

BUSINESS

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VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

NETWORKS



Unmasking entrepreneurial success

Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame celebrates
milestone anniversary with masquerade soirée
recognizing a decade of honorees.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP
HALL of FAME
1999-2009

FIU

Business

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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BUSINESS NETWORKS

Business Networks is a semi-annual publication of the College of Business Administration at Florida International University. Published in the spring and fall, it includes a selection of articles about the business school culled from the past six months, plus a major feature.

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On the cover:

The 24 honorees of the Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame from 1999 to 2009

From top left to bottom right:

Robert Bell, Augusto L. Vidaurreta, Joe Merino, Richard Dobrow, Anthony E. Ronconi, Joseph Caruncho, Justo Pozo, Robert Capo, Andrew Yap, Agustin "Tino" Herran, Larry Harris, Albert Santalo, Glenn J. Rufrano, Margarita M. Gonzalez, Antonio "Tony" Argiz, Malcolm Butters, Ignacio Urbieto, Howard J. Leonhardt, Keith St. Clair, Sanford L. Ziff, Manuel Medina, Miriam Lopez, Sergio Pino, Joyce J. Elam

Please see page one for background and award information for each honoree.



Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame celebrates 10-year anniversary.



With entrepreneurship as one of its strategic focuses, it made sense for the College of Business Administration to acknowledge the achievements of leading entrepreneurs, many of them alumni. The establishment of the Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame gave the business school a perfect way to honor those whose contributions help strengthen the economy, foster entrepreneurial efforts, and bring prestige to the college.

Continues

Above, back row, left to right: Lillian Peters (SunTrust Bank) and previous alumni inductees Augusto L. Vidaurreta, Joe Merino, Albert Santalo, Larry Harris, and Antonio L. Argiz. **Front row:** Anthony Ronconi, Andrew Yap, Margarita M. Gonzalez, Roberto Capo, and Joseph Caruncho. **Right:** Previous South Florida Entrepreneur of the Year recipients Sanford L. Ziff and Keith St. Clair.



The following individuals have continued to log impressive achievements. The list indicates their accomplishments at the time they were honored.

Alumni Entrepreneurs

1999
Robert Bell (BBA '81), founder, Banana Boat Suncare, Sea & Ski Corporation

2001
Augusto L. Vidaurreta (BS '80), co-founder, The Systems Consulting Group, Inc., RAM Strategies, Inc., and Adjoined Technologies, Inc.
Joe Merino (MBA '76, BBA '74), founder, UNIPOWER Corporation

2002
Richard Dobrow (MACC '97, BBA '95), chief executive officer, Guarded Networks, Inc.

2003
Anthony E. Ronconi (BBA '88), principal, chief technical officer, and chief strategy officer for then-StrataSys Group, LLC

2004
Founder: Joseph Caruncho (BBA '81), founder and **Justo Pozo** (BBA '80), chief executive officer, Preferred Care Partners, PSO Health Plan

Family Business Award: Robert Capo (BBA '93), chief marketing officer, El Dorado Furniture; **Andrew Yap** (MBA '97, BBA '91), senior vice president and chief operating officer, LEASA

2005
Founder: Agustin "Tino" Herran (BBA '91), president, General Real Estate Corporation, Sedano's Supermarket, and Tire Group International

Builder: Larry Harris (BS '81), proprietor, Mosaico and Salero Restaurants, and co-founder, Pollo Tropical Restaurants

2006
Founder: Albert Santalo (EMBA '97), president and chief executive officer, Avisena
Builder: Glenn J. Rufrano (MSM '74), chief executive officer, New Plan Excel Realty Trust, Inc.

2007
Founder: Margarita M. Gonzalez (BBA '06), president and chief financial officer, AccuBanker

Builder: Antonio "Tony" Argiz (BBA '74), managing partner, Morrison, Brown, Argiz and Farra, LLP

2008
Founder: Malcolm Butters (MBA '83), president and founder, Butters Construction and Development, Inc.
Builder: Ignacio Urbieta (MBA '85), chief executive officer, Urbieta Oil, Inc.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP
HALL OF FAME
1999-2009

South Florida Entrepreneur of the Year (non-alumni)

2003
Howard J. Leonhardt, chairman and chief executive officer, Bioheart, Inc.

2004
Keith St. Clair, chairman and chief executive officer, TraveLeaders

2005
Sanford L. Ziff, founder, Sunglass Hut of America, and a major donor of the university (honored with a Lifetime Achievement award)

2006
Manuel Medina, chairman and chief executive officer, Terremark Worldwide, Inc.

2007
Miriam Lopez, chairman and chief executive officer, TransAtlantic Bank

2008
Sergio Pino, president and chief executive officer, Century Home Builders, LLC

2009
Joyce J. Elam, executive dean, College of Business Administration

Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame

Since 1999, when seed money from SunTrust Bank made the Hall of Fame a reality, friends, supporters, and alumni of the college have assembled yearly to recognize leading entrepreneurs. The induction ceremony has grown into the largest annual alumni gathering hosted by the college.

A panel of judges—past inductees, event sponsors, and community business leaders—singles out alumni in two categories: founder, for those creating a company; and, beginning in 2005, builder, for those taking an existing business to a new level.

“The Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame is not simply a college event, but represents everything that is the college, its students, and its alumni,” said **Monique Catoggio** (EMBA ’03), director of advancement and alumni relations. “Entrepreneurship is in our DNA, and our alumni have proven that.”

Beginning in 2003, a non-alumna/alumnus was selected as the South Florida Entrepreneur of the Year.

Special touches ensure the milestone is memorable.

To mark the 10th anniversary, organizers hosted a masquerade soiree and silent auction. This year, only a South Florida Entrepreneur of the Year was chosen: the college’s executive dean, **Joyce J. Elam**.

“We have become a leading business school because of her entrepreneurial spirit and leadership, so it is fitting that we recognize her as the 2009 South Florida Entrepreneur of the Year,” Catoggio said.

“For the first twenty years of my academic career, I was a faculty member, not an entrepreneur,” Elam said. “However, when FIU President **Modesto Maidique** selected me to be dean of the business school, I

Joyce J. Elam: a transformational leader

Under the leadership of Joyce J. Elam, executive dean and James L. Knight Professor of Management Information Systems, the business school has achieved reaccreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, constructed a world class building complex, and gained prominence for its programs—particularly in international business—at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Within the university, Elam has played a prominent role in the study of women in leadership, including guiding an annual research study that surveys women-led businesses in Florida. She also serves as the faculty leader for a women’s leadership development program called Women on the Move, offered twice annually through the FIU Center for Leadership and the business school. As vice-provost of FIU Online, she has built a university-wide online organization that, in 2008, offered 252 courses to more than 11,000 students.

A number of business and academic organizations have recognized her contributions. The Academy of International Business Fellows chose her as International Dean of the Year (2007); the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce named her the AXA Advisors International Business Woman of the Year (2008); the Coral Gables Community Foundation presented her the Athena Award (2007); and Women in International Trade selected her as the International Business Woman of the Year (2003). ■



Joyce J. Elam

immediately saw the possibility of growing the college through the creation of a number of new programs and initiatives. It has been truly rewarding to see the seed of an idea take hold and grow beyond my wildest expectations.”

In a professional life filled with achievements, Elam finds this recognition special.

“Being recognized as the 2009 South Florida Entrepreneur by my colleagues whom I have had the privilege to work so closely with over the past twelve years is an honor without parallel and one that I will always cherish,” she said.

Many of the previous honorees were among the approximately 400 attendees at the Fontainebleau Miami Beach Hotel on May 16, 2009.

Sponsors sustain effort.

“At a time when every dollar spent by a company must be allocated as wisely as possible,

we are particularly grateful to the sponsors who gave so generously to ensure that the 10th anniversary would be the special event we wanted it to be: for Dean Elam and all our honorees,” said **Annabelle Rojas** (MBA ’98, BBA ’87), assistant dean, Department of Advancement, Alumni, and Corporate Relations.

The 2009 sponsors were SunTrust Bank; Morrison, Brown, Argiz and Farra, LLP; *The Miami Herald*; Vitas; Royal Caribbean; Unique Impressions; Park ’N Fly; Florida Event Décor; Infinium Spirits; Hoodiny Entertainment; Gold Coast Beverage Distributors; Antigal Winery Estates; Balloonatics, Inc.; Fontainebleau Miami Beach Hotel; and Southern Audio Visual.

Future entrepreneurs share the limelight.

The program also acknowledged entrepreneurs-in-the-making: winners of the 2009 Entrepreneur Challenge Business Plan Competition: Miami’s Finest Aquarium Services, LLC and Science Boomers. FIU’s Eugenio Pino and Family Global Entrepreneurship Center and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation sponsored the competition, which netted \$5,000 for each of the two companies. ■

New workforce absenteeism study offers insights on who is calling in sick—and why.

It's no surprise really: when unemployment is on the rise—like it is today—employee absenteeism drops as workers worry about losing their jobs when new ones are scarce. But is this always a good thing for employers?

According to a new study involving thousands of employees of a state department of transportation working in units across the state, this shift in absenteeism may ultimately not benefit employers.

“Engaged and satisfied workers are on the job through thick and thin,” said

Both job satisfaction and commitment to the organization play a key role in absenteeism.

According to Hiller, the study also shows that in areas with high unemployment, absenteeism was about seven to eight percent less than in areas with low unemployment, provided the unit was low on commitment or satisfaction. In contrast, in units with high satisfaction or commitment, local unemployment rates had little, if any, effect on job absences, because absenteeism in those groups was consistently low.

On the positive side for employers, this means when a company's workforce is satisfied and committed, it really doesn't matter what the economy is doing—as those employees tend to be the ones who are not missing days at work.

The study also contains another piece of insightful news for employers: worker absenteeism has a tendency to creep up over the years if left un-

checked, through good and bad times alike.

“Absenteeism isn't always a bad thing, but it can be viewed as a general barometer of how well a unit is being run,” Hiller said. “A spike in absences may indicate that bigger problems in the unit are just around the corner.”

Study resonates around the globe.

First published in the January 2009 issue of the *Academy of Management Journal*, the workforce absenteeism study quickly spread to an international audience. A *Reuters* news wire article appeared in MSNBC and Yahoo online news and other business and news outlets in Canada, India, Philippines, United Kingdom, and the United States.

“Clearly, the study reaches across different business cultures at a time when employers are concerned about how employees can help their businesses survive and sustain a competitive advantage,” Hiller said. ■

“Engaged and satisfied workers are on the job through thick and thin. On the other hand, disengaged, disaffected workers are much more likely to show up only during the thin times.”



Nathan J. Hiller

Nathan J. Hiller, assistant professor, Department of Management and International Business. “On the other hand, disengaged, disaffected workers are much more likely to show up only during the thin times. On the downside, the employees who show up more when the economy is difficult are those whose contributions to productivity are likely to be the least.”

Hiller collaborated on the study, titled “Work Unit Absenteeism: Effects of Satisfaction, Commitment, Labor Market Conditions, and Time,” with **John P. Hausknecht**, Cornell University, and **Robert J. Vance**, principal, Vance & Renz, LLC.

Who thinks it's okay to cheat on taxes? Study looks at variables.

Would you cheat on your taxes? Never? Always? Sometimes? Two members of the School of Accounting in the College of Business Administration conducted an analysis of data on individuals in six Latin American countries and the United States to determine the factors affecting this ethical issue.

“We zeroed in on a portion of a wider study that gathered information on human beliefs and values conducted on 200,000 people in 85 countries,” said **Robert Mc-**

Gee, director, Center for Accounting, Auditing, and Tax Studies (CAATS), who collaborated on the research with **Wendy Gelman**, instructor, School of Accounting. “The relevant question, answered by 8,465 respondents, was would they cheat on taxes if it were possible to do so.”

The ranking of the countries from most to least opposed to tax evasion was Venezuela, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Peru, Chile, the United States, and Mexico. McGee and

Continues

Gelman's analysis revealed the following:

- People in Venezuela and Argentina most oppose tax evasion. People in Mexico and the United States oppose it least.
- Women oppose tax evasion more than men.
- People's opposition to tax evasion increases as they get older.
- Education level does not make a difference regarding opinions about the action.
- People who attend religious services less frequently are more likely to evade taxes than people who attend more frequently.

Businesses take note: multiple reasons for tax evasion exist.

Although evading taxes seems like a simple question of right versus wrong, individuals have a variety of justifications for their actions, according to McGee.

"Some people think it is all right not to pay taxes if the government is corrupt, or if it wastes money, or if a family situation requires the money," he said.

The study, "Cheating on Taxes: A Comparative Study of Opinion in Six Latin American Countries and the USA," will be published in the *Akron Tax Law Review*. McGee and Gelman have tackled the same subject in two additional studies and in a poll using students in the business school. Over the last several years, McGee himself has authored numerous papers and demographic studies on tax evasion and other ethical issues such as insider trading and corporate bailouts.

"In our poll of business students, we want to see if we can determine any differences in their attitudes toward tax evasion based on gender, age, education, religious affiliation, and ethnic background," Gelman said. "This really hits home to us."

And both caution employers that, while the study does not offer a solution, "the research raises moral questions that business people may ponder," according to McGee, and "the results of the data might influence their behavior when faced with similar situations." ■



Wendy Gelman and Robert McGee

"Some people think it is all right not to pay taxes if the government is corrupt, or if it wastes money, or if a family situation requires the money."

Forget the balloons: human resources can play a strategic role in an organization's success.

T rue or false: a company's most valuable resource is its people. Though the answer is "true," many have an erroneously negative impression of the functional department—human resources (HR)—that manages personnel and more, according to **Juan I. Sanchez**, professor and Knight Ridder Byron Harless Eminent Scholar Chair in Management, Department of Management and International Business.

"People see the HR function occupying the bottom of organizations," he said, noting that employees regard HR professionals as police who intervene in conflicts; counselors who help employees whose problems are interfering with their performance; entertainers with the budget to organize social events complete with invitations, food, and

balloons; and bureaucrats who handle paperwork.

Sanchez argues that taking this limited—and distorted—view of HR management causes companies to overlook the vital contributions that HR managers can make to improving the bottom line. That role is especially true now when intangible factors, such as talent and creativity, have replaced tangible ones, such as infrastructure, as most important for success.

Consider AT&T as an example of a company once competing effectively based on tangible assets and Southwest Airlines embodying the notion of drawing on intangible ones.

"Twenty-five years ago, if you wanted to make a long distance call, AT&T owned

Continues



Juan I. Sanchez

the infrastructure,” he said. “After a series of technology breakthroughs—such as fiber optics and most importantly, wireless communication—callers no longer need to rely on the AT&T infrastructure.”

Contrast that model with Southwest Airlines, which factors in personality and talent, hiring people compatible with the airline’s image of reliability, no frills, and informality as a way to compete.

“To support that strategy, you need the kind of person who will be flexible, informal, and who doesn’t take himself or herself too seriously,” he said.

With a shift to focusing on intangibles, HR needs to approach its role differently.

Organizations must turn to HR to identify, hire, and train the right people in this world of intangible capital. As a result, HR can play a role in enhancing profitability. However, for HR to fulfill its valuable place as a strategic partner, its managers need to redefine and reposition themselves.

“HR professionals need to understand the entire business,” Sanchez said. “Then they can pinpoint actions that fit the strategy so they can motivate people to behave in ways that are consistent with the company’s strategy.” ■

Energy challenges remain a growing concern.

Why are today’s oil prices so high? What about alternative fuel sources? How should energy policies evolve?

All are tough issues—with no easy answers. To provide perspective on the ongoing energy debate, **Edward Glab**, co-director of FIU’s Energy Business Forum, offers some insights into what really is happening with energy today.

The law of supply and demand in the global marketplace, Glab noted, determines the price of oil—just as it does for steel, cement, copper, corn, or any other commodity.

“Rapid economic growth around the world—particularly in India and China—is driving up energy demands, with oil prices rising accordingly,” Glab said. “Historically, energy and economic growth move in lockstep—and that’s what is happening now.”

Glab sees a confluence of factors that prevent the oil and gas industry from producing what needs to be taken out of the ground to meet rising demand. He points out that political and legislative obstacles in the United States as well as in Mexico, Venezuela, and Russia are limiting the development of new oil and gas resources and, in some cases, making it difficult for foreign investors to fund oil and gas exploration.

Developing a portfolio of different ener-

gy sources provides the optimal way to solve the current energy crisis, in his view.

“We need to invest in a variety of alternative energy sources—solar, wind, nuclear, biofuels, hydrogen, and hydrocarbons—to enable us to move forward and continue to enjoy the same lifestyle,” he said.

Glab hopes to see research and de-

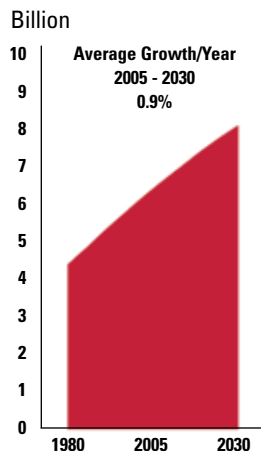
velopment in other areas, too, such as the creation of a more efficient internal combustion engine.

“Ultimately, there is no panacea, no single energy resource that can meet growing global demand . . . we need to support the long-term investments needed to develop new, diversified energy sources,” he said. ■

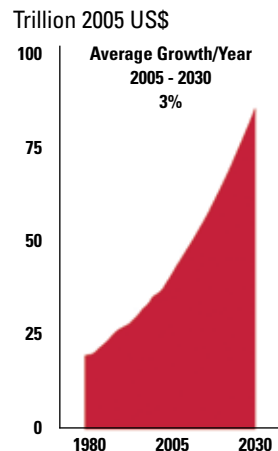
“Historically, energy and economic growth move in lockstep—and that’s what is happening now.”

Global Economics and Energy

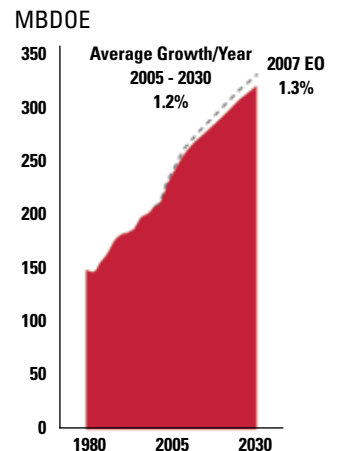
Population



GDP



Energy Demand



Source: ExxonMobil, *The Outlook for Energy: A View to 2030*. Published in 2009.

NSHMBA spotlight shines brilliantly on College of Business Administration.

Each year, the National Society of Hispanic MBAs (NSHMBA) awards the Brillante Award for Excellence to outstanding corporate and educational leaders that reflect the society’s mission to foster Hispanic leadership through graduate management education and professional development.

The 2008 Brillante Award for an educational institution went to FIU’s College of Business Administration. The college was recognized at the Brillante Awards Gala, hosted by Deloitte, which capped the NSHMBA 2008 Conference and Career Expo held October 9-11, 2008, in Atlanta, Georgia.

“Our active support of NSHMBA’s mission to enhance opportunities for Hispanics in the business world comes naturally,” said **Joyce J. Elam**, executive dean. “Not only are we number one in the country in granting bachelor’s and master’s degrees to Hispanics according to *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*, but also our students have cultural roots from all across Central America, the Caribbean, South America, and Europe—a diversity that reflects Miami’s unique position as ‘the crossroads of The Americas.’”

Other 2008 award recipients place the college in very good company and include **Rudy Beserra**, vice president of Latin affairs for The Coca-Cola Company; **Loida Rosario**, with DePaul University; **Tillie Hidalgo Lima**, president and CEO of Best Upon Request Corporate, Inc.; American Express; and the National Hispanic Business Association.

Established in 1989, the Brillante Award remains the most prestigious honor granted by NSHMBA.

“The individuals and organizations awarded the Brillante Award for Excellence are truly dedicated and determined to make a significant impact in the business world and the Hispanic community,” said **Lourdes Hassler**, CEO of NSHMBA.

NSHMBA event provides excellent networking opportunity.

Twenty-four students in the university’s graduate programs made their way to Atlanta to participate in the 2008 event.

Current International MBA student **Emmanuel Roman** (BBA ’08) saw the NSHMBA Conference and Career Expo as an excellent opportunity to connect directly with a diverse group of Fortune 500 companies.

“If you are serious about getting a job after graduate school, NSHMBA is the place to go,” he said. “I talked with recruiters looking for people at every experience level in a variety of fields—from finance to consulting to management.”

For **Grace Ugalde**, now enrolled in the Evening MBA program, attending NSHMBA provided a strategic step in her career plan to move from a smaller company to a global organization. Her advice to other MBA students?

“Our active support of NSHMBA’s mission to enhance opportunities for Hispanics in the business world comes naturally.”

Executive and Professional Education bolsters business success in challenging environment.

The value and pleasures of education don’t have to stop with high school, college, or even graduate school thanks to Executive and Professional Education (EPE) in the College of Business Administration. EPE’s ever-expanding menu of programs enables professionals to hone their skills or gain certification for career success.

Surprisingly, the economic downturn has increased, rather than decreased, interest

in what EPE offers, according to the office’s director, **Robert Garcia** (EMBA ’97).

“People feel they need to develop their skills to make them more successful in their current job or to prepare them for opportunities either within or beyond their company,” said Garcia, who meets with decision makers to identify their needs and match those to existing programs, among other duties.

Continues



From left to right: Jerry Haar, associate dean for international affairs and projects and professor, Department of Management and International Business; Joyce J. Elam, executive dean; Luis Casas, director of marketing, communications, and recruiting; Tomislav Mandakovic, associate dean, Chapman Graduate School

Traditional back-to-school time means array of new courses, plus long-standing favorites.

Several new courses include an online Sarbanes-Oxley certification program and a Six Sigma certification, offered in collaboration with FIU's College of Engineering.

Also, previously taught courses in customer relationship management (CRM), managing interpersonal communications, and training and instructional design, are available, with a number of new courses in the works.

"We always have courses in development and are open to ideas, including customizing an existing course for a particular company or delivering an existing course at the company's site," he said. "For example, we currently are working with a pharmaceutical company on an executive education program for their high-potential leaders, with our faculty members working with their subject matter experts so the result will be very specific to their needs."

EPE also is working on a six-month advanced management program spanning all business functions and designed for those who need to acquire or sharpen business skills.

In world of acronyms, EPE opens clear path to advancement.

ASTD, SHRM, PMI. These professional organizations—American Society for Training and Development, Society for Human Resource Management, and Project Management Institute, among others—require certification, and EPE courses provide the background that helps individuals prepare to take the examinations.

"We list all our programs at epe.fiu.edu, where we accept enrollments as well as via fax, phone, or in person; and we are eager to answer questions about which program would be right for potential participants," said Garcia, who welcomes queries about company-specific needs at 305-348-1144 or garciar@fiu.edu. ■



Robert Garcia, director, Executive and Professional Education

"People feel they need to develop their skills to make them more successful in their current job or to prepare them for opportunities either within or beyond their company."

Joint degree builds real-world skills—where business and law intersect.

Alexander Nottingham (MBA-JD '08), operations consultant, Smile South Florida, believes that a law degree will open more doors for his career in business. Current graduate student **Marlon Greenwood** chose to pursue both a business and law degree because he was looking for a way to make his educational degree unique—and to help ensure that his résumé stands out in job application pools.

Both offer insights into the value of pursuing a joint degree at FIU—in their case, the MBA-JD offered by the College of Business Administration in conjunction with the College of Law.

Nottingham is the first to graduate with an MBA-JD joint degree and now is seeking an upper-level executive position or

a spot with a consulting firm.

"The study of law has improved my analytical and writing skills," he said. "I believe it will help me greatly as a business person."

With two years of law school completed, Greenwood decided to go for the MBA-JD joint degree.

"The benefit of having an MBA for just one more year of full-time coursework seems like an excellent opportunity," he said. "I hope to eventually run my own business and, in my opinion, a solid background in both business and the law will provide me with the educational foundation I need to succeed."

Greenwood observes that the MBA-JD program builds complementary skill sets.

"For example, a lawyer starting a prac-

Continues

tice needs to have a good business plan coupled with a good understanding of numbers in terms of how to finance and budget a firm's operations," he said. "On the flip side, in business today, you can hardly write a letter without subjecting yourself to some kind of legal implication—not to mention contractual agreements and regulatory requirements. That's why the skills emphasized in law school—such as legal analysis, legal research, and legal writing—are increasingly important in almost every aspect of business today."

In addition to the MBA-JD, eligible MBA students attending the College of Business Administration can choose from the following joint degree programs: the Master of Science in Finance (MBA-MSF), the Master of Science in Management Information Systems (MBA-MSMIS), the Master of Arts in Latin American and Caribbean Studies (MBA-MALACS), the Master of Science in Human Resource Management (MBA-MSHRM), the Master of Science in International Real Estate (MBA-MSIRE), and the Master of International Business (MBA-MIB). ■

"The study of law has improved my analytical and writing skills. I believe it will help me greatly as a business person."

Become an accountant with a badge: IRS "Special Agent Experience" shows students how.

Last October, members of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Criminal Investigations (CI) unit descended on the College of Business Administration. Fortunately, they arrived not to investigate tax crimes but to host a "Special Agent Experience" day for interested accounting majors.

The IRS conducts these combined learning-and-recruitment events at select college campuses across the United States—only two of them in Florida—to provide students with a chance to experience a day in the life of an IRS special agent, according to **Tessie Brunken**, student services assistant director for the college's School of Accounting.

"We were excited to welcome the IRS special agent team to South Florida and to our campus for the first time," she said. "Twenty-two students participated in the daylong activities, gaining insight into new ways to put their accounting degrees to work in the areas of forensic accounting and fraud investigation."

"The students followed the steps taken to solve a tax crime—from mock interviews, to surveillance, to appearing before a magistrate to secure a search warrant," said IRS Special Agent **Antonio Gomez** (MACC '02), who led one of the teams through the role-playing exercise. "Others from the IRS CI team played character parts, including suspects

and judges. After we set the guidelines and explained the processes, the students began their investigative work."

The ideal candidate for the program is an individual with a four-year business degree that includes a minimum of fifteen accounting credits plus nine credits in other areas, such as business law, tax, finance, and economics.

"We are very pleased with the outcome of this first 'Special Agent Experience' and hope to host a similar event again," Brunken said. "It gives students a chance to take what they've learned in the classroom and apply it in a real-world scenario. Also, it opens their eyes to a broader understanding of the opportunities their degree affords them." ■

From left to right: Frances Ortega, Adriana Ross, Paula Gomez, Oliver Soto, Gladys Mazon, Cecilia Estevez, and Special Agent Moises Assael



Business in Society course emphasizes community service.

In the college's BBA+ Weekend program, students take *Business in Society*, a class with far-reaching results. Here are two examples.

Small loans translate into empowered recipients and donors.

For recipients of micro loans, a small amount of money and a short amount of time can transform their lives. Similarly, in one short year, FIU Micro-Lenders has rapidly progressed and succeeded. Having begun as a community service project in the *Business in Society* course, it already has become an official student organization, is in the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) non-profit Florida corporation, and has formed partnerships to

tor, *Business in Society*. "We have a general idea of the direction we're going in, with each class improving the operations and taking on special fundraising and public relations roles."

One BBA+ Weekend group organized book drop offs on campus and at various sites throughout Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. They sell the books—ranging from textbooks to children's books—via an Amazon account.

"One book may only be worth \$5 or \$10, but as we gather more, it really helps," said **Romina Tripichio**, student coordinator, SER Jobs for Progress; with **Mariangle Calcoya**, purchasing manager and corporate officer, Darmiven, Inc. "If everyone in

Micro-Lenders is "an international service project that doesn't require air travel, while giving students the kind of international exposure appropriate for the college's international business and management emphasis."

To learn more about FIU Micro-Lenders, visit <http://microlenders.business.fiu.edu> and learn more about Kiva, its major partner, at www.kiva.org/lender/fiumicrolenderscorp.

BBA+ Weekend students team with AT&T to give back to the local community during the holiday season.

Think globally. Act locally. Certainly this altruistic concept rang true for BBA+ Weekend Group 26 as they chose their *Business in Society* service learning project: conducting a Thanksgiving food drive and a Christmas toy drive for needy South Florida families.

To bring cheer to those most in need during a holiday season made more difficult because of the economic downturn, the students joined forces with AT&T Telecom Pioneers South Florida Council. Telecom Pioneers is the largest industry-related volunteer organization in the world, with chapters located across the United States and Canada.

Baskets were distributed through two charitable organizations—Safe Space of North Dade County and Voices for Children Guardian Ad Litem South Florida. Four organizations—Children's Home Society of Florida, Mooseheart Charities, Association for Retarded Citizens, and CHARLEE Homes for Children—benefited from the toy drive. The Thanksgiving food basket project raised \$4,783 and collected a mountain of food donation boxes.

"This enabled us to feed 189 families and provide an additional 25 gift cards to other families in need," said **Tammi Calarco**, legal assistant, Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A. "The Christmas toy drive was equally successful, with 769 toys collected in the true spirit of the season." ■



FIU Micro-Lenders

increase its impact. A team from FIU Micro-Lenders is working to integrate the service project across the entire BBA+ Weekend curriculum and is forming a partnership with Great Florida Bank.

"FIU Micro-Lenders is a project that's building the road as it moves down it," said **Robert Hogner**, associate professor, Department of Management and International Business, coordinator of the college's Civic Engagement Initiative, and instruc-

Miami-Dade County alone donated \$5, or a book, imagine what we could do for the rest of the world."

"That's the premise of micro finance: that we can empower others through very small loans," said **Frank C. McGuinness**, IT strategist, *The Miami Herald*; BBA+ Weekend Group 24 class president; and future president of the non-profit.

While many aspects of the effort stand out, Hogner notes in particular that FIU

International Business Honors major participates in month-long service project in Amazon rainforest.

“If mosquitoes were made of chocolate, the Amazon trip would have been perfect,” said **Yirama “Catalina” Medina**, an International Business Honors (IB Honors) major in the College of Business Administration, with a second major in economics.

One of eleven students from FIU to journey deep into the Amazon rainforest—part of the first-time offering of the course in the university’s Honors College—Medina

was interested because of her “fascination about the world,” and her desire “to travel everywhere I can.”

Equally important was her commitment to service, a commitment she could fulfill on the Amazon trip, which centers on community service projects.

She already had participated in a college Global Leadership and Service Project (GLSP) to Thailand, spending ten days in

Bangkok working at a pre-school that rescues children living on the streets. Her interest in education prompted her to develop an Amazon project “to study the effect of external influences on the education system” in the remote area in Peru where the group was based.

Students seek ways to make experience sustainable.

Post-trip, group members are working to establish a new university student organization called Pathfinders, designed to manage entrepreneurial initiatives in the locale. Medina’s business courses have given her the background to propose efforts such as micro-lending as a way to “create more and longer-term projects,” she said.

And despite the mosquitoes, she felt “the environment is just magical, and the harmony of the birds, frogs, and rain, beautiful.”

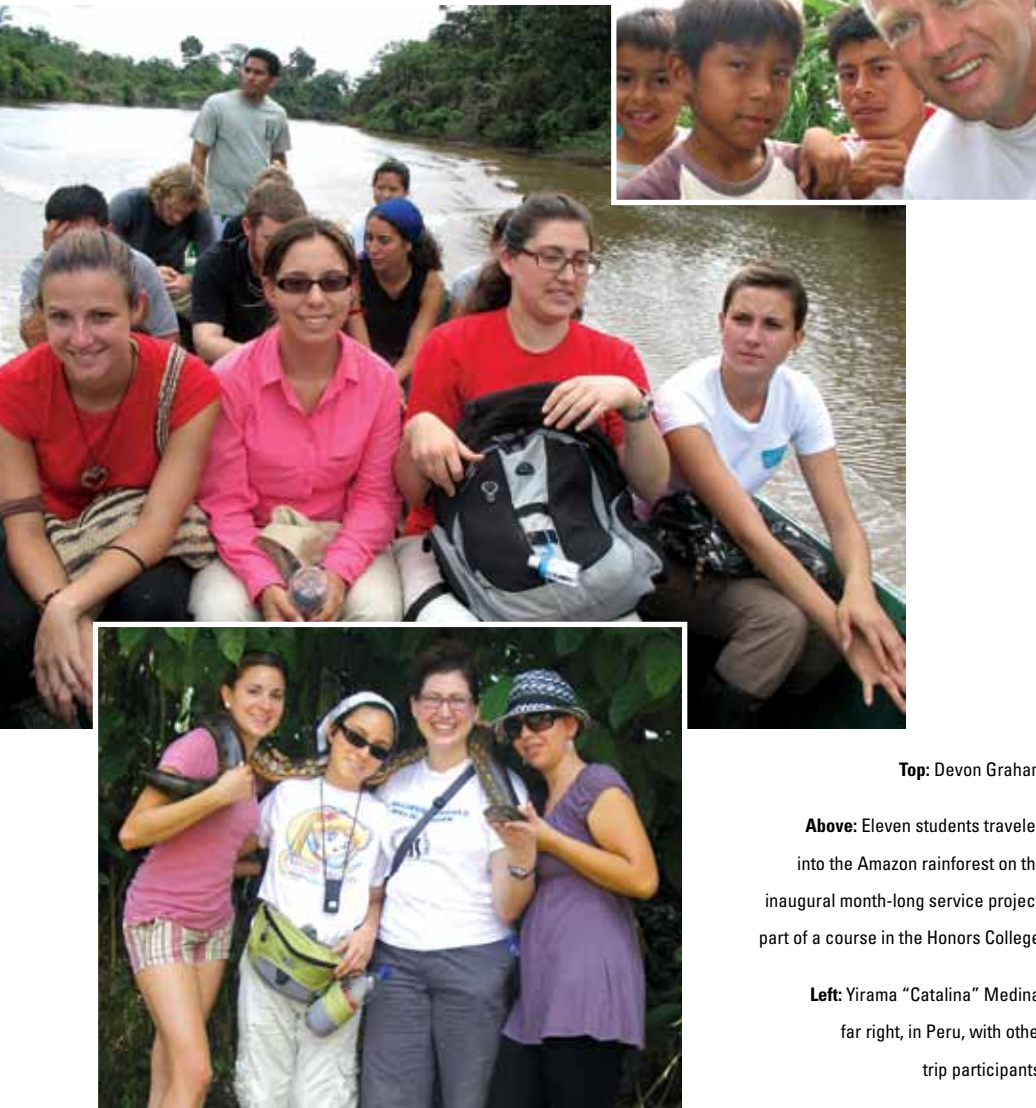
Another IB Honors major helps with logistics.

Norman Uriarte, an IB Honors major, who has participated in multiple GLSPs, including one he organized to Nicaragua, in addition to having gone on a study abroad program to Australia, organized by the university’s Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), is deeply committed to the idea of global service projects. As vice president of Panorama Services and Travel, he handled much of the travel planning, including the international flights through Grupo TACA.

“I was able to talk to the professors—**James R. Riach**, instructor, Department of Environmental Studies, and fellow of the Honors College; and **Devon L. Graham**, adjunct professor, Honors College—who teach the course and led the trip about my experiences, about what worked, and what didn’t,” he said.

For more information about the Honors College Amazon program and trip, visit <http://hon.fiu.edu/~peru>. ■

“The environment is just magical, and the harmony of the birds, frogs, and rain, beautiful.”



Top: Devon Graham

Above: Eleven students traveled into the Amazon rainforest on the inaugural month-long service project, part of a course in the Honors College.

Left: Yirama “Catalina” Medina, far right, in Peru, with other trip participants.

Business Alumni Chapter Board induction takes place, plans laid for 2009.

The College of Business Administration's Business Alumni Chapter inducted its new board members on May 30, 2008 at a breakfast held in the new College of Business Complex. The breakfast

honored the board members who served during the 2007-2008 term and welcomed the incoming board members who will serve the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

Juan Carlos Hernandez (BBA '02), port-



The College of Business Administration's Business Alumni Chapter inducted its new board members on May 30, 2008.

Front row left to right: incoming president Juan Carlos Hernandez, Betty Alvarez, Isis Roque, and Michael Jadoo (student liaison). **Back row left to right:** Michael Fenton, Ervan Hernandez,

Dawn Lazar, Dianne Cordova, Lesline McKenzie, and Christopher Davila.

Not pictured: Scarlette Carballo, Martin Rivas, and Michelle Vautier.

folio officer, corporate and commercial banking divisions, BankUnited, leads the group as its newly inducted president. The other officers include **Michael Fenton** (BBA '07), associate director, The Catholic Community Foundation in the Archdiocese of Miami, Inc., president-elect; **Scarlette Carballo** (BBA '04), Sperry Van Ness/Doran Jason Group, vice president of events; assisted by **Michelle Vautier** (BBA '06); **Cristopher Davila** (MACC '07, BACC '05), assurance associate, BDO Seidman, LLP; treasurer; and **Lesline McKenzie**, senior partner advocate, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, secretary.

Sandra Abascal (BACC '08), comptroller, Financial Insurance Brokers, Inc.; and **Martin Rivas** (MACC '04, BACC '02), manager, forensics, KPMG; lead the membership committee. The development committee is led by **Isis Roque** (BBA '95), managing director, ORG: Oncall Resource Group; and **Ervan Hernandez** (BS '03), marketing manager, Pollo Tropical; community liaison is **Betty Alvarez** (BBA '97), administrative assistant, Broadway Multimedia Inc./The Welcome Channel; career service liaison is **Dawn Lazar** (BS '06), assistant director, undergraduate programs, Career Management Services, College of Business Administration; FIU Alumni Association liaison is **Dianne Cordova** (BBA '06), the university's assistant director of student and chapter outreach programs, with **Michael Jadoo** serving as undergraduate student liaison.

Silver Pride induction brings alumni back to campus.

On November 8, 2008, 38 alumni representing the classes of 1972-1983 were inducted into the Silver Pride. More than 100 FIU alumni celebrated their 25th year of graduating at the new Stadium Club. The festivities began with brunch and a welcome from FIU President **Modesto Maidique**. He spoke about the changes and additions to the university over the past 25 years. Business school alumni toured University Park and then joined Executive Dean **Joyce J. Elam** for a tour of the new College of Business Complex.

"It is wonderful to have our alumni come back to University Park to see how much the college has grown, not only via buildings and students but also through the addition of programs and increased international recognition," said **Michelle Joubert**, assistant director of advancement and alumni relations. "Alumni who toured the building said that they would love to come back to take classes in our state-of-the-art classrooms."

The day ended with a tailgate party and a victorious FIU football game. ■

Tradition of excitement and purpose continues in new board.

The enthusiastic group met several times over the summer to plan their new series of networking receptions, which were scheduled for October 16, 2008, January 29, 2009, and March 26, 2009.

"As the newly appointed president of the Business Alumni Chapter, together with our highly motivated executive board, we intend to build on the achievements of our predecessors," Hernandez said. "We will continue to

Continues

organize events that generate increased participation and grow the membership. The chapter is energized and committed to be a part of a business school that not only is growing structurally with new buildings, but also in national and international recognition.”

“Joining the Business Alumni Chapter

is my way of thanking the college for the opportunities it granted me as a student and the doors it opened leading to my success in my career with Sperry Van Ness/Doran Jason Group,” Carballo said. “The alumni base here in South Florida is a major force driving our economy and it is only logical for the board to

foster these relations and invite our alumni to be active participants and leverage their success for the benefit of the university and future generations. The board consists of a multi-talented and very motivated group of professionals striving to take our college to new heights, and I am honored to be part of it.” ■

School of Accounting Alumni Affinity Council hosts “busy season” kickoff.

On January 15, 2009, the School of Accounting Alumni Affinity Council (SOAAAC), along with presenting sponsor U.S. Century Bank, hosted the “busy season” kickoff. During the busy season, which starts in mid-January, auditors and tax specialists work extremely long hours to meet financial reporting and tax filing deadlines for the year just ended. More

than 100 alumni and friends gathered at the college for cocktails and networking with the Cuban American CPA Association and the Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants (FICPA) South Florida chapters. The purpose of the event was to bring together School of Accounting alumni and individuals in the accounting industry to create awareness about the SOAAAC. The council’s

mission is to provide an environment that engages alumni with the School of Accounting, fosters relationships, and creates mentoring opportunities for those in or interested in the accounting industry. **Ben Diaz** (BACC ’95), Alvarez & Marsal Taxand, LLC; and **Ed Duarte** (BBA ’98), BDO Seidman, co-chair the group. To learn more about the SOAAAC, call **Michelle Joubert** at 305-348-0397. ■

A message from the Real Estate Alumni Affinity Council co-chairs

The real estate market is experiencing historic times that will surely continue into the foreseeable future. During these changing times in our industry, it is most important to have the opportunity to create valuable contacts while remaining informed on current market news. Under new leadership, the Real Estate Alumni Affinity Council (REAAC) is excited to host several networking events in 2009—events that will bring together great company and endless possibilities. It is important for us to get out there, be involved, and create opportunities for ourselves. If you are interested in being a part of the REAAC board, please e-mail us at reaacfiu@gmail.com or call 305-773-6600 or 786-473-9387.

Thank you,

Adrian Rodriguez and
David Lopez (BBA ’07)

Chapman alumni attend annual holiday party.

More than 100 Chapman Graduate School alumni gathered during the opening week of the Patricia and Philip Frost Museum to meet, mingle, and make merry for the holidays. The third annual holiday party on December 11, 2008 brought together Chapman graduates from various graduating classes, faculty, staff, and program managers to reconnect and network. Executive Dean **Joyce J. Elam** spoke about the many accomplishments and impressive rankings the Chapman Graduate School has recently received.

The highlight of the event was a guided tour of the Frost Museum’s 46,000-square-foot galleries. Alumni were able to view several collections including the General Collection, the Metropolitan Museum and Art Center Collection, the Betty Laird Perry

Emerging Artist Collection, and the Cintas Fellows Collection. Alumni who signed up for membership were entered into a raffle to receive an Art Basel VIP package provided by the Frost Art Museum. ■



The newly opened Patricia and Philip Frost Museum provided an elegant setting for the third annual holiday party for alumni of the Chapman Graduate School.

Margaret Brisbane (BBA '80), assistant director, Enterprise Technology Division Miami-Dade County, has been using her extensive commercial sector experience to champion the enterprise-wide adoption of project management best practices within a public sector environment.

Michael Baiamonte (BBA '86), the voice of the Miami Heat, has been appointed to the board of directors of the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic's Regional Unit of Florida and to the board of trustees for Palmer Trinity School in Palmetto Bay.

Cecilia Duran Simmons (BBA '86) is practicing commercial litigation at Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A.

Jorge Rigüero (BBA '88) has been executive director of BAC Investments Nicaragua since 2000. He also is a member of BAC Financial Network.

TotalBank has named **Daniel Diaz** (MBA '90) senior vice president and branch manager of its Bird Road branch. He will be responsible for coordinating, managing, and overseeing all banking operations. Diaz was most recently a commercial real estate lender at Premier American Bank.

American Bank has appointed **Javier L. Jaramillo** (BBA '93) bank secrecy act officer and senior vice president.

Jermaine A. Lee (BBA '96) has been added as an associate to Bilzin, Sumberg, Baena, Price & Axelrod. Previously, Lee was an associate at Shook Hardy & Bacon.

Michael Houser (EMBA '98) is director of Studio Initiatives Entertainment Imaging for Eastman Kodak Company. Houser has worked for Kodak for eighteen years. A recent project included Kodak and Universal Pictures partnering to promote *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* at the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race at Chicagoland Speedway on July 12, 2008.

Arturo Neto (MSF '98, BBA '93), CEO of Neto Financial Group, Inc., has been selected by Goldline Research as one of "The Most Dependable™ Wealth Managers of The Southeast United States" for 2008. The list is published in the September 29, 2008 issue of *Forbes* magazine. He also was a finalist for Excellence in Finance for the March of Dimes "Building Our Community Award," which is based on community involvement and contributions. Neto is a member of the college's Alumni Circle.

Manny Velasquez (BBA '98) was elected as the executive vice president for the New York Chapter of the National Society of Hispanic MBAs. Last year, he was the organization's vice president of marketing. Velasquez also is associate director, audience services, at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the world's leading performing arts organization.

Microsoft MSN and Internet music community Cyloop have teamed up in an alliance that will allow Cyloop to offer its content on MSN's portals in Latin America, the U.S. Latin market, and the Sympatico/MSN portal in Canada. The strategic alliance was negotiated between MSN and Hoodiny Entertainment Group, the digital entertainment company that owns Cyloop. **Demian Bellumio** (BBA '00) is president of Hoodiny Entertainment and currently is a Dean's Council member, while **JC Morales** (BACC '05), is Hoodiny's vice president of finance and an Alumni Circle member.

Ocean Bank has promoted **Janet Pujol-Pijuan** (BBA '01) to senior vice president and head of credit administration. She will be responsible for all operational and reporting functions of the credit area, including changes to loan policies and procedures and credit quality assurance.

Concepcion Tuma (MIS '01) is a senior recruiter at Victoria & Associates Career Services. She also attained her PHR Certification.

Ana Sanso-Hill (MST '03, BBA '99) has joined CBIZ MHM and Mayer Hoffman McCann PC as a senior manager specializing in audit management for public and private companies.

Zameer Upadhyia (BACC '03), co-founder and CEO of BabySpot, was featured in *Hispanic Entrepreneur* for the launch of the beta version of BabySpot Latino, a social networking site for Latino parents and their families. The company also debuted on the top-rated Hispanic morning show, Univision's *Despierta America*, in September.

Miguel Campos (EMBA '06) has joined C&L Technologies as vice president and general manager.

Shirley Lowe (IMBA '06) has joined New England Financial (NEF)-Miami. She founded the first women's group at NEF-Miami, the Women's Financial Network. Lowe is a member of Women's Movement Now (WMN) and volunteers for Junior Achievement at Palmetto Senior High School, where she has been teaching entrepreneurship and leadership to seniors since 2007.

Andre Silva (BBA '06) has been based at the Laughlin Air Force Base in Del Rio, Texas. He began undergraduate pilot training in September 2008.

Erica Courtney (MBA '07) was featured in the November 2008 *Oprah Magazine* as one of the eighty women trailblazers chosen nationwide based on prior leadership, diversity of entrant's life experiences, and project idea/vision about how to change the way things are done.

Have you been promoted or changed jobs? Update your profile at <https://cbasys.fiu.edu/alumni>.

Correction: Mike Baiamonte's name was misspelled in the photo caption on the cover of our fall 2008 issue.



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