying the foundation for future generations of academics.

Gant served as principal of Bradenton Elementary School and Lincoln Memorial High School before joining the Florida Department of Education. In 1970, he began teaching in FSU’s Department of Educational Administration and was appointed dean of the College of Education in 1974. He later retired in 1982 and was honored as professor emeritus in 1994.

His enduring commitment to service lives on through the Jack Gant Community Study Award, established through the 21st Century Council, which he co-founded. The award is presented annually to an undergraduate student who demonstrates exceptional dedication to improving their community through volunteer service with a local or regional nonprofit or through research addressing a community need.

Known for his warmth, integrity, and lifelong devotion to education, Gant’s influence continues to be felt across Florida State University and beyond. Anne’s College would not be the place it is today without the pioneers like Gant who came before, and we honor his legacy by exemplifying his passion for education and unwavering faith in the human spirit. ■



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Voranica Joseph

Skepple Family Endowed Scholarship

Dr. Rose A. Skepple and Mr. St. Claire D. Skepple

Halle Joyner

Sport Management General Fund

Anne’s College Alumni & Friends

Ashlyn Solomon Natalie Wallace
Meredith Grimm Noah Kalter

Staunton Military Academy - John Deal Education Scholarship

Mr. Hunter W. Henry and Mrs. Elaine V. Henry

Annette Zamsky

Su Wei So Scholarship

Mr. Samuel S. So

Yinan Li

Sue Nelson and Trish England Endowed Fellowship

Ms. Suzanne C. Nelson, Ms. Patricia L. England†

Nikki King

Support Staff Development Fund

Anne’s College Alumni & Friends

Sarina Williams

Susan and Marie Hipps Endowed Scholarship

Mr. Jack M. Hipps

Kali Kamiya Katelyn Slosson

Sylvia Sparkis Endowed Memorial Scholarship Fund

Mr. Romas Sparkis and Mrs. Gabrielle Sparkis

Lillian Adelfio

Tennis With a Different Swing Fund - Sheila Bolin Scholarship

Tennis With A Different Swing, Inc., Ms. Sheila S. Bolin

Chloe Mottin

Terrence & Loyal S. Leas Endowed Scholarship in Higher Education

Terrence Leas, Ph.D. and Mrs. Loyal S. Leas

Morgan Danyi Xinting Wu

Thomas Wesley Byrun Endowed Scholarship

Ms. Mary L. Herr†

Bowen Yu Ruoshan Hu
Feiting Li Thu Huyen Nguyen

Tornillo Family Scholarship Fund

Ms. Donna M. Tornillo

Ashley Sposato Martyna Smart
Kameelah Weeks Trisha Phillip

Trish England and Sue Nelson Endowed Scholarship

Ms. Suzanne C. Nelson, Ms. Patricia L England†

Aaliyah Williams

Visual Disabilities Fund

Anne’s College Alumni & Friends

Iris Schwimmer Teri McCord

W. Hugh Stickler Memorial Fund

Mrs. Cindy S. Burggraf and Mr. William N. Burggraf

Britain Riley

Walter F. Hayes Family Endowment

Dr. Kevin M. Hayes and Mrs. Ashley W. Hayes

Christin Domeier

Walter H. Wray Endowed Memorial Scholarship

Walter H. Wray, Jr., M.D., Mrs. Gwendolyn L. Wray

Yarui Chen

Wayne King Endowed Scholarship

Anne’s College Alumni & Friends

Ezequiel Espinosa

William J. and Jane G. Montford Excellence in Academics Scholarship

Senator William J. Montford, III and Mrs. Jane G. Montford

Mercy Chepkemoi

Willie Le Hall Johnson Endowed Scholarship in Education

Ms. Willie Le Hall Johnson†

Jaleha Lockwood Laurel Kate Voeltz
Kayla Lewis

Wilson Sitton Endowed Scholarship

Jean D. Wilson, M.D.†, Dr. Margaret A. Sitton†

Mahmuda Akter

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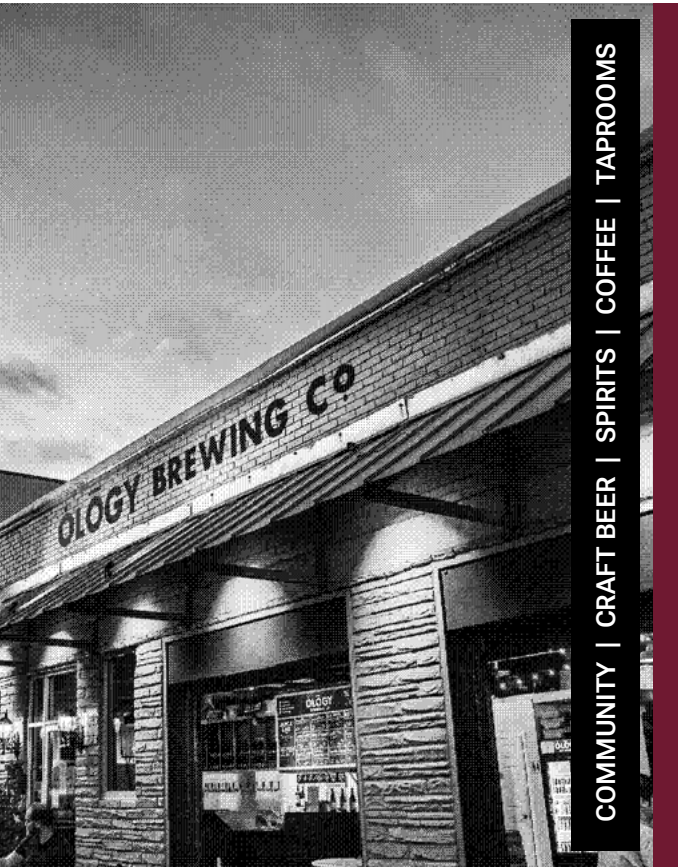
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FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

Faculty excellence in scholarship, research, and creative activity is critical to the quality of student learning and makes a difference in the lives of others. Throughout the year, honors and recognitions are awarded to individual faculty members in Anne's College. Their achievements are listed below to recognize accomplishments and showcase honors, awards, bylines, presentations, grants, service and any other notable items.

HONORS, AWARDS AND SERVICE

Damon Andrew, dean of Anne's College, began his term as president-elect of the American Kinesiology Association in January 2025. Andrew serves as president-elect in the 2025-26 year, followed by a term as president of the AKA in the 2026-27 year. **Andrew** also received the 2025 Earle F. Zeigler Lecture Award, the most prestigious award given by the North American Society for Sport Management.

Cameron Beatty, associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, received the award for Distinguished Support for Graduate Students from the NASPA faculty council at the NASPA Annual Conference in March 2025.

Michael Delp, **Michael Giardina**, **Bob Hickner** and **Michael Ormsbee** were inducted into the National Academy of Kinesiology as part of the class of 2024 new fellows. They were inducted for their distinguished and sustained contributions to the field of kinesiology through scholarship and professional service.

Veronica Fleury, associate professor of Special Education, was appointed associate editor of the *Journal of Early Intervention*.

Garret Hall, assistant professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems, received the Light-

ner Witmer Award from Division 16 (School Psychology) of the American Psychological Association, which recognizes early-career professionals and academic school psychologists who have demonstrated scholarship that merits special recognition.

Phil Hiver, associate professor in the School of Teacher Education, was named associate editor of *System*.

Amal Ibourek, associate professor in the School of Teacher Education, was named an Early-Career Research Fellow by the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. She joined the program's education research track to contribute to the advancement of science, STEM, and environmental education in the Gulf region.

Lyndsay Jenkins, Michael and Jean Shahnasarian Endowed Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems, was named a fellow of the American Psychological Association. The honor is regarded as one of the most prestigious in the field. Jenkins was also invited to join the Society for the Study of School Psychology (SSSP).

Lara Perez-Felkner, professor of Higher Education, was named associate editor of *Research in Higher Education* and is serving as inaugural vice chair for the Association of the Study of Higher Education's new fellowship program. Additionally, Perez-Felkner and higher education alumna Ciera Fluker, were awarded Edited Book of the Year by the American Asso-

ciation for Hispanic Higher Education for their 2024 publication of *Latin* Students in Engineering: An Intentional Focus on a Growing Population*.

Jenny Root, Anne and John Daves Endowed Associate Professor in the School of Teacher Education, was selected as one of about 400 scientists and engineers to receive the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, announced by the White House in January 2025. Root was also named associate editor of *Teacher Education and Special Education*, the journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children.

Prashant Singh, associate professor in the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Food Sciences, was named a senior member of the National Academy of Inventors. NAI senior members are active faculty, scientists and administrators with success in patents, licensing and commercialization, and have produced technologies that have had a real impact on the welfare of society.

Kyle Smith, assistant professor of Health, Nutrition, and Food Sciences, was selected as a 2025 Fellow for the Transdisciplinary Research on Energetics and Cancer Training Workshop funded by the National Cancer Institute.

Sherry Southerland, former Anne and John Daves Endowed Professor in the School of Teacher Education, received the 2025 Distinguished Contributions

to Science Education through Research Award ahead of her 2025 retirement. It is the highest award bestowed upon members of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching.

Amy S. Thompson, director of the School of Teacher Education, received the 2025 Distinguished Service to the Profession Award from the Association of Language Departments, a part of the Modern Language Association.

Joseph Watso, assistant professor of Exercise Physiology, earned a 2025 Environmental and Exercise Physiology Section Early-career Research Award from the American Physiological Society.

GRANTS, PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Motoko Akiba is editor-in-chief of the *American Education Research Journal*. She co-authored the editor's introduction in the journal, which shares the new editorial team's vision and priorities.

Timothy Baghurst co-authored "A Case for Thinking About Thinking in Sports Coaching: Understanding Situated Cognition as a Means to Inform Coaching Practice," published in the *International Sport Coaching Journal*. Baghurst also authored "Coaching Endorsements, Certifications, Policies, and the Need for Reform in Florida School Sports: Why We Need to Lead the Change" and "Lived Experiences of Stress and the Coping Mechanisms of Assistant Coaches in the National Basketball Association (NBA)," as well as "You coach coaches? A rationale for the coach developer role and practical guidelines for effective working relationships with coaches," each published in *Quest*, the official journal of the National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education. He also published two articles in the *International Journal of Kinesiology in Higher Education* exploring the coaching of international student-athletes and retention in online kinesiology-based college courses. Additionally, Baghurst was the keynote speaker at the biannual conference of the Association Internationale des Écoles Supérieures d'Éducation Physique (AIESEP) and was the keynote speaker at the International Orga-

nization of Health, Sports, and Kinesiology's (IOHSK) annual conference, both held in May 2025.

Megan Buning, clinical associate professor in the Interdisciplinary Center for Athletic Coaching, conducted a workshop titled "AI, Imagery, & Emotion: How Consultants Can Leverage Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Client Imagery Skills & Emotion Regulation" at the Association of Applied Sport Psychology annual conference. Buning also gave two presentations at the National Association of Kinesiology in Higher Education conference: a solo presentation titled "Teaching Using Teams in Research Courses," and a presentation conducted with three M.S. students titled "Journey to the Core: Helping Coaches Create Anchors through Core Values."

Vanessa Dennen, Mack and Effie Campbell Tyner Distinguished Professor of Instructional Systems and Learning Technologies, co-authored "Navigating the high school to university transition with social media: intensity of use, sense of belonging, and meaningful change" alongside alumna Lauren Bagdy and doctoral candidate Hilal Ayan Karabatman. It was published in *Information & Learning Sciences*.

Veronica Fleury, associate professor of Special Education, delivered the spotlight session for the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities at the 2025 Council for Exceptional Children Annual Convention in Baltimore. Her lecture was titled "Pre-bunking and Debunking Autism Misinformation."

Bob Hickner, Linda Grizzard Owens Endowed Professor in the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Food Sciences, co-authored "Creatine monohydrate supplementation and NOX impact skeletal muscle microvascular blood flow: a pilot study," alongside researcher Mostafa Ali and numerous exercise physiology Ph.D. alumni. It was published in the *European Journal of Physiology*.

Shouping Hu, Lou & Elizabeth Bender Endowed Professor of Higher Education, and **Joe O'Shea**, Higher Education faculty and FSU's Vice President for Student Academic Success, published a comprehensive volume titled *The Routledge Handbook on Postsecondary Student Success*.

Roxanne Hughes, associate professor in the School of Teacher Education, co-au-

thored "Instilling a Sense of Belonging in STEM through a Virtual Summer Program for Girls," alongside a pair of graduate students. The article was published in *Connected Science Learning*.

Allan Jeong, associate professor of Instructional Systems and Learning Technologies, received the award for best paper at the Cognition and Exploratory Learning in the Digital Age conference for his paper titled "The Effects of Politeness on Shaping Discourse in Online Debates" published in *Distance Education*.

Sarah Johnson, associate professor of Health, Nutrition, and Food Sciences, is a principal investigator on a \$7.3 million multi-PI grant from the National Institutes of Health's Botanical Dietary Supplements Translational Research Teams program. The project is titled "Examining Gut Microbiome as a Determinant of Blueberry Polyphenol Bioavailability to Optimize Dose and Phytochemical Standardization for Functional Effects in Humans."

Kadir Kozan, assistant professor of Instructional Systems and Learning Technologies, and doctoral students co-authored "Instructional Designers' Integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence into Their Professional Practice," published in *Education Sciences*.

Thomas Ledermann and **Myriam Rudaz** of the Department of Human Development and Family Science co-authored "On Partial Versus Full Mediation and the Importance of Effect Sizes," published in *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*.

Matthew Lenard, assistant professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, conducted research on K-12 career and technical education that was included in the 2025 Economic Report of the President (chapter 7, page 278).

Ravinder Nagpal, associate professor of Food and Nutrition Sciences, was invited to deliver a research talk titled "Gut microbiome in Alzheimer's neuropathogenesis" at the Infectious Diseases Society of America annual meeting in Los Angeles. Nagpal also co-authored "Almond snacking modulates gut microbiome and metabolome in association with improved cardiometabolic and inflammatory markers," published in Nature's *The Science of Food*. Five graduate students served as co-authors.

Ravinder Nagpal and **Chester Ray** of the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Food Sciences co-authored “Microbiome-based therapeutics towards healthier aging and longevity” published in *Genome Medicine*.

Deb Osborn, professor and co-director of the Psychological and Counseling Services program, co-authored an article titled “A Content Analysis of Information and Communication Technology in Career Development Articles from 2009 to 2022,” published in the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*. Doctoral student Jacob Stamm also contributed. Osborn and numerous doctoral students and alumni also co-authored “Beyond the Game: Exploring the Interplay of Career Thoughts, Career Adaptability, and Athletic Identity in Shaping Postgraduate Paths for Student Athletes,” published in the *Journal of Post-secondary School Success*.

Lara Perez-Felkner, professor of Higher Education, and Ph.D. candidate Holly Henning received an \$11,447 grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for a strategic communications project. Perez-Felkner also received a \$290,356 subaward from the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering and the National Science Foundation's CREST II Center. Perez-Felkner and students also co-authored “Public Financing of STEM Education: Research Evidence and Policy Recommendations,” published in *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. Additionally, Perez-Felkner co-authored “The (Mis)Education of Black Boys: Exploring the Contributing Factors of Their Accelerated Curricular Decision-Making Process,” published in the *Journal of African American Males in Education*, and a book chapter titled “Student Success for Latin* Students,” in the *Routledge Handbook on Postsecondary Student Success*.

Lara Perez-Felkner and **Shouping Hu** from the Higher Education program co-authored “Pathways into Computing Fields by Florida’s Community College Students,” published in the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, as well as “The Impact of Merit Aid on STEM Major Choices: A Propensity Score Approach,” both published in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*.

Qinchun Rao, Betty M. Watts Endowed Professor in the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Food Sciences, co-authored

the article, “Exploring the effects of plasma-activated water and probe-type ultrasonication on white shrimp (*Litopenaeus setiferus*) and Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) proteins: A comparative study,” published in *LWT – Food Science and Technology*. Rao also co-authored “Quantitative Assessment of Bony Fish Tropomyosin Using a Monoclonal Antibody Competitive ELISA,” published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. Doctoral students and alumni contributed to both.

Jenny Root, Anne and John Daves Endowed Associate Professor in the School of Teacher Education, guest edited a special issue of *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities* (Volume 49 issue 4), within which she co-authored a conceptual paper titled “Embracing Mixed Methods Research in Special Education.” Root also co-authored a paper in the new peer-reviewed, open-access journal *Research in Special Education* titled “Prioritizing Preregistration in Special Education.”

Bret Staudt Willet, assistant professor of Instructional Systems & Learning Technologies, guest edited a two-part special issue of 12 articles for *Information & Learning Sciences*, titled “Learning with Social Media in an Algorithmic Age: Opportunities and Challenges for Education.” Staudt Willet wrote the introductory editorial to the special issue and co-authored one of its articles: “Understanding beginning teachers’ socio-ecological challenges: self-directed learning in the r/Teachers subreddit,” alongside doctoral candidate Hunhui Na.

Joseph Watso, assistant professor of Exercise Physiology, had an abstract selected as one of the Walter B. Cannon Lecture Abstracts of Distinction for the 2025 American Physiology Summit (APS) and was the recipient of the *American Journal of Physiology- Regulatory and Integrative Physiology* Impact Paper Award presented at APS. Additionally, Watso and three Ph.D. candidates co-authored “Differential effects of female aging on sympathetic blood pressure regulation at rest and during stress in humans,” published in *Physiological Reports*. Watso also co-authored “Advanced phenotyping in patients with a fontan circulation uncovers effects of pulmonary vascular disease” published in *Heart and Circulatory Physiology* as well as “Central Blood Pressure and

Arterial Stiffness Among Ultramarathon Runners Across the Lifespan,” published in the *European Journal of Applied Physiology*, “Cardiac Responses to Environmental Heat Exposure in Young and Older Adults,” published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, and “Sodium Intake and Biological Sex Influence Urinary Endothelin-1 in Salt-Resistant Adults: A Pilot Study,” published in the *American Journal of Physiology – Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology*.

Jason Williams and **Joseph Watso** from the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Food Sciences co-authored “Upper Leg Muscular Co-Contraction During Maximal-Speed Sprinting in Male Club Ice Hockey Athletes,” published in *Sports Medicine - Open*.

Annie Wofford, assistant professor of Higher Education, co-authored “We Can Change the Culture Through Those Individual Engagements: Social Exchange and Equity-Mindedness in STEM Doctoral Students’ Roles as Mentors,” published in *Studies in Graduate and Postdoctoral Education*. Doctoral candidate Holly Henning was a co-author. Wofford also co-authored “Building Transfer Student Interest in Computer Science Ph.D.s: Examining an Advising Intervention Using a Staged Innovation Design,” published in *Research in Higher Education*.

Annie Wofford, **Lara Perez-Felkner**, **Bret Staudt Willet**, and a researcher from UCLA published a research note titled, “Geography of Computing Graduate Degree Opportunities: Examining the Characteristics of Minority-Serving Institutions,” in *Research in Higher Education*.

Qian (Jackie) Zhang, associate professor of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems, is a sub-award principal investigator on an Institute of Education Sciences training grant titled “Bayesian Longitudinal Data Modeling in Education Sciences,” awarded to the University of Virginia.

CLASS NOTES

Stefanie Gall (M.S. ’70, Ph.D. ’73) received the Educator of a Lifetime Award from the Bay District School System, the highest honor bestowed by the district. The award celebrates her lifelong dedication to education and the profound impact she has made on Bay County students, educators, and the community during her 45-year career in education.

Yvonne Tedder (B.S. ’88) has been promoted to vice president of human resources at CSI Leasing, Inc. Tedder leads the company’s global HR strategy, overseeing talent acquisition, employee engagement, training and development, and compensation and benefits. Tedder joined CSI after serving as director of human resources at Precoat Metals. She holds a master’s degree in human resources development and management from Webster University in addition to her bachelor’s degree in child development from FSU. Tedder also serves on the board of directors for The Bennett Project and on the HR committee for FamilyForward.

Myron Rolle (B.S. ’08, M.D. ’17) joined Nemours Children’s Health in Orlando as an attending pediatric neurosurgeon. In his unique, distinguished career, Rolle was a star FSU football player, earned a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University, played in the NFL for three seasons, earned his medical degree from FSU College of Medicine, and completed his residency at Harvard-Mass General Hospital and a fellowship at Johns Hopkins All Children’s in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Madison Johnson (B.S. ’14), co-owner of Posies Flower Truck, is helping grow the Florida-based mobile flower business into a blooming success across Tampa Bay, Sarasota and Winter Park. After joining her mother in this venture in 2022, Johnson applied her FSU education in retail merchandising and product development to expand the company into a 10-truck fleet with plans for national franchising. The business was featured on PBS’s “Start Up USA” for its innovative approach to mobile retail and community engagement.

Shiyi Chen (Ph.D. ’19) was awarded a \$1.4 million NSF career grant as an associate professor of child development at the University of Idaho. Her five-year project will investigate young children’s emerging metacognition and its role in science learning. Chen’s work focuses on metacognition, which is the ability to reflect on and regulate one’s own cognitive processes.

Naomi Coté (M.S. ’22) was nominated as Palm Bay Magnet High School’s teacher of the year. By helping to build her school community through club sponsorship, fostering school spirit, and implementing innovative teaching practices, she has made a significant impact on her school. Coté was placed at PBMHS for her student-teaching practicum and has taught there ever since.

Carolyn Greiner (M.S. ’22) founded OWLS Consulting — Optimize with Learning Solutions — a company that helps businesses strengthen their learning and development programs through tools like eLearning, VR, and AR. Recently featured on the entrepreneurial competition show The Blox on Amazon Prime, Greiner continues to advance the role of instructional design in improving workplace performance, employee retention, and leadership development.

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