Alumni participation, the number of alumni who give back to their alma mater, has gained momentum over the past few years thanks to the growing number of alumni who support the Annual Fund. Every Annual Fund gift, regardless of size, is important in increasing alumni participation, one of the criteria used in the national rankings of business schools.

The Annual Fund plays an important role in building the School of Business Administration. Annual Fund gifts designated to the School of Business Administration are used to meet the most immediate and pressing needs of our school. They provide financial resources for recruiting and retaining top business students, and for continuing to offer outstanding teaching, innovative programs and world-class facilities.

WITH YOU we are making a difference!

If you have never made an Annual Fund gift before, or have not yet made your gift for this year, please log on to www.miami.edu/makeagift. In the Gift Designation area, be sure to select School of Business Administration from the drop-down menu. Be a part of creating momentum today!

The University of Miami Annual Fund
School of Business Administration
Post Office Box 248032
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305-284-4052
A Message from the Dean

Share the Excitement

As the new dean, I am extremely excited to be here. I have only been on campus three months, but already I can sense the anticipation and enthusiasm of the faculty and the students. People here can feel the energy and I want you to feel it, too. My goal is to take the University of Miami School of Business to the next level and help it earn an international reputation for excellence. Some of my plans for achieving this goal, and the new leadership team that will help me do so, are profiled in a series of articles inside this issue. One of the reasons I know we will be successful is that the School is in great shape, thanks to former Dean Paul Sugrue and what he has built here during the past 15 years. We have impressive students, outstanding faculty and staff, and world-class facilities. But now we have to plan where we want to go in the 21st century. With a clear vision, good implementation and hard work — and, of course, with a little shape, thanks to former Dean Paul Sugrue and what he has built here during the past 15 years. We have impressed me with their determination and willingness to work hard to achieve our objectives.

Alumni relations is of critical importance to the School’s growth, and I intend to focus on making the bond between the School and its alumni even stronger. I don’t want you to think of the School as “the place where I got my degree.” I want you to think of the School as the place that gave you a foundation for success in your career, and with which you have an ongoing relationship. Why? Two reasons:

First, we both benefit, and that’s always a good business proposition. The better our reputation, the higher we rise in the rankings, and the more we become a global player, the greater the value of your diploma. Second, we need your help. We want you to hire our graduates and provide internships for our students. If you live in the greater Miami area, we invite you to participate in our special programs and events here on campus. If you live elsewhere, we hope you will visit us if you come to South Florida on business or vacation. And wherever you live, we look for your support, no matter how large or small. I look forward to sharing the excitement with you.

— Barbara E. Kahn, PhD
bkahn@miami.edu
New Chairs Named for Two Departments

NEW CHAIRS HAVE been appointed for the Management and Management Science departments as part of the restructuring of the School of Business leadership.

Professor Edward K. Baker III was named Chair of the Management Science Department. He succeeds Dr. Anuj Mehrotra, whom Dean Kahn has appointed Vice Dean of Graduate Business Programs.

Yidong Luo was named Chair of the Management Department. He succeeds Dr. Linda L. Neider, whom Dean Kahn has appointed Vice Dean of Undergraduate Business Programs.

School Plans Broader PhD Program

THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS currently offers a PhD in economics, but a faculty committee is now designing a School-wide PhD program.

Under the leadership of Professor of Marketing A. Parasuraman, the committee is developing the curriculum, admission process and other elements of the new program. The plan is to offer PhD degrees in marketing, management and possibly management science, in addition to economics, with other disciplines added in coming years.

“A. Parasuraman

“We will begin accepting and processing applications in early spring,” says Dr. Parasuraman. “Qualified applicants will be admitted by summer 2008 and begin their program of study in fall 2008.”

Dr. Parasuraman notes that “an active and strong PhD program is an essential pillar for supporting our School’s goal of enhancing its visibility and scholarly reputation in the academic and business communities, and among the public at large.”

For more information, contact Dr. Parasuraman at paars@miami.edu.
Health Care Management Programs on the Move

**PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT** Steven G. Ullmann (profile, page 25) is the School’s new Director of Health Sector Management and Policy Programs, has several initiatives under way.

- The MBA in Health Administration and Policy program—one of only free programs in the country with dual accreditation in business administration and health administration—is assembling a new advisory board of top-level administrators from the health care community, with local, regional and national representation.
- An MD/MBA program is being established in partnership with UM’s Miller School of Medicine. The program is expected to begin in the fall of 2008.
- A for-credit certification program in health care management is being developed in collaboration with several UM schools, colleges and programs. The program is targeted to working professionals and students who have or are pursuing an MBA or MD degree or other graduate degree in nursing, exercise physiology, physical therapy, medical sociology or psychology.
- Non-credit certificate programs and focused workshops are being developed for the health care community. Topics will include elements of change management, budgeting and finance for clinical managers, and consumer-focused quality in health care.
- A concentration in health care management is being developed for the School’s undergraduate curriculum.
- Also being explored are the international aspects of health care and the privatization of health care, with a focus on educating both health care administrators and government policymakers.

For more information, contact Dr. Ullmann at ullmann@umiami.edu.

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**CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS TARGET PROFESSIONALS AND STUDENTS**

BUSY PROFESSIONALS and UM graduate students in non-business academic fields now have an opportunity to enhance their career portfolio with cutting-edge business knowledge offered through the School’s three new certificate programs. The programs include the General Business, Lean/Six Sigma Management and Investments.

Each program consists of several courses. Single courses may be taken, but all required courses must be completed to earn a certificate. Programs begin in January.

"These programs offer great value to professionals who lack the time to pursue a conventional business degree, and to students preparing for careers in which business knowledge will be useful," says Anuj Mehrotra, Vice Dean for Graduate Business Programs, who is directing the certificate programs.

For more information, call (305) 284-2794.

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**CUSTOM PROGRAMS ADDRESS SPECIFIC COMPANY NEEDS**

As part of its extended outreach to the South Florida community, the School is now offering custom programs tailored to the needs of a specific company or industry. The programs provide the expertise of a world-class faculty combined with opportunities for senior executives to network with their peers in other companies.

The wide range of subjects offered includes Latin American business issues (in English or Spanish), leadership and strategy, health care, logistics and Six Sigma continuous process improvement.

The custom programs are developed through a five-step process involving pre-training needs assessment through post-training evaluation. High-impact interactive class sessions are designed for small groups and feature case discussions developed specifically for the company or industry.

Two types of comprehensive business education for senior executives are also offered. The first is a customized MBA program that can be completed in 18 to 20 months, on or off the UM campus. Classes meet on weekends or full time for two weeks every two months. The second is an abbreviated program for busy senior executives unable to commit the time for a full MBA. Classes meet on or off the UM campus for 20 days, either on weekends or twice for two weeks two months apart.

"With increasing global competition and changing marketplaces, senior executives need to be conversant with emerging management thoughts and practices," says Arun Sharma, Chair of the Marketing Department and director of the School’s custom program initiative. "These programs provide a unique career opportunity for emerging leaders."

For more information, contact Dr. Sharma at customprograms@umiami.edu.
SURPRISE!

WHEN DEAN PAUL K. SUGRUE, his wife Linda Neider, and their college-bound daughter Rosie walked into the Red Fish Grill on May 18, he thought they were attending a dinner meeting for Miami-area families with a child entering the Massachusetts Institute of Technology this fall. Instead, there were balloons, Champagne and a roar of “surprise!” from the assembled School of Business faculty and staff. What followed was an evening of toasts and roasts celebrating the outgoing Dean’s 15 years of service in high style. There were lengthy tributes, but perhaps the simple banner hanging in the foyer said it best: “Thank You, Paul.”
Barbara E. Kahn, our new Dean, intends to turn the School of Business into a global player

INTERVIEW BY ROBERT S. BENCHLEY • PHOTOS BY MARGUERITE BEATY (MFA ’02)

When former Dean Paul K. Sugrue announced in September 2006 that he would step down at the end of the 2006–07 academic year, the University of Miami immediately began a national search for his successor. That process ultimately led the search committee to Barbara E. Kahn, the Dorothy Silberberg Professor of Marketing, Vice Dean and Director of the Undergraduate Division at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School. Dean Kahn is an internationally recognized expert in such marketing areas as consumer choice, variety seeking, brand loyalty and decision making. Under her leadership, Wharton has had the top-ranked undergraduate program in the U.S.
Dean Kahn didn’t start out to be an academic or even a marketing specialist. A native of the New York City area, she began her college studies as a math and science major at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. In her junior year, she transferred to the University of Rochester to major in English literature with a minor in art history, resulting in what she calls a “fairly eclectic” undergraduate education. That degree led to a job as a writer/researcher at an advertising and public relations firm in Seattle. She wanted to get back to New York, though, and an MBA at Columbia seemed like the ticket to the marketing fast track.

Once back in school, however, Dean Kahn realized that she really enjoyed the research and teaching associated with the academic life. She did complete the MBA degree, but then went on to earn a PhD in marketing. Her dissertation focused on measuring and modeling variety seeking and brand loyalty behavior — why some consumers, for example, buy primarily Coke, while others drink a variety of flavors. Her first academic position was at UCLA’s Anderson Graduate School of Management, where she met her husband, Robert J. Meyer, another marketing professor. After five years together in Los Angeles, the two went on sabbatical to Wharton to continue their research. Wharton turned out to be a good match for their interests, and they stayed.

Dean Kahn was very productive teaching and doing research, and she expected her career to remain on that path. When the Vice Dean position at Wharton opened up in 2003, however, the school’s then-Deputy Dean approached her about the job. He thought she would be ideal for the position. He turned out to be right, and she spent the next four years in the dual role of professor and administrator. That’s when UM’s search committee came knocking on her door.

Robert S. Bendehley, editorial director of BusinessMiami, spoke with Dean Kahn to find out what happened next and what her plans are for the School of Business.

“What attracted you to this new position? After becoming Vice Dean of Wharton Undergraduate, I was offered positions at several other schools. Mostly I ignored them because I was very happy at Wharton. The UM invitation sparked my interest, however, because it was an exciting opportunity to become involved with a school that is in a good position to become a major player in the international arena. UM President Donna Shalala was also a big draw for me. I really respect what she has done in her career and what she has done for the University. I like the idea of helping UM jump to the next level, and I believe that UM has many strengths that can be leveraged. It has seen tremendous growth in the last few years, and we hope to see more even in the future. I also liked that there were so many changes happening at once all around campus. Very impressive people were attracted to the university from many different fields and perspectives. That creates a stimulating environment. There are also some interesting strengths at the School of Business in particular, and I hope to build on those and take the School to the next level.

What did UM’s location factor into your decision? Miami was a big draw for me. It goes without saying that it is a beautiful city. I am also drawn to the international aspect. Miami’s location makes it truly a global place, especially as a gateway to Latin America. I love the diversity, the restaurants, the culture and the overall excitement. In addition, my husband was going to high school in Miami (see sidebar, page 14).

What do you see as the School’s strengths? Paul Sagarte leaves the School in great shape. The physical facilities are state-of-the-art, and the students in the various programs are impressive. Great strides have been made over the past 10 years in the academic quality of the students who come here. There are some terrific faculty members who are doing interesting research. From what I have seen so far, the faculty is also willing to do what it takes to go to the next level — to move from having a wonderful reputation in Florida to becoming a global player. Doing that, however, requires a long-term strategy.

What is that strategy? We are in the process of reviewing and evaluating everything we do. First, we’re going to build on the strengths we have here to attract new scholars who have global reputations and who can help us increase our research reputation. That means an aggressive recruiting campaign, combined with the current successful practice of hiring top research professors and junior faculty. We are also reactivating the School’s PhD program. Second, I have appointed a task force to examine the curriculum in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. I want to make sure that the most up-to-date, relevant information is being taught so that our students are well prepared for any business career they might choose to pursue. Third, we intend to study our placement opportunities to try and increase the out-of-Florida possibilities. Our students tend to focus on the Florida marketplace, which is fine, but a world-class business school should also look for placement in other business centers, such as New York City. Finally, I want to engage the business community and the alumni to actively participate in the excitement that is occurring in the School of Business. There are many possibilities for involvement, both on campus and through financial support. Obviously, we need resources to make some of this happen.

You have already begun making significant administrative appointments. Yes. I am very pleased to have appointed two current faculty members to fill two Vice Dean vacancies. Dr. Anuj Mehrotra (profile, page 17), formerly the Chair of the Management Science Department, is the new Vice Dean for Graduate Business Programs, succeeding Dr. Harold Berkman (profile, page 21). Dr. Linda Neider (profile, page 16), formerly the Chair of the Management Department, has assumed the role of Vice Dean for Undergraduate Business Programs, succeeding Dr. James Foley (profile, page 22). Both have the vision, the skills and the solid academic credentials to help the School of Business reach the next level of excellence. Their successors — Dr. Edward Baker in Management Science, who has previously served as Chair, and Dr. Yunlong Luo in Management — have already been announced (story, page 5). In addition, I am delighted to announce that Dr. Steven Ullmann, Professor of Management, has agreed to become the School’s Director of Health Sector Management and Policy Programs. Dr. Ullmann (profile, page 23) recently stepped down from two senior UM positions — Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and University Administration. We’re proud that he has been succeeded as Dean of the Graduate School by Professor of Management Terrri Scandura (profile, page 15). These appointments demonstrate the strength and quality of the faculty I have joined here.

What are your long-term goals for the School? Simply put, I want the University of Miami School of Business to be internationally recognized on all fronts — as disseminators of state-of-the-art research and knowledge, as producers of the best students (undergraduates, MBAs and PhDs), and as providers of relevant business theory and applications to the business community.

You have spoken of collaborative efforts with other UM schools. How might that happen? We are going to explore cross-disciplinary opportunities where we can win. Right off the bat, I see opportunities to collaborate...
on health and business programs with the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing. I also see possibilities to collaborate with the School of Architecture in real estate programs. Additionally, there are entrepreneurial programs that provide opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration. And we are thinking possibly about a sports business program.

Do you see your expertise in areas such as consumer choice and health care being beneficial to the School? I’m proud of my research record. I have contributed to the literature exploring how patients and consumers make challenging health care and preventative care decisions. I believe this research has increased our knowledge base and so is valuable just for that reason. But the process of doing in-depth, careful academic research also strengthens one’s skills in critical thinking, problem identification and analytical thinking. So the fact that I have been an active researcher for the past 20 years has prepared me to take on the new challenges presented here.

Will you do any teaching? Yes, I will. I’m planning to teach a strategic branding course in the Marketing Department in the spring.

How do you plan to interact with alumni? I am hoping to actively engage in alumni relations, both on campus and during my travels across the country and throughout the world. I already held four alumni get-togethers this fall, in conjunction with marketing conferences that I attended in Aspen, Denver, Memphis and Tokyo. In addition, I recently presented my strategy at a reception for South Florida alumni and other local professionals here at the School. I look forward to meeting our alumni and encouraging them to become more actively involved.

Transition Leader

When Terri Scandura arrived at the School of Business in 1990, fresh from a stint as Assistant Professor of Management at the University of Kentucky, she was enthusiastic about UM’s relationship with the city of Miami. “I saw the University as an institution that would have a major impact on the community in which it was located,” she recalls. “The diversity and growth patterns of Miami made it an exciting place to be.”

Dr. Scandura is a Cincinnati native who earned her BBA and PhD at the University of Cincinnati. George Graen, a professor there who was well known for his research in leadership, became her mentor. That experience set the stage for more than 20 years of academic exploration. “Dr. Graen sparked my interest in organizational behavior,” she says. “I found this process to be so important in my own life that I decided to study mentoring as one of my research areas.”

Her other principal area of academic interest is leadership, which dovetails neatly with mentoring. “Organizational behavior is an interdisciplinary field of study that draws from business, psychology, social psychology, sociology and other areas,” she explains. At heart, it is about how the relationships between individuals affect large institutions.

Now she has an opportunity to put her research expertise to work in her new position as Dean of The Graduate School. It’s a big job. The Graduate School provides assistance and oversight for more than 150 graduate programs in Architecture, Arts & Sciences, Biomedical Research, Business, Communication, Education, Engineering, Marine Sciences, Music and Nursing.

“We support recruiting efforts for those programs,” she says, “and we will be working to improve the experiences of more than 5,000 graduate students. We will be monitoring program quality and placement of students upon graduation.” Dr. Scandura succeeds Steven G. Ullmann, also a Professor of Management, who is now Director of Health Sector Management and Policy Programs at the School of Business. (Profile, page 25).

Dr. Scandura notes that her expertise in leadership, team building and negotiating skills are already proving essential in her new position, and she plans to continue teaching courses in those areas.

“Graduate education is fundamental to the mission of the University of Miami,” says Dr. Scandura. “Graduate programs enhance the reputation of the university through the quality of the students they attract, the scholarship produced by those students, and the placement of graduates in positions of prominence in the field. The impact on students will be an enhanced educational experience through enhanced program quality.”

“UM is going through an exciting transition, with increased emphasis on graduate education. I look forward to being part of that change.”

A FAMILY ON THE MOVE

Dean Kahn’s husband will join the faculty next year.

For one member of Dean Kahn’s family, the relocation to Miami will be a homecoming of sorts. Her husband, Robert J. Meyer, moved to Miami with his family as an adolescent and graduated from Killian High School. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in geography at Florida State, and a PhD in geography at the University of Iowa. Dr. Meyer is on the faculty at the Wharton School, where he is the Gaylord Steinberg Professor of Marketing, Chair of the Marketing Department and Co-Director of the Wharton Center for Risk and Decision Processes.

Their son, Tim Meyer, 17, can’t wait to attend UM. First, however, he has to finish his senior year of high school, which he will do in Philadelphia. His father will remain with him for the next year while Dean Kahn gets settled in her new job in Miami. Following Tim’s graduation, the two will relocate to Miami, and Dr. Meyer will join the faculty at the School of Business.

Their daughter, Alyssa, 20, is a junior at George Washington University majoring in sociology. In addition to her studies at GW, she is working in external relations (development and alumni relations) and may consider a career option when she graduates.

— R.S.B.
LINDA L. NEIDER  
Vice Dean, Undergraduate Business Programs

**Change in Management**

“I realized the potential for our School to build one of the best programs in the world.”

within four years, from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

As the new Vice Dean for Undergraduate Business Programs, Dr. Neider now has the opportunity to influence the experience of all of the School’s 2,150 undergraduates. With assistance from senior faculty and her staff, she is already reviewing the School’s entire undergraduate education curriculum.

It’s a role she has played before in the School’s Management Department, which she completely revitalized during her tenure in that role, as Chair. Dr. Neider hired 17 of the 23 current full-time faculty members. She also raised an endowment of nearly $1 million that is used to support faculty research, travel and teaching needs. She developed majors in entrepreneurship and human resources management at the undergraduate level, and worked with faculty to develop numerous graduate courses. Today the department is the School’s largest and has the third-largest number of undergraduate majors in all of UM.

Dr. Neider says she looks forward to continuing the progress made under the prior leadership of James Foley (profile, page 22). Nonetheless, this career move, like her sophomore year, was an experience that has changed her life. She knows that it’s true because it happened to her.

Dr. Neider was a sophomore majoring in chemistry when she was assigned to the chair of the Psychology Department as a work study. “I knew that as a ‘hard science’ major I was familiar with basic research methods,” she recalls, “and he asked me to work with him on his lab studies dealing with short-term and long-term memory effects. I ended up publishing two papers with him by the time I finished my undergraduate studies. More importantly, I learned that I enjoyed working on research in the social sciences. This ultimately led me to apply to doctoral programs in psychology, and eventually to specialize in industrial/organizational behavior.” The Syracuse, N.Y., native graduated summa cum laude and went on to receive MA, MBA and PhD degrees, all from the best programs in the world.

I had never considered an administrative role for which I have been preparing since high school.”

Dr. Neider believes in the power of the undergraduate experience — how just one professor can steer a student onto a path of study that can change his or her entire life. She knows that it’s true because it happened to her.

Dr. Neider was a sophomore majoring in chemistry when she was assigned to the chair of the Psychology Department as a work study. “I knew that as a ‘hard science’ major I was familiar with basic research methods,” she recalls, “and he asked me to work with him on his lab studies dealing with short-term and long-term memory effects. I ended up publishing two papers with him by the time I finished my undergraduate studies. More importantly, I knew that this was what I wanted to do when I was in high school.”

Dr. Neider’s path to academia began with a mechanical engineering degree at Birla Institute of Science and Technology in India. He earned his master’s degree at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (where he met his wife, Kashmira, a native of Mumbai, who works in information technology at Burger King Corp.) and his doctorate at Georgia Institute of Technology. Both were in operations research, which he notes has been called “the science of better.”

Anuj Mehrotra behind him, Dr. Mehrotra arrived at UM as an assistant professor in 1993. Since then, his research has made him a well-regarded authority on large-scale optimization and interdisciplinary applications, and he has taught many of the graduate-level courses he now oversees as Vice Dean. He became department chair in 2002, and was named Leslie O. Barnes Professor of Management Science in 2003.

Dr. Mehrotra’s new challenge, working in conjunction with Dean Kahn and fellow faculty members, is to review and revamp Graduate Business Programs. “Having taught extensively in our graduate programs, I bring a fairly good understanding of our strengths and weaknesses,” he says. “I like to question everything, and I am not afraid to implement change to speed up progress. It is a challenging opportunity, but we have a strong faculty, talented staff, and promising students and alumni, and I am very open to receiving everyone’s input. I am really looking forward to making a positive contribution.”

Some of the changes he anticipates include “aggressive recruitment of qualified and qualified students from around the world, an improved admissions process, and more rigor in our curriculum and classes. We must enhance the opportunities for our graduates to achieve leadership positions.”

That’s an ambitious agenda, but Dr. Mehrotra believes he is stepping into a role for which he has been preparing since he hiked up the slopes overlooking Dehradun. Of his experience at UM, he says, “It has been a great ride that keeps getting better.”

**Scaling New Heights**

A boy growing up in Dehradun, India, a town nestled in a valley in the Himalayan foothills, Anuj Mehrotra could see snow-covered peaks from his window. He liked to hike several miles up to a hill station called Mussoorie when it snowed there because it was too warm for snow in Dehradun. From that vantage point, he could gaze off into the distance and think about what life might have in store for him.

Today, his window looks out on palm trees and the flat Miami landscape, and Dr. Mehrotra is scaling different heights as the new Vice Dean for Graduate Business Programs. His life, however, has turned out pretty much as planned.

“Education was always a major area of focus in my family,” says Dr. Mehrotra, “so I grew up never considering alternatives. A life of teaching and research, combined with the multicultural environment that a university campus offers, is one of the most fulfilling lifestyles that I can imagine. I knew this was what I wanted to do when I was in high school.”

Dr. Mehrotra’s path to academia began with a mechanical engineering degree at Birla Institute of Science and Technology in India. He earned his master’s degree at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (where he met his wife, Kashmira, a native of Mumbai, who works in information technology at Burger King Corp.) and his doctorate at Georgia Institute of Technology. Both were in operations research, which he notes has been called “the science of better.”

His doctorate in hand, and a year as a visiting professor at Carnegie Mellon...
The evening of Saturday, September 16, 2006, offered up typical late summer Miami weather — hot and humid. The School of Business faculty was together for the annual “welcome back” dinner held at the beginning of the new academic year. For the second year in a row, the event was held on a dinner boat that cruised around Miami Harbor. Short sleeves and a sea breeze helped cut the humidity, and the colorful lights of the Miami skyline and causeways provided a beautiful backdrop to the celebration. When Dean Paul K. Sugrue stepped to the microphone to address the faculty, they expected him to say, as he did each year, how nice it was to all be together again and what a good year it was shaping up to be.

That he did, but he also had some news to share — he was stepping down as Dean at the end of the 2006–07 academic year. As he spoke, there was a collective gasp of surprise. After all, he was the only dean many of the faculty had known at the School.

Dr. Sugrue told his colleagues his reasoning. The School was in great shape, it was rising in the rankings, it was on sound financial footing, its buildings (most of which he had put up) were abuzz with scholarly activity, and there was another building on the drawing board. It was exactly the right time to step down after 15 years — a very long tenure for a dean anywhere — and let a new leader guide the School into the future. The fact that the School was in such good shape was a testament to Dr. Sugrue’s leadership — something the faculty acknowledged that evening with a standing ovation.

Coincidentally, Dr. Sugrue’s academic career had its very beginnings on a boat, specifically a U.S. Navy warship. Growing up in Cambridge, Mass., he became “fascinated with the idea of the Navy,” he says. “I was 16 when I applied to the Naval Academy.” Four years at Annapolis earned Dr. Sugrue an officer’s commission, but the rigorous classroom training also pointed him to another career path. “I excelled at mathematics, a subject I had always loved and which many other students found difficult,”
he says, “I realized then that I wanted to teach and do research.” A stint as a
structor in naval operations and navigation at the U.S. Naval Officer Candidate School
confirmed his instinct.
After fulfilling his service commitment, Dr. Sugrue resigned from the Navy and
pursued graduate study, earning an MBA at the University of Rhode Island and a PhD
at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His facility with mathematics led
naturally to the field of management sci-
ence. “I found the applications of math-
ematics in business very interesting,” he says.
Two years of teaching at Providence
College led to an offer from UM. “I have
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in research productivity (in first-tier refereed publications). Freshman retention was 78
percent in 1987, with SAT and GMAT scores more
lower than those acceptable to a top business
school. And even with the Jenkins and Stuble-
field buildings, in many ways the School was
still more of an idea than a place.
“I didn’t have a single priority,” says Dr. Sugrue.
“I knew I needed to build the School in all areas — faculty, students,
facilities and reputation.”

In the faculty arena, he set out to
develop a research-oriented culture by rais-
ing money to support all untenured faculty
in the School “with a vengeance,” earning an MBA
and a doctorate at St. John’s University.
After teaching at Long Island University
for seven years, Dr. Berkman was wooed away
by UM as an entrepreneur. He
was made director of the Executive MBA
Program. Suddenly, the guy who got out of
retail because he didn’t want to be a boss
was an administrator. Later he was named Associ-
ate Dean of the School of Business in 1992.
Dr. Berkman says he is proud of the many
students who have gone on to successful ca-
ers, of his devoted staff who stayed with him
and of the many programs he introduced, es-
pecially the Master of Science in Professional
Management. He also points to the rapid rise
in new students’ GMAT scores and the many
students attracted to the School’s graduate
programs from overseas. It’s been a great run,
he says, but it’s time for a rest.

“When Paul Sugrue became Dean, I promised him that I would stay as long as
he did. I never expected it to be 15 years. At 81, I may have been the oldest dean in the
country,” Dr. Berkman laughs. “Now I’m
headed for a long-deserved ‘sabbatical.’ I
can’t wait!”

In appreciation
A “Pretty Good” Career

James Foley, with typical modesty, uses the term “pretty good” when describing his abilities, but in 40 years at UM he has proven to be a lot more. Back when he was an undergraduate liberal arts student at the University of Cincinnati, his goal was to become a lawyer. Just in case law

state, where he entered the PhD program in economics, he was required to teach and found he was “pretty good” at that, too.

It was while he was at Michigan State that Dr. Foley, who was interested in the economies of developing countries, was influenced by one of his professors to focus on Latin America. Ultimately, that focus is what brought him to UM.

“At most universities, you would be lucky to teach one course a year on Latin America,” he says. “Here at UM, I had the opportunity to teach several courses a year because of the strong emphasis on Latin America.”

Dr. Foley arrived in Miami in 1968 and began teaching economics. Along the way, he became director of the School’s graduate programs in economics. Even the master of understatement, he says that experience showed that I had some administrative ability.” In 1987, then-Dean Jack Borstein offered him the position of Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Services. That turned out to be a “pretty good” idea, too, for Dr. Foley held the position for the next 20 years.

Dr. Foley also takes pride in the leadership role that he and his staff have taken at UM. “We were the first school to put in our own undergraduate admissions director, and our recruiting model has resulted in a dramatic rise in the SAT scores of incoming freshmen. We also were the first to go to paperless files and to a computerized degree-audit system,” he says. “And our award-winning peer-counseling program may be the best in Florida.”

One of the benefits of being a dean — Dr. Foley calls it “a real privilege” — has been the opportunity to work with talented faculty and administrators across UM. A teacher at heart, he headed back to the classroom this fall, a practice he never abandoned in his 20 years as Associate Dean. “You have to do something you love. That’s the key.”

“One of the things that put it all together was that they flew me down in January. Ann Arbor was 22 below, and it was 70 in Miami!”

Dr. Foley is proud of all that he accomplished in his two administrative positions. “UM is an institution with 8,000-plus faculty and staff, and 15,000-plus students, so you’re dealing with a small city in terms of the situations that come up,” he says. “But teaching is his tonic. ‘To me it’s almost therapy,’ he says. ‘I can be having a really bad day and walk into the classroom, and the students energize me.’

Perhaps that is why Dr. Ullmann has won so many of UM’s Excellence in Teaching awards — 24, according to the School of Business.

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JAMES W. FOLEY
Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Services
1987–2007

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Dr. Ullmann also served UM as Director of Academic Programs in Health Administration (1986–1995) and Associate Director of the Center on Adult Development and Aging (1991–1993). And he was acting director of UM libraries — twice.

None of that, however, includes his first love — teaching. Dr. Ullmann has appointments as Professor in both the Management and Economics departments at the School of Business, and in two departments at UM’s Miller School of Medicine.

His juggling act is easier now. Dr. Ullmann has stepped down from both administrative positions and returned to full-time teaching. With one small exception: Dean Barbara E. Kahn asked him to fill a new position as the School’s Director of Health Sector Management and Policy Programs. He said yes.

Saying yes to UM was easy from the start. Following undergraduate study in economics at the University of California at Berkeley, the San Francisco native earned master’s and doctoral degrees at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. It was there that an influential professor steered him toward health economics, which was then an emerging specialty.

“UM had everything I needed to do my research,” says Dr. Ullmann. “They had a business school that wanted me to do health care work, a health administration program, a medical school and a center on aging. They also asked me to guest lecture in the undergraduate economics course. I thought, Wow, what a cool signal, that teaching is really important here.”

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STEVEN G. ULLMANN
Director, Health Sector Management and Policy Programs
1992–2007
Dean, The Graduate School
1999–2007

DEAN BARBARA E.

I can be having a really bad day and walk into the classroom, and the students energize me.”
Ashley Cristol (BBA ‘07) met Sherry Ulsh (MBA ‘83) at a pivotal time in her education. The pair were matched by the Mentor Program at the beginning of Cristol’s junior year, just after she changed her major from finance to marketing. It was a move that Ulsh, director of marketing account administration at Miami-headquartered Burger King, could well understand. >>>
LEGAL EAGLES
New law student benefits from judicial wisdom

On his first day as a protégé, Ian Lerner (BBA ’07) got started by simply watching his mentor, Florida Circuit Judge Gill S. Freeman (MEd ’73, JD ’77), at work. “I went to the courthouse and sat in on a couple of hearings. Her bailiff would come over and explain what was going on, and it was cool,” he says. The experience was also ideal for Lerner, who entered the UM School of Law this fall.

After that initial meeting, Lerner and Freeman, of the 11th Judicial Circuit Complex Business Litigation Section in Miami, met every few weeks. Their discussions naturally centered on the law — or more specifically, life as a lawyer. “We talked about what his aspirations were and where he ultimately wants to live and practice,” says Freeman. “We talked about the nature of the legal practice, getting your first job, what areas of practice are the most lucrative, and the nature of legal practice and what you have to do to really be successful in those areas.”

Lerner credits the success of the experience to Freeman’s ability to be friendly and down to earth, and to make him feel comfortable. “The relationship could have been awkward, but she was nice and really open to everything I had to say. That helped a lot,” he says.

For her part, Freeman says that Lerner’s approach was critical as well. A mentor can only do so much to initiate and shape the relationship, she explains. “If the protégé is not willing to help me, I can’t help them,” she says. “They need to be interested.”

For Freeman, the protégé is looking out for me. That’s basically what it was, and that has been really valuable,” she says. “I also learned how to work with Nielsen and MTM Networks — exactly what she had hoped for.

“I learned a lot about the media entertainment industry and MTVN as a company,” she says. “I also learned how to work with Nielsen and Scourby and other research tools. It was a really great internship because my department was very small — five people, including the secretary — so they gave me actual work to do.”

For the most part, it is really up to the protégé to be proactive — and Lerner was. “Ian’s personality and drive helped to make this work,” she says. “He made it clear to me that he had an interest in gathering as much information as he could and really learning, and he was very pointed and direct in asking about things he wanted to know.”

“We talk about our personal lives a lot more,” reported Ulsh. “The first time we met, we spoke about what we want to do and how the relationship could have been awkward, but she made an effort to make me feel comfortable. “The relationship could have been awkward, but she was nice and really open to everything I had to say. That helped a lot,” he says.

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Now a law student, Lerner still has occasional dinners with Freeman, continuing the relationship that developed through the Mentor Program. “This has been a great opportunity, having someone who’s really important in my field being willing to help me,” Lerner says. “My friends used to ask me, ‘What do you do with a mentor?’ And I told them that it’s someone who cares and who was very pointed and direct in asking about things he wanted to know.”

“During our first few conversations, we talked a lot about finding your passion,” says Ulsh, whose MBA concentration was finance but whose responsibilities now include financial support of Burger King’s marketing department. “Ashley realized that while she’s comfortable with numbers and statistical analysis, hardcore finance was not for her.”

Their first year together, the two women met regularly, attending roundtable discussions held by the Mentor Program and dining together monthly. Initially, their conversations focused on housing Cristol’s career plans. “We had discussions about the difference between finance and marketing,” reports Ulsh. “Because my current role involves supporting marketing, I was able to share with her some insights about what each of the twoussen’s roles would entail.”

Early on, Ulsh also gave Cristol her first look at real-world business operations with a tour of Burger King’s headquarters, office visits, and meeting and speaking with Ulsh’s co-workers. “Going to her offices was great networking for me,” says Cristol. “And talking to Sherry every month about her career and how she’s achieved what I hope to do was incredibly helpful.”

The two also faced down the biggest challenge for a junior: finding the perfect summer internship. Complicating matters, Cristol had her heart set on interning in New York — a goal that ruled out Burger King.

Meeting over dinner one night, they pored over Cristol’s résumé, fine-tuning her accomplishments in anticipation of internship interviews. “Her résumé didn’t highlight what she had accomplished as strongly as it could have,” recounts Ulsh. “So we reworked it on a laptop over dinner, moving her work experience up higher, adding more action words and details on the results she had achieved on various projects.”

Thanks in part to the revamp, Cristol secured a highly coveted internship in the research and planning department at Viacom-owned MTV Networks — exactly what she had hoped for.

It’s refreshing to see someone who knows what she wants and is willing to do what she needs to do to get down that path. She’s not a person who will just fall into whatever comes her way.”

To help give Cristol insight into what companies look for in entry-level employees, Ulsh arranged for her to meet with a member of Burger King’s talent acquisition team, who offered job search pointers. Ulsh also sent out feelers to her contacts in the marketing world and worked with Cristol to develop a spreadsheet of target companies in the media and entertainment industry where she most hoped to work, as well as at large New York publishing companies and ad agencies.

“It’s hard to send your résumé into a large company cold and wait for a callback,” said Cristol, who checked in with Ulsh for encouragement as well as advice whenever she had doubts about a cover letter or when to send a...
“IT WAS SCARY, BUT AT THE SAME TIME I KNEW THAT AT SOME POINT I WOULD GET A JOB. I WAS E-MAILING AND MAKING FOLLOW-UP CALLS LIKE CRAZY.”

—ASHLEY CRISTOL

**WINTER 2006**

By December, Cristol had submitted her résumé to a dozen companies, including the Food Network, Condé Nast, Walt Disney, CBS, The New York Times, CNN, McGraw-Hill, Ogilvy & Mather, and Scholastic. In February the search was in high gear, but it became increasingly clear that landing a job from afar was unlikely. Undeterred, Cristol made a visit to New York — hard in part by the invitation to interview for one of 12 paid internships for recent graduates at the MTV Networks Summer Associate Program. “The interview went well, and I’m really hoping it will work out at MTVN, but I won’t find out until April,” she said on returning from her New York trip, adding that she also interviewed at Teach for America’s corporate office and spoke by phone with a contact of Ulsh’s at a large marketing firm. “I am continuing to network and am staying in touch with the people I’ve met so far. A lot of companies in these industries only hire a few weeks before they want you to start, so that makes it hard. But I have faith.”

“She’s done a great job making connections,” added Ulsh. “I really hope she can join the media agency. That would be a great learning experience for her. I know that she would prefer MTV, and in the end it’s her decision. I just put the opportunity out there.”

**SPRING 2007**

When the internship at MTVN did not materialize, Cristol broadened her search, aided by contacts provided by Ulsh’s network. “Sherry got me contacts at so many New York agencies through her network,” she reported. “But in the end I graduated without a job.”

Confronting the two agreed that to join New York’s media world, Cristol would need to break her vow not to move without a job. “I wasn’t getting anywhere because I didn’t have a set date of when I would be in New York, so I couldn’t set up interviews or say, ‘I will be there on this date,’” she said. “So I thought, I just have to go.”

No small feat, moving to the country’s most ruthlessly competitive city without a job. Undaunted, Cristol secured both an apartment and roommates via the Web and booked a one-way ticket.

**SUMMER 2007**

I met my roommates the same day we signed our lease,” reported a relocated Cristol in June. “It was scary, but at the same time I knew that at some point I would get a job. I was e-mailing and making follow-up calls like crazy.”

Meanwhile, Ulsh had been hard at work on her behalf, calling on contacts to open doors. Their joint efforts led to interviews at Deutsch, Clear Channel Radio Sales, Z100, the Food Network and — yet again — MTV, as well as at VH1, another Viacom network. “The opportunities at MTV and VH1 came through Sherry’s contact at the media agency, with whom I had kept in touch,” says Cristol. “She called me up and — since she couldn’t hire me [due to a hiring freeze], she was forwarding my résumé to some people she knew at the television stations they work with.”

Shortly thereafter, Cristol received a call from an advertising executive at VH1. She met with the woman who was to be her future boss at a Starbucks, where they hit it off immediately. The conversation ended with an informal offer of an advertising sales assistant position, quickly followed up with a formal offer from VH1’s HR department that afternoon. “I started a week later and I love it,” says Cristol, who credits Ulsh’s network. “Sherry got me in touch with the people I’ve met so far. A lot of companies in these industries only hire a few weeks before they want you to start, so that makes it hard. But I have faith.”

“For Taylor, a private investor, proper planning encompasses everything from gathering basic contact information and looking at students’ class schedules to asking the protégé about his or her philosophy of life. The idea is to build the groundwork for a relationship upfront so that mentor and protégé can hit the ground running when they meet, armed with topics that are relevant to the student. “You have to tailor the mentoring to the protégé,” he says. “Each one is looking for something different out of the program. Some are interested in learning more about a particular discipline. Others just want to interact with an adult whom they can talk to outside of the school environment on a myriad of topics.”

Taylor has also found that protégés often respond to a mentor’s willingness to explore and question, rather than just dispense information. “The mentor’s goal should not be to change the protégé’s thinking, but rather to expose the protégé to various options and viewpoints,” he says.

Rob Short’s plans to stay in touch with Taylor as he embarks on his career.

Brett Brown’s experience with the program was similar. “We would talk about nearly everything — Don’s experiences in business, investing, the stock market, about choosing a career and advancing in a career,” he says. “I definitely gained a real understanding into a lot of areas that are interesting to me as a finance major.” The program also led to Brown getting a summer internship at Assurant Solutions, where Taylor’s wife, Renata, is a vice president of operations accounting. Renata, incidentally, joined the Mentor Program this fall.

All agree that communication also is key. For Taylor, that means more than formal meetings; it also means using e-mail to continue discussions. “Fortunately, with e-mail you can share articles and items of interest with the protégé very easily, and say, ‘Let’s discuss this at our next meeting,’” he adds that any communication has to be two-way, and that the mentor has to be truly listening. “The mentor can leverage the program to learn what young people are thinking,” he says. “After all, these kids are going to be the leaders of tomorrow, and it’s a good idea for all of us to know what is on their minds.”

Brown is back at UM this fall, and Short, who graduated last spring, has been in Tampa taking additional coursework for his Florida CPA license and is now working at the Grant Thornton accounting firm. Both plan to stay in touch with Taylor, and Short adds that he plans to follow Taylor’s example. “Having Don as a mentor gave me renewed vigor and passion for volunteer- ing, and for taking the time to help others,” he says.

—Peter Haapaniemi

David Rabinowitz (left), gets an internship at mentor Don Taylor’s wife Renata’s company.

**TAILORED APPROACH**

Communication is key to a successful relationship
When it comes to intelligent, inspired ideas, the winners of the 2007 Rothschild Entrepreneurship Competition have it all.

You might call them generation “i” — the “i” for inspiration, the overwhelming quality that all of the winners of the 2007 Rothschild Entrepreneurship Competition possess. "I'm absolutely inspired by all of you," an energized Leigh M. Rothschild (BA '73) told the group assembled on April 20 in the School’s James W. McLamore Executive Education Center to honor the winners of the annual competition he helped launch five years ago. While Rothschild acknowledged outgoing Dean Paul K. Sugrue for championing the competition’s success, lecturer Philip Needles (BBA '91) for coordinating the School’s entrepreneurship curriculum, and the judges for steadfastly evaluating the 17 finalists’ presentations, he singled out the most important individuals. "What inspires me the most are the students," said Rothschild, the managing director of Rothschild Trust Holdings. "The level of their business plans is higher than those of some of the companies I’ve invested in."

Indeed, the five winning plans — as well as the UM students who created them — represent the essence of ingenuity, diversity and perseverance that entrepreneurship embodies. There’s an MBA student calculating that teahouses are the next big thing … a marketing major’s novel idea for a drive-through sushi restaurant … a law school grad wired into a patent-pending way out of a common mess … a dynamic duo determined to duplicate data … and a fashion-conscious flip-flopper.

And they get more than just recognition of their winning entry. The two first-prize winners — one in the High-Potential Venture category, one in the Small Business category — receive $8,000 each. The three second-prize winners (there was a tie in the Small Business category) get $4,000 each. The 12 overall Honorable Mentions get $1,000 each.

Turn the page to find out more about this year’s winning plans.
He’s Taking the Chai Road

Jason Catlette wants to do for tea drinkers what Starbucks does for coffee quaffers

High Rothschild calls it the “elevator pitch.” As one of the perennial judges for the School’s eponymous entrepreneurship competition, he throws down the same challenge to each of the presentering finalists: In 15 seconds or less, give a synopsis of your business plan. For those on the hot seat, it’s a tense, ready-or-not moment. “We want to be the Starbucks of the specialty tea industry,” Jason Catlette shot from the lip, “and with growing market conditions, we feel that there’s a lucrative opportunity for Chai Harmony.”

And how did that fastball strike Rothschild and his fellow panelists, Catlette was asked a day later? “He told me I nailed it,” he says. Indeed, Catlette, an International Business student in the School’s MBA Program for Working Professionals, was relaxing this story a couple of hours after being awarded first prize in the High-Potential Venture category. So beyond his rapid response, Catlette shot from the lip, “and with growing market conditions, we feel that there’s a lucrative opportunity for Chai Harmony.”

And upon the recommendation of one of the competition’s judges, Catlette read an apopons book: Pour Your Heart Into It: How Starbucks Built a Company One Cup at a Time, by Starbucks founder Howard Schultz.

Jason Catlette wants to do for tea drinkers what Starbucks does for coffee quaffers.

There’s nothing fishy about Leot Chen’s idea for a sushi drive-through

There’s nothing fishy about Leot Chen’s idea for a sushi drive-through.

Chen (pronounced like “hen”) hardly needed to defend herself or her second-prize-winning opportunity within the High-Potential Venture category, Sushi on the Roll. The novel concept is summed up in the opening line of her 55-page proposal: “Have you ever said, ‘I wish there was some sort of fast food that was healthy, that didn’t cost a fortune and could easily be picked up, while on the go?’” The Rothschild Competition’s judges concurred that Chen has the answer to this question: an affordable sushi eatery that satisfies consumers’ health- and style-conscious needs in a fast-casual sit-down and drive-through options.

I was always doing a million things at once,” Chen says of her fast-paced college lifestyle, which included Delta Gamma sorority activities, community service and a 35-hour workweek. “Eating wasn’t a big priority,” admits the regular patron of McDonald’s and Wendy’s, “but I wanted something fast, healthy and still tasty.” The budding entrepreneur in Chen, along with the impending start of the Rothschild Competition, got Sushi on the Roll rolling last fall. “I’m not someone who can sit in an office all day,” she says. “To really be successful, you have to do it on your own.”

Even so, Chen recognizes that her strengths lie more in the creative and personalized dimensions of launching a venture and less in crunching numbers. That’s why she partnered in the early stages of creating her business plan with friend Alex Garcia, whom she met in a management class. “I explained the idea to him and said, ‘Let’s team up,’” Chen recalls. “I had the creativity and Alex had prior business-plan competition experience.” Although he wasn’t able to continue as a partner, “Alex supported me all the way, right up to the presentation,” she adds.

That was the day last April, in front of the discerning panel of judges, when Chen alone elucidated on the viability of merging the sushi craze with the ever-growing fast-food business. Her product pitch? Easy-to-eat sushi rolls in recyclable plastic cylinders that fit into a vehicle’s cup holder, miso soup in cups so it can be sipped, rice rolled into balls that can be packed up without utensils and nuggets of teriyaki chicken on a stick. “I want the customers to be able to eat in the car, if they choose, but also to pay attention to dressing,” she explains. In a bow to classic sushi restaurants, Chen will put her chefs behind glass windows so they can be watched by drive-through customers.

Chen impressed the judges with her attention to detail, as well as with her passion for the concept, but she’ll need more than the $4,000 second prize to fully realize her dream of someday franchising Sushi on the Roll. (Chen also won the School’s inaugural Entrepreneurial Woman of the Year Award; see page 37). “My next step is finding startup funding,” she says, but she’s already on a roll.
The Untangler

Amir Khorsand has figured out how to pull the plug on those annoying wires

Doh! That’s the collective sound of the Homer Simpsons of the world as they trip yet again over another nest of wires contorted from overloaded electrical power strips booby-trapping homes and offices everywhere. Is there a solution?

You bet. If Amir Khorsand (JD ’07) has his way, WireBase Solutions — the patent-pending device that won him first prize in the Small Business category of the Rothschild competition — will soon become a common peripheral in our wired environs. The native Californian, who came to Miami to study law, not product design, nonetheless used his passion for clever, moneymaking ideas to develop a novel product and a way to get it into the marketplace. “It was crazy to see this idea in my head appear in front of my eyes,” he says of the process. It began, as sometimes a great notion does, with a bit of serendipity. “One night I was in my room, the lights were off, and I had my computer plugged in,” says Khorsand, who earned an undergraduate degree in English from the University of California at Irvine before coming to Miami. “I got up to go to the restroom and tripped over the wire.”

Doh! We’ve all done it before, right?

The difference, though, is that when Khorsand got back into bed, he thought, “There’s got to be a solution to the mess of wires in my house. The next morning, it wasn’t just a dream, but soon a note in his utility patent (which means that a product may be the first of its kind and completely new to the marketplace) for WireBase Solutions. His business plan describes the device as “a box-like enclosure which fits over surge protectors/power strips and safely conceals the mess of wires and adapters within an aesthetically pleasing form.”

The judges certainly applauded the 15-by-3 1/2-by-12-inch injection-molded, plastic product itself, but the rest of Khorsand’s plan is what put him over the edge. For instance, consider the target consumer for WireBase Solutions, which essentially is any of the 70 million U.S. households that own at least one computer. That doesn’t include the gazillions of printers, scanners, TVs, DVD players, stereo, gaming systems and other electronic gizmos whose wires emanate from the multiple power strips needed to keep them all humming.

Although he’s the first law student to win the Rothschild competition, Khorsand demonstrated business acumen in his manufacturing, marketing and pricing plans, and diligently scoured the Internet for help in outlining his financial projections. He took a hiatus this summer to help turn the idea into a possible venture. Ultimately, their joint effort paid off when it was selected as a second-prize winner in the Small Business category.

They’ve Got Your Backup

Two students found a better way to keep their digital lives in order

Amir Khorsand has figured out how to pull the plug on those annoying wires

IKE ABAKI WAS bummed out last winter when he lost the USB flash drive that he used to back up data and music files. “But I was not going to spend another $80 to get a new one,” says the finance and management science double major, revealing typical college-student behavior and spending priorities. Unlike many of his peers, though, Abadi found a smart solution to his problem. And like any future entrepreneur, he teamed up with a partner to help turn the idea into a possible venture. Ultimately, their joint effort paid off when it was selected as a second-prize winner in the Small Business category.

Although Abadi’s MyGiga was suggested by a professor from the School of Management and an executive at New Frontiers Information Corp., Abadi ran the notion past his good friend, Itziar Diez-Canedo, who is majoring in economics and international finance. “It was an interesting process,” Abadi says, “and you can’t lose it or damage it, like a flash drive.”

Then came the “aha” moment: “Wouldn’t it be great if there was a place, just for college and high school students, where you could have all your stuff in cyberspace and access it whenever you want?”

Abadi ran the notion past his good friend, Itziar Diez-Canedo, who is majoring in economics and international finance and marketing. “It was really unique,” says Diez-Canedo, who went to high school with Abadi in her hometown of Mexico City.

Thus was born MyGiga.com, “an online storage site that facilitates the backup, sharing and transfer of computer documents and files for students and young adults,” according to the business plan. A user’s first gigabyte of memory is free, then the account can be upgraded for a monthly fee of $5 for each extra gigabyte of storage. The site will also sell software upgrades and special functions.

Preparing the business plan taxed the relatively limited classroom experience that sophomores have in specialized areas such as economics and marketing, but Abadi and Diez-Canedo culled the knowledge gained in an introductory finance course they both took. “It was an interesting process,” Abadi says, “because we had to materialize what we learned in the class and put it into real-world perspective.” They also received valuable feedback from their mentor for the competition, Andrew Heitner, a lecturer in

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Call Him a Flip-Flopper, Please

Adam Weiss has landed on his feet with a fresh fashion product

Several of the young women chose to show up at the Rose Garden wearing flip-flop sandals along with their dresses and skirts, which incited a fashion faux-pas flap. While “Flip-Flop Gate” sparked a debate over what’s appropriate attire for visitors to the White House, Weiss seized upon the sandal scandal as the genesis for Stomps, a stylish line of flip-flops for the hip-hop generation.

That incident demonstrates the casualization of society and how people in my generation feel it’s permissible to wear flip-flops in such situations,” says Weiss, who is completing his JD/MBA degree (he received an MBA in International Business in May). In his business plan, he compared flip-flops to another generational breakthrough “just as blue jeans have become completely gentrified, from their origins as low-culture work items to their current status as high-fashion leisure garments, flip-flops are the fashionable future of leisure footwear.”

Like dungarees, flip-flops are nothing new. Yet while cheap rubber flip-flops have become a pedestrian commodity for beachgoers, trendy designers have co-opted the concept to produce high-priced accessories. “But those still don’t resonate with the hip-hop generation,” Weiss contends. “I want to develop a niche where the product will evolve to the point where Stomps aren’t just an accessory but become a staple fashion item.”

It’s safe to say that none of the Rothschild Competition judges were wearing flip-flops when Weiss made his presentation, but as astute entrepreneurs and venture capitalists, they know a good idea when they see one. As much as they appreciated Weiss’ product itself and his assessment of the demographics and Stomps’ market potential, they pressed him in follow-up questions about his financial projections.

“It’s easy enough to come up with an idea and a design for a new product and put together a marketing plan,” says Weiss, “but when people are investing in your idea, they want to know that they’re going to get a reasonable return on their investment. To back up projections with solid data was the most difficult aspect of this experience — and what I appreciate most from having done it.”

Admitting that after law school he may get his feet wet in a traditional job in a big corporation or law firm, Weiss is no flip-flop-averse entrepreneur. “My ultimate goal is to start a venture-capital firm that solely invests in college students and their business ideas,” he says. “I think college students are the most underutilized entrepreneurial resources in the country.”

YNTHIA COHEN BELIEVES IN “DOING DEALS IN HEELS.” LIKE MANY OF her male counterparts, Cohen is the successful boss of her own company, a frequent public speaker and a member of several public and private corporate boards. Unlike her male counterparts, she does it all in her signature brightly colored high heels. The sought-after strategy consultant has been a three-time judge in the annual Rothschild Entrepreneurship Competition. This year, Cohen initiated the Entrepreneurial Woman of the Year Award with a $1,500 grant to recognize the achievement of a female finalist and inspire her to continue the pursuit of her entrepreneurial dream.

Never without her heels, Cohen wore blue stilettos when she addressed the students, faculty and fellow Rothschild Competition judges at the awards luncheon. When presenting the award to this year’s winner, she spoke about the need for more women to be involved in all aspects of entrepreneurship, from venture capital to business startups. The “Strategic Diva,” as she proudly calls herself, said, “My mantra is there are not enough women in key business roles. Until there are more female role models to inspire them, young women need incentives such as this award.” The Strategic Mindshare Foundation, of which Cohen is founder and chairman, sponsored the award. It also provides scholarship and mentoring to young women across the country who are pursuing business careers.

Leot Chen (BBA ’07) was selected by the full judging panel as the inaugural winner for her Sushi on the Roll idea — a drive-through restaurant serving sushi and other healthy Asian fast foods (story, page 3). “Leot came across with credibility,” says Cohen. “She did her homework, conveyed the essence of the business plan, had passion for it, and demonstrated leadership and innovation.”

Oh, and one more thing caught Cohen’s eye when she handed Chen the check. “She’s wearing high heels,” the Strategy Diva remarked, “and has great taste in shoes.”

HE GOING’S-ON AT THE White House have inspired many a college student to seek a life in politics or some other form of public service. For Adam Weiss, an incipient resident at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue generated an idea for a small business, the detailed plan for which has earned him a second prize in the Rothschild competition.

Weiss paid special attention two summers ago when members of the Northwestern University women’s lacrosse team, being honored by President George W. Bush for winning the 2005 NCAA Division 1 National Championship, created some controversy.

WELL-HEELED PATRON
A competition judge with a fondness for footwear establishes a new prize for entrepreneurial women

T he following teams received honorable mention awards of $1,000 each for their business concepts.

HONORABLE MENTION

HIGH POTENTIAL VENTURE
ASCENDANT
Adam Smith

ALL-AMERICAN BASKETBALL ACADEMY
Scott Fishman

APEX
Arie Phillips

GLOBAL CONCRETE CORP.
Anthony Centanni
Amanda DiNardi

SCUBA STORE LEISURE
Pablo Daviden
John Espinosa
Ray Godschultz
Robert Waitax

SECURE ASSURANCE FOUNDATION
Nicole Demmon

TRIPLE CROWN BAIT
Leslie Debassige

HONORABLE MENTION

SMALL BUSINESS

COLLEGE TOURS
Chris Kuczynko
Yiran Xu

LITTLE SCHOLARS FOUNDATION
Joseph Discipola

YANCEY LAW
Amnon Yancey

PANEL OF JUDGES

BETTY G. AARDS (BBA ’73, MBA ’75)
The Abbey Companies

CYNTHIA R. COHEN
Strategic Mindshare

SCOTT DEUTCH (BBA ’80)
Orange Clothing Co.

ANDREW HEITNER
Alcon Technology Consulting

DAVID EPSTEIN
Presidential Capital Partners

ROBERT NEWMAN
Greenwood Gulch Ventures

MICHELE FERNANDEZ
NBF Healthcare Partners

MATTHEW W. SHAW (BBA ’91, MPRACC ’92)
Connected Capital Technologies

YANCEY LAW

CAPICORP

KAYA WITTENBURG
Majestic Properties
Aerospace Pioneer

When NASA's Hubble Space Telescope first beamed back thousands of photos in 1994, Beverly Cooper Stapleton beamed with pride. And so she should. Stapleton was the contracts manager for the Hubble Space Telescope program at Lockheed, the prime contractor for the project, as well as for other major space programs, and one of the women pioneers in the aerospace industry.

But science wasn't on her radar screen when she graduated from UM in 1954, admin Stevenson. Government was—she earned a master's degree at the University of Alabama on a fellowship in political science. Her return from graduate school to her high school alma mater, Miami Beach High School, to teach American history and government coincided with the launch of Sputnik in 1957 and a national interest in space exploration. "Suddenly, teachers were required to take science courses," she recalls.

Stapleton married in 1959, three years before the National Academy of Sciences recommended building a large space telescope. He then-lorded worked as an aerospace engineer, and in 1971 the couple relocated to San Jose, Calif., where Stapleton focused on raising a family and began a second career in publishing.

"Working in publishing was a great launching pad for preparing, processing and negotiating contracts," says Stapleton, who quickly discovered that she had an affinity for them. In 1978, she made another career change and landed a job in the defense industry preparing proposals for United Technologies.

"The company designed solid rocket motors for spacecraft lift," she says. "Within a year I was promoted to contract administrator. In 1982, Echo Space hired me to be the manager of their contracts department.

After less than a year working for Echo Science (now DRS Precision Echo), Lockheed wooed her away to negotiate large, complex contracts with NASA and the Department of Defense. The challenge was exhilarating, and her success in contracts was considered unmatched. Stapleton remained with Lockheed (which became Martin Marietta in 1995) until her retirement in 1998.

She admits that her greatest thrill, however, occurred at Cape Canaveral in the 1990s, when she witnessed a space launch and later walked past a display of aerospace history. "I realized that I was walking past the timeline of my life's work," she says, "using it etched in a fascinating, historical perspective." — Stephen Levin
CHANGE AGENT
Harvey Wagner has enjoyed a ringside seat at some of the most important events in business and technology during his career, from the leveraged-buyout craze of the 1980s to the technology boom of the late 90s. But more exciting, says Wagner, has been his role as an “agent of change.”

“Whenever there was change required, I was the guy to do it,” he explains. “My personality is such that I get bored early and quickly. When things are running smoothly, I start itching to find the next thing to do.”

After graduating from UM, Wagner went to work at a public accounting firm in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. A public company hired him as a controller four years later, and he stayed on the corporate financial track. He went on to become the CFO of another public company, and eventually held that title at four New York Stock Exchange-listed companies and two NASDAQ-listed companies, most of them in the technology industry. Early in his career, he set a goal of becoming CFO of a Fortune 500 company — he ended up doing that four times.

Along the way, he held positions with high-tech companies on both coasts during the industry’s heyday.

When things are running smoothly, I start itching to find the next thing to do.

Wagner Adams, Inc., in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. HARRIS N. STEINBERG (BBA ’58), a self-employed financial consultant in Miami, reports that he works a lot (consulting with real estate developers) and plays a lot (tennis). He also enjoys his grandchildren and travels to Europe in the spring.

Maynard W. Thompson (BBA ’55) lives in Lake- mont, Ga., and reports that although he lived in Miami for virtually half a century (1935 to 1984), he “loves the mountains.”

1980s

Michael Z. Brennan (BBA ’90), CEO of FCB Advisory, Inc., in Homestead, Fla., has been inducted into the Order of the Golden Heifer of the International Fraternity of Delta Sigma Chi for 50 years of continuous service and membership. He lives in Miami.

H. Edward Domingo Jr. (BBA ’86) retired from the supermarket industry after 30 years but says he and his wife couldn’t sit still. As a result, they opened a cabin-retail company in Bat Cave, N.C. They live in Orlando, Fla.

Rooney L. Layer (BBA ’64) is the president of Royal Enterprises in Edisto, S.C.

Ralph H. Polster (BBA ’81) is president and treasurer of Ralph H. Polster Enterprises, Inc., in Miami.

Howard J. Rubin (BBA ’82) owns The Glove Doctor, in Boca Raton, Fla., which designs and manufactures ski gloves. He also is working on designs for gloves that help prevent sports injuries or restore function to people with certain hand and wrist ailments.

William R. Rogers (BBA ’85) retired from a 25-year career in the Real Estate Development of the city of Phoenix and now lives in Occoquan, Va.

EMANUEL “MANNY” Topakas (BBA ’65) is retired and living in Benson, N.C.

1970s

Mirtha Guerra Acuérre (BBA ’72), president of MGA Accountants & Consultants, Inc., in Miami, has been appointed business valuation examiner by the American Society of Appraisers.

Arthur G. Baizt III (BBA ’74) is a project management consultant for Bechtel International, assigned to Jakarta and Subang, Indonesia. He is working on the Gasoline Optimization Program, a major engineering and construction upgrade project at the Pertamina-Petronas Refinery, located on the west coast of the island. He lives in San Fernando, Trinidad, West Indies.

Robert Beder (BBA ’77) is a retired financial advisor in West Windsor, N.J., but “retirement” hasn’t slowed him down. He is an active personal investor, serves as an arbitrator for the NASD, devotes time to volunteering and is a local library patron, where he enjoys reading biographies and watching movies. He is a retired professor of law and chairman of the board of the Florida Bar Foundation.

Gerald R. Cahn (BBA ’73) has been named president and CEO of Christian Cruise Lines in Miami.

LED Fallback (BBA ’76, PhD ’84) is a Wall-street pharmacist manager in the Village, N.Y., was installed as chairman of the board of directors of the Florida Pharmacy Association on July 1.

Lewis B. Freedman (BBA ’74), founding principal of Lewis B. Freeman & Partners, a forensic accounting firm in Coconut Grove, Fla., received the 2007 Ultimate CEO Award from South Florida Business Journal.

Rosanne Krihnen Galati (BBA ’78), an agent with New York Life Insurance Co., in Naples, Fla., was selected to attend the company’s Leaders for Life workshop.

Martin J. Ganderson (BBA ’73) is the principal at Martin J. Ganderson Attorneys and Counselors at Law in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

David Goodelman (BBA ’74) is casino supervisor at the Hilton Casino in Atlantic City, N.J.

Richard J. Grecco (BBA ’72) is president and owner of Celebration Homes, Inc., in Champions Gate, Fla. The company has been named a Featured Builder at Builder's Roundup and Club in Orlando, Fla.

Lizannetwiedenall Kail (BBA ’79) works in Las Vegas as an affiliate with Video Mail Direct, which she says is “the next Google, MySpace and AOL rolled into one.”

William Letchner (BBA ’71) reports that he was inspired, in part, by his wife, Betsy, and their cat, cinnamon, to open The Lechtner Group, a private consulting team specializing in pet products and maintaining the special bond between people and their pets.

Edward J. Neide (BBA ’75) is retired in Bradenton, Fla. He was a senior vice president at Lehman Bros., on Wall Street and a director of a non-profit Consumer Credit Counseling program in southern New Jersey.

Bill Mouser (BBA ’76), president of The Veggie Queen in Santa Rosa, Calif., recently released a DVD titled “The Veggie Queen Cooks Under Pressure: Delicious in 30 Minutes,” utilizing the benefits of pressure cooking.

Joan R. Pinder (BBA ’79) is retired chairman of the College of the Bahamas. She lives in Nassau, Bahamas.

Robert Pettinos (BBA ’72) retired as a captain in Miami-Dade Fire Rescue after 30 years of service. He lives in Key Largo, Fla., and reports that his retirement plans include traveling and sleeping late.

Dean Stone (BBA ’71) is self-employed in Hiale, Mo. He reports that many years of living in Big Sky Country make him look “very different” when he comes back to visit.

Sakae Yoshii (BBA ’74) is CEO of Japan Wealth Management, Inc., in Tokyo.

Many people think they are risk takers. Alan Rector is one. He probably inherited some of his hard-charging style from his father, Maurice, who played on UM’s first football team, in 1926, but he credits his classes at UM with giving him the business acumen to survive and thrive as a career defined by taking chances. He even named his dog Havoc. Clearly he is not a man who fears change.

Following graduation in 1964, Rector went to work at a subsidiary of Griffith Laboratories, a food-ingredients manufacturer owned by his family. The fit was right, so he took a job with the stuffing firm Manpower. He rose quickly, but six years later, when his career seemed on a steady climb, the phone rang with an offer that would change the course of his life. It was Griffith Laboratories, wanting to know if he’d check it all out, more to Australia and start up some manufacturing plants Down Under.

“I had obtained plenty of management experience, but I knew nothing about doing business in Australia, nor did I know a single person there,” Rector recalls. “But I believed in my ability to undertake the task.”

Today, he knows he made the right choice. He and his wife, Leigh, live on New Zealand’s South Island, surrounded by mountains, on a plains spread with sauvignon blanc-producing vineyards. They have a small collection of Jaguar automobiles, and most days drive along the winding roads or spend time on their boat.

“Leigh was the marketing manager for one of Australia’s premier wine companies, so living among vineyards and wineries and enjoying the wines have made all the hard work worthwhile,” he laughs.

Hard work and lots of change. After arriving in Australia in 1970, Rector spent eight years overseeing manufacturing facilities in Melbourne and Sydney, and in Auckland, New Zealand. Over the years, though, came other phone calls with other opportunities to run over-large companies in a variety of industries. In 1987, he founded his own hospitality asset-management company, Raffles International Resorts Pty Ltd., which he ran until his retirement in 2000.

His new job inspired him to operate a major business, Rector says, and he believes he gained something from every course. He still has most of his textbooks and says he can’t count the number of times he has consulted clients.

“My experience at UM formed the foundation of my business life,” says Rector. “It let me desire to succeed and gave me the confidence to take assessed risks. I was able to fly solo and neither fall on my own efforts. I cannot imagine a more rewarding feeling.”
Joseph McGoldrick, BBA ’75
PRESIDENT & CEO, GAS OPERATIONS, CENTERPOINT ENERGY, HOUSTON

TEAM PLAYER
He shot some memorable rounds of golf on the lush course at the Biltmore, where just $150 bought a scholarship — is the deeply invested faculty and how they let it show. Take the time he stood outside a classroom talking with Kermit Roberts, then a professor of accounting.

McGoldrick is deeply rooted in the University of Miami. “I never got credit,” says McGoldrick, a father of four boys who along with his wife, Judy, likes to coach. “I use that all the time — in running this business and in everything I do.”

Joseph McGoldrick, BBA ’75

HUNTER E. DEUTSCH (MBA ’92), executive vice president for wealth management at BankUnited in Coral Gables, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Vizcayans.

DOUGLAS L. EATON (BBA ’97) is president of Eaton Financial Group in Coral Springs, Fla. He lives in Parkland, Fla.

HAU N. ELLIOTT (BBA ’94) is president of Shawn Elliott Luxury Homes & Estates in Woodbury, N.Y. The company recently opened its fifth office, in Roslyn, N.Y.

CHRISTINE A. HARLEY (MBA ’15, JD ’19) is a full-time law firm, Harvey, de Hartley & Associates, PA, in West Palm Beach, Fla., was recognized as one of the top 25 law firms in South Florida by South Florida Business Journal, and she was named a 2007 Florida Super Lawyer in a peer-balloting process of attorneys throughout the state.

JOHN ARTHUR HOOK (BBA ’78) traded stocks and securities at Ernst & Young in Singapore.

MARTIN KARP (BBA ’94, MSc ’91, ED ’95) was elected vice chair of the school board for Miami-Dade Public Schools, serving as the representative from District 3.

PATRICK B. MARSHAVOLSKY (BBA ’81) joined the Order of St. Augustine after graduation and became a Roman Catholic priest. He teaches at Malvern Preparatory School in Malvern, Pa., and is chair of its Theology Department.

SUNY MADHAVA CHANDRA (BBA ’96) is the owner of Thai Plastic House Co., Ltd., in Nakhonpathom, Thailand.

ROLAND SANCHEZ-MEDINA JR. (BBA ’88) announces the formation of his new law firm, Sanchez-Medina, Gonzalez & Quesada LLP, in Coral Gables.

SANDI VIDAL (BBA ’78) was named executive director at Christian HELP, a Coral Gables non-profit organization.

DAVID L. WILSON (BBA ’83) is president of EquiFinancial LLC in Miami, and with his company is now a member of the National Association of Securities Dealers.

1980s

JOSE RODRIGUEZ, BBA ’81
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PARTNER, AUDIT, KPMG, GREENSBORO, N.C.

FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS
When Jose Rodriguez was elected to the board of directors of KPMG LLP late last year, he became a member of a very exclusive club. In fact, he is the only second alumnus of the School to receive that honor. (The first was Michael Cowsey, BBA ’97, former head of professional services at the Big 4 accounting firm, now retired.)

Rodriguez was elected by KPMG’s 1,700 U.S. partners to serve in an oversite role for the firm’s affairs and those of the partnership. “I would hope that it was my reputation for integrity, fortitude, along with my background, my work and my experience as a regulator in Florida, that led to their choice,” he says.

With the title of Professional Practice Partner — Audit, Carolina and South Florida Business Units, Rodriguez is KPMG’s lead partner on Reynolds American, the parent company of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. His responsibilities include coordinating the services KPMG renders to Reynolds, “but my ultimate responsibility is signing the firm’s audit opinion on financial statements for Reynolds,” he says.

Previously, Rodriguez was KPMG’s audit partner for the University of Miami. He describes the duties involved as similar to what he does now but notes that each engagement involves different challenges: “One big difference is the size of the account,” he says. “It’s a full-time job at Reynolds, which it wasn’t at UM, but it’s been an honor and a pleasure to serve both organizations.”

Rodriguez has been in public accounting since graduation, joining KPMG in 1989 and making partner in the Miami office. He credits the School with giving him the foundation, knowledge and tools to succeed as a CPA and a professional. “In both accounting and non-accounting courses, there was always a stress on critical thinking and an emphasis on writing and communications,” he says. “Those served me well.”

He also credits his advanced accounting professor, Howard Zacar, with convincing him to interview with what would turn the Big 8 accounting firms, even though he had a generous job offer from a prestigious local firm. “I took his advice,” Rodriguez says. “In hindsight, it was probably a critical moment in my future development and career path.”

Rodriguez and his wife of 22 years, Silvia Rodriguez (BBA ’82), live in their three children in winter—Storrs, N.C. Silvia, also a CPA, worked for a former Big 5 accounting firm after graduation. “She put her career on hold to support me in achieving our shared goals and in raising our three children,” he says.

— Michael J. McDonnell

Wealth Management in West Palm Beach, Fla., as vice president and financial advisor.

VAMOSKI “PAUL” DIAN (MBA ’99) is owner and president of Digi Technology, a 3-D animation and multimedia company in Plantation, Fla.

BRUCE FOLLANSBEE (MBA ’91) has joined Pravo waterhouseCoopers as client relationship executive to focus on business development with major clients in the Seattle area. He would like to hear from others in the Executive MBA Class of 1991. He lives in Sammamish, Wash.

MARGO R. (EDWARDS) HAM (MBA ’95) works in the Restructuring & Discontinuation Action Unit at the Ministry of Education in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

MARILYN P. INVEST (MBA ’96) has joined the South Florida Advisory Council of the Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit land conservation organization. She lives in St. Petersburg, Fla.

BRIAN THOMAS HOFFMAN (MBA ’91) is living in Bethesda, Md.

RICK A. MARQUIN (BBA ’93) has moved back to Miami from Chicago and is chief marketing officer for Baratoga, a leading Hispanic music site based in Coral Gables.

J. R. NAPIER (BA ’86, MBA ’97) is a vice president of Fidelity Investments in Cincinnati. He is married to Michele Tynes Naper (BBA ’97),

TIMOTHY LEE NEWBY (BBA ’93), vice president of Communications, John C. Davenport, announces a new addition to his company — representation of Blüthner pianos from Germany — and to his family — Alexander Logan Newby, born November 17, 2006, and, says his proud father, already being prepared for the UM Class of 2027.

GILL FARMACIACOPEI PEREZ (BBA ’99) and ANTONIO PEREZ with organization provided the birth of their fourth child, Alexander Michael Perez, on April 7. They live in East Brunswick, N.J.

MARCUS R. ROTHBERG (BBA ’92, MBA ’94) works for Summit Sales in Scottsdale, Ariz. He lives in Phoenix.

JORDAN S. ROTHBERG (BBA ’98, MBA ’00) lives in Mill Valley, Calif.

LORE (RELIEVE) SARNERS (MBA ’91) is manager at Southeast Insurance in Boca Raton, Fla.

JARED M. SMITH (BBA ’94, MSt ’95) is chief financial officer at W.R. Grace & Co. in Canton, Mass., and partner in Grace’s jiu-jitsu club.

VALERIE R. TOWNSEND (BBA ’93) is vice president at Farnam Bank in Panama, Tenn.

PEDRO VALENTE (BBA ’97, MBA ’99) organized the UM Jiu-Jitsu Club, and with his friend and former classmate James R. ROBERTSON (BBA ’98, MBA ’99) worked last year to launch Grace’s jiu-jitsu program. The Miami’s largest school of self-defense. This summer, Valente and other educators took part in a program at

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North Beach Elementary School about the value of early education in Ju-Ju and various other activities on young children. He and three other investors had been invited by U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who was present, to speak at the program.

AUREL S. VIZINA (BBA '99) is an associate for communications, media and entertainment finance at Credit Suisse. He lives in Woodbury, N.Y.

WAYNE S. WIANUK (BBA '13) is marketing manager at Citizens Payment Systems in Renton, Wash.

SEAN ZAWINER (BBA '94) is vice president at Gisaur & Zawinor Process Service, Inc., in Miami.

2000s

MARILENNE AUGUSTE (BB '04, MBA '07) is assistant brand manager at Bacardi, USA in Miami.

MARTHA LORENA AYERDA (MBA '04), a PhD candidate in the Public Administration Program, is a human resources director at Miami Dade College. Last year, she opened her own company, MBA Management, Inc., to provide human resources, marketing and management services for Central and South America. Her daughter Luster (MBA '17) and Wendy (BS '06) also work at the company.

CLAUDIA D. BABICH (BBA '02) is senior financial manager at Comcast Atlantic, Inc. in New York. She is a New York City native, and now lives in Milford, Conn. Her move from Miami to New York is both professional and personal. On December 29, she will be married to ANDREW E. POTTER (BBA '03), who is with Colonial Consulting LLC, also in New York.

CARLA BARBENA (BBA '02) is a relationship manager at Bank of America’s International Wealth and Management Department in Miami. She lives in Homestead, Fla.

GABRIELA DEPIERRE (BBA '03) has been promoted to district sales manager at Bemardi Real Estate Products in Sunrise, Fla. He and his wife celebrated the birth of their daughter, Jovia Alexandra Deppa, on June 5. She lives in Miami.

LAURA EVERING (BBA '05) works in commercial real estate at Avenu座 Blasi has a strong showing and 10 years of experience in the commercial real estate field. She became president of Codina Development in 2008, and the company is known for its success in residential and commercial real estate development.

In 2011, Blasi joined the Codina Group, where she launched her career. She began by working on the Beacon Center, South Florida’s largest business park, which at the time was on the cutting edge of mixed use. Blasi—who calls the firm’s principal, Armando Codina, “an absolute real estate visionary”—spent 10 years with the company, learning every facet of the business. She became president of Codina Development while it was the largest regional developer in South Florida.

Blasi left Codina in 2004 to become the president of Terranera Corp., South Florida’s largest commercial real estate advisory firm, where she had the opportunity to run the entire organization. After three years, though, she realized that her heart was really in the development side of the business. Around that time, she was approached by Panattoni Development, which had an office in South Florida but not yet engaged a partner to run it. “We really turned out to be a great strategic fit, with similar values and similar investment strategies,” says Blasi, whose current position involves identifying real estate opportunities, whether they are pieces of vacant land that are suitable sites for new projects or existing buildings or projects that are poised for renovation or redevelopment.

In the “absolutely male-dominated” field of local commercial real estate, Blasi maintains that she has been extremely lucky. “I have never been discriminated against, never been the victim of gender-based harassment,” she says. Frequently called on to do public speaking, Blasi finds that the toughest questions are posed by the students in the University of Miami School of Law’s LLM graduate program in real property development, where she guest lectures on the topic of shopping center development. She also finds time to offer practical advice to students who ask for it.

“I’ve been extremely blessed in my career,” Blasi says, “and we all need to find ways to give something back.”

— Karen Bennett

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The mission of the University of Miami School of Business is to provide an environment in which the creation and dissemination of business knowledge can flourish.