Six years after appearing on our cover, 16 international MBAs are taking the business world by storm. Irena Chang-Yen is making her mark in New York City. Where in the world are the other 15? Find them on the back cover, then turn to page 24 for their stories.
World Champions

A s you have seen on our cover, this issue of BusinessMiami revisits some old friends — a group of 16 former MBA students, now alumni, who appeared on the cover of our Spring 2000 issue. That story focused on the strong appeal that the School’s MBA program had for students from around the world. The students we photographed then were selected not only for their high academic standing but also for the variety of countries, 14 in all, that they represented.

Finding them took a bit of detective work, but we’re pleased to report that they all are doing quite well. They are scattered around the world — eight remained in the U.S., four returned to their home country, and four are living and working in a different country — and many of them conduct business globally.

One of the common threads that run through their stories is the value that their MBA studies brought to their careers. Several mention using what they learned here at the School on a daily basis, and a few have remained in touch with some of their professors.

We continue to attract a strong cadre of international students — fully one-third of those in our MBA program are from outside the U.S. Why? For the same reasons students have always come to the School. We provide the knowledge and the skills necessary to succeed in today’s global business environment. In addition, we’re blessed with a beautiful climate, and Miami is a multicultural metropolis that makes everyone feel at home.

Interestingly, many of the 16 former students originally aimed for corporate jobs but ended up becoming entrepreneurs. That’s a strong trend in business today that is reflected in the growth of entrepreneurship studies and activities here at the School. This issue also features our winners of the fourth annual Rothschild Entrepreneurship Competition. You’ll see that the quality of the winning ideas is better than ever — and that two of the winners just happen to be international students. Like business, entrepreneurship today knows no borders, and that two of the winners just happen to be international students. Like business, entrepreneurship today knows no borders, and we’re proud to be an influential force in the center of it all.

Finally, as we were putting this issue together, we received some very good news. BusinessWeek, in its first-ever ranking of undergraduate business programs, ranked us No. 1 in Florida and No. 44 in the nation. The report also noted that our outstanding Mentor Program “owes students” (story, page 22). We were thrilled ourselves by the ranking, and we are happy that we have so many successful alumni around the world helping to spread the word about the School every day by bringing their knowledge and skills to the global marketplace.

— Paul K. Sugrue, PhD
THE SCHOOL’S LONGTIME Saturday MBA Program for Professionals in the Bahamas — now in its 31st year — entered its next generation with the dedication of a new state-of-the-art classroom on June 29 in Nassau.

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New Funding Spurs Hyperion Council Projects

THE HYPERION COUNCIL, a service organization for undergraduate business students that is now in its third year, has begun a series of community service projects targeting at-risk youth.

Using funding from the School of Business and a grant from the Marcus Foundation, the Council’s Titans (as its members are known) have been applying their business knowledge to benefit students as near as Miami and as far away as Romania. Four projects were put in place during the past academic year. Three of them involved seminars about financial topics such as saving money, getting a good credit rating and avoiding identity theft. The seminars were conducted for students at Bradlick High School in South Miami, former foster children who had aged out of the system after turning 18, and UM freshmen. For the fourth project, through a connection forged by a Titan whose aunt is teaching in Romania, they developed a curriculum for teaching students there about ethical financial and business practices.

More programs are planned for the fall semester, says Ellen McPhillip, Director of Undergraduate Admissions and an advisor to the Hyperion Council. “Students are learning a form of social entrepreneurship,” she explains, “in which they can utilize their business skills to help less fortunate members of our society.” Interested alumni take note: She is looking for more volunteers to serve on Hyperion’s Business Advisory Board. She can be contacted at emcphillip@miami.edu or 305-284-2987.

MIAMI BANKER’S GIFT BENEFITS ETHICS PROGRAMS

ADRIENNE ARSHT, chairman of Miami-based TotalBank, was honored at a breakfast reception on April 26 in the School’s James W. McLamore Executive Education Center dining room to celebrate her gift of $1 million to UM Ethics Programs. The School, which has a long history of ethics in its curriculum, has held two debates, a speakers series and a film series. Shown with an oversized check symbolizing the significance of Arsht’s gift are (front row, left to right) Anita Cava, Associate Professor of Business Law, Director of Business Ethics Programs and Co-director of UM Ethics Programs; Sergio Gonzalez, Vice President, University Advancement; UM President Donna E. Shalala; and Arsht; (back row, left to right) Nick Gavronsky, David Pierlus, Brandon Quarles, Dante Rolland, Henri Allin and Ross Votel. (Front row, left to right) Jennifer MacKenzie, Robyn Parris, Laura Farich, Lauren Petrosky and Jason Dray.

Stooding with the portrait of George W. Jenkins after its unveiling are (left to right) Nick R. (“Barney”) Barnett, vice president of Publix Super Markets Charities; UM President Donna E. Shalala; Carol Jenkins Barnett, daughter of George Jenkins and president of Publix Super Markets Charities; UM Trustee Chuck Cobin; and Dean Paul K. Sugrue.

Jenkins Building Celebrates 25 Years

ON MAY 4, THE SCHOOL CELEBRATED THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY of a milestone in its history — the opening in 1980 of the George W. Jenkins Building, which was made possible by a naming gift from Jenkins, the founder of the Publix supermarket chain and a UM alumnus. It was much more than a large and generous gift; it was the beginning of the modern era of the School of Business.

At that time, the School’s classrooms and departmental offices were spread throughout UMG Coral Gables campus. With the opening of the Jenkins Building (and the Stumblefield Classroom Building that same year), the School of Business went from being a concept to being a physical place. Jenkins passed away in 1996, but the building is a permanent reminder of his generosity.

To honor “Mr. George” (as Publix employees still refer to him), the School held a luncheon and unveiled a portrait that now hangs in the Storer Auditorium foyer. The event (which had been postponed from last fall due to Hurricane Wilma) was held in the James W. McLamore Executive Education Center dining room and attended by UM and School of Business staff, Jenkins family members, Publix executives, and students who are recipients of scholarships endowed by Publix Super Markets Charities.

“George Jenkins was more than a talented businessman,” said Dean Paul K. Sugrue. “He was a visionary who loved UM and who saw that he was in a position to help generations of students have a more meaningful educational experience. The School has seen the direct benefits of his generosity for a quarter of a century now, and we are grateful for what he gave to us.”

Standing with the portrait of George W. Jenkins after its unveiling are (left to right) Nick R. (“Barney”) Barnett, vice president of Publix Super Markets Charities; UM President Donna E. Shalala; Carol Jenkins Barnett, daughter of George Jenkins and president of Publix Super Markets Charities; UM Trustee Chuck Cobin; and Dean Paul K. Sugrue.

At the classroom dedication (left to right): Rhonda Chipman-Johnson, Faye M. Harris and David Green.

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP DAY ATTRACTS STUDENTS

STUDENTS INTERESTED in becoming entrepreneurs turned out in force on March 3 for the fourth annual Spring Career Day program, “Careers in Entrepreneurship.” Hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Career Options Counseling, the program began with a luncheon attended by the guest speakers, Management Department faculty, School of Business administrators, and students from the Business Ambassadors and the Entrepreneurship Club.

Following the luncheon, a panel presentation was held in the School’s Storer Auditorium. Each speaker discussed how to be a successful entrepreneur in a particular field. Leigh M. Rothschild (AB ‘73), managing director of Rothschild Trust Holdings, led off the panel by discussing how to be successful in business today and how to be a successful entrepreneur overall. Other speakers were Mike Fernandez, president of MBF Healthcare Partners, on health care; Tarek Al-Fassi (BLA ’00), president of F’K Investments, on college and careers; Betty G. Amos (BBA ’73, MBA ’75), president of The Alkey Companies, on the food and beverage industry; George F. Giampietro, president of Whip ‘N Dip Ice Cream Shoppe, on family businesses; and John W. Hoover Jr. (BBA ’67), senior vice president of First East Side Savings Bank, on banking. The panel was moderated by Elisa B. Lewis (PhD ’90), Director of Undergraduate Career Options Counseling, and Philip Needleks (BBA ’91), a lecturer in the Management Department who coordinates the School’s entrepreneurship curriculum.

Afterward, a networking session was held in the Storer Auditorium for students to meet the speakers one-on-one, and everyone enjoyed ice cream provided by Whip ‘N Dip Ice Cream Shoppe. “This was a very successful event,” said Lewis. “The students gained a great deal of information about entrepreneurship because of the variety of industries represented by the speakers.”

REAL ESTATE EXPERTS SPEAK TO STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS

On April 4, the Entrepreneurship Club held its 2nd Annual Real Estate Forum. Speakers included Bret Del, president of Swedish Group; Guillermo J. Olmedillo, former director of planning and zoning for the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County; and Joel Goldman, a commercial real estate attorney with Greenberg Traurig LLP. John Delagrava, a lecturer in the School’s Business Law Department, was the moderator. Shown in photo (left to right): Aaron Greenblatt, Entrepreneurship Club vice president; Del; Olmedillo; Delagrava; Goldman; and Tom Hacker, Entrepreneurship Club president.

SPORTS MARKETING PANEL DISCUSSION

On March 30, the School’s chapter of the American Marketing Association held a sports marketing panel discussion in Storer Auditorium. Representatives from the area’s four major professional sports teams talked about marketing issues related to team performance, image and branding. Panelists were (left to right): Ken Lehner Sr., director of marketing and branding, Miami Dolphins; Michael McCullough, chief marketing officer, Miami Heat; Sean Flynn, vice president of marketing, Florida Marlins; and Chad Armstrong, vice president of sales and marketing, Florida Panthers.

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VISITING SCHOLARS SPEAK AT SCHOOL

TWO PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARS — an economist and a historian — brought their insights to the School’s Storer Auditorium in a pair of presentations to students, faculty, staff, alumni and guests.

R. Glenn Hubbard, former chairman of the White House Council on Academic Advisers and currently dean and professor of finance and economics at the Columbia Graduate School of Business, spoke on February 27. His presentation was sponsored by the Economics Department and his publisher, Prentice-Hall.

Hubbard was introduced by Professor Michael Connolly of the Economics Department, who called the Orlando native “a Florida success story who designed and pushed through the reduction in the capital gains and dividend tax for most investors — a major step in reducing the double taxation of corporate earnings.” This tax reform, he added, “has provided major incentives for investment and entrepreneurial activity.”

Corporate governance was the principal focus of Hubbard’s presentation, and his words were a startling predictor of the outcome of criminal cases against executives of Enron and other companies in the news since February. Simply put, said Hubbard, “Long jail sentences for officers who roil from and deceive shareholders will be more effective than the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.”

Naif Ferguson, professor of international history at Harvard University and senior research fellow at Oxford University, spoke on April 11 about the relationship between globalization and business. Called “the most influential British historian of his generation,” he was named one of the “100 most influential people in the world” by Time magazine.

Ferguson said that it is important “to build bridges between the study of history and the study of business. How can we understand our world historically,” he asked, “if we don’t understand it economically?”

The presentation was a good news/bad news approach to the impact of globalization.

“The good news,” noted Ferguson, “is that the global integration of markets has resulted in higher growth, lower inflation and lower volatility worldwide — especially for Americans.” Miami, he said, “is in the right place at the right time.”

The bad news, however, is that “Globalization has happened before and sunk before. It can go quickly, as the result of a war, or slowly, through such moves as cross-border trade restrictions.”

He listed three threats to globalization: the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, the world economy’s ties to Asian-American economic relationships, and the conflicting agendas between environmental protectionism and the elimination of poverty.

FACULTY WIN AWARDS

Six faculty members were presented with the School’s Excellence in Teaching Award during the spring faculty meeting. The winners were: JEFFREY DROPE Assistant Professor, Political Science HOWARD GITLOW Professor, Management Science VAIDY JAYARAMAN Associate Professor, Management PHILIP NEEDLES Lecturer, Management ARUN SHARMA Professor and Chair, Marketing KAREN TURNER Lecturer, Business Law

INVESTMENT ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSES FUND CHOICES

“Noise vs. Actively Managed Funds” was the topic of the annual Investment Manager Roundtable, held in Storer Auditorium on April 6. Shown here with moderator UM Vice President and Treasurer Charlie Cook (MBA ’79) are speakers Weston J. Wellington, vice president of Dimensional Fund Advisors, Inc. (left) and Mark J. Gabel, chairman and CEO of GAMCO Investors, Inc.

INVESTMENT ENTREPRENEUR DELIVERS ROTHSCILD LECTURE

James S. Pitzer, chairman and CEO of Hytham, a company developing innovative protocols for treating alcoholism and drug addiction, delivered the annual Rothschild Entrepreneurship Lecture on February 7 in Storer Auditorium. Pitzer (right in photo) launched six companies in seven years in the fields of technology, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. The lecture series is sponsored by Leigh M. Rothschild (AB ’73) a Miami-area entrepreneur (left in photo).

FORMER AMBASSADOR SPEAKS ON CHINA

Former U.S. ambassador to the People’s Republic of China, delivered a lecture on April 4 entitled “U.S.-China Cooperation and Competition in Intellig...
Donors Recognized at Scholarship Luncheon

MORE THAN 100 scholarship donors and recipients attended the 26th Annual Scholarship Donor Recognition Program & Luncheon on February 24. Those in attendance, some of whom are shown in the photographs on these pages, represented a substantial number of the School’s 51 endowed scholarships and 15 annual scholarships.

Dean Paul K. Sugrue welcomed the donors and thanked them for their generosity. He talked about the importance of scholarships to outstanding students, some of whom might not otherwise be able to attend UM.

For information about funding scholarships, contact Connie Kazanjian, Director of Development, at 305-284-4373 or ckazanjian@miami.edu.

ALBERT & ESTHER GREEN ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient Luca Marseglia with donor Esther Green.

JAMES A. SAWYER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED BY THE HAROLD W. SIEBENS FOUNDATION

Recipient Rachael Maltese (center) with donors Judi Prokop Newman (BBA ’63) and Robert Newman.

LEE RUWITCH ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient JoeJon Manning (left) and Faiz Imam (right) with donors Francis and Robert Ruwitch (BBA ’87).

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ALUMNI FUND SCHOLARSHIP

Marlenea Hernandez (BBA ’82, MBA ’95, MS ’86) (center), representing the alumni donors, with recipients (left to right) Scott Meyer, Haley Profita, Laura Morris and Amit Jain.

LARRY BIRGER ENDOWED BUSINESS SCHOLARSHIP

Donor Arlyne Birger (right) with recipient Patricia Mazzei.

JOYCE SHUTER GALYA FAMILY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Joyce Galya with recipient Christian Riera.

PAT & LON WORTH CROW SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT

Donor Pat Crow with recipient Scott Shipley.

SOUTHEAST BANKING CORP. FOUNDATION ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Donor representative George Basarr (MBA ’76) (left) with recipient Jonathan Fichman.

EDWARD J. FOX ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient Allison McElhaney and donor Gary Fox.

MARTIN E. SEGAL BUSINESS LAW DEPARTMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Donor Martin Segal (left) with recipient Alex Lieberman.

Recipient Marianela Hernandez (BBA ’82, MBA ’95, MS ’86) (center), representing the alumni donors, with recipients (left to right) Scott Meyer, Haley Profita, Laura Morris and Amit Jain.
The winners of this year’s Rothschild Competition (clockwise, from lower right): David Gunnarsson, Jeffrey Blum, Ralph Jorge, Aaron Greenblott, Alexandra Ingersoll, Sam Hill, Philip Osborne.

Where might groups of baby boomers live when they retire? How can nervous novices play online poker with no risk? Can boat haulers minimize potential damage to their precious cargo? Is there a better bottle cap?

These are the wide-ranging, real-world questions posed by the quartet of winners in this year’s Rothschild Entrepreneurship Competition, each seeking to solve problems in creative, business-minded ways. Coming up with solutions not only challenged the students’ abilities to create a viable business plan, but also impressed the inquiring minds of an astute panel of judges.

“The quality of this year’s presentations — the detail and the passion — was tremendously exciting and satisfying,” says Leigh M. Rothschild (AB ’73), the Miami-area entrepreneur and main sponsor of the four-year-old competition, which is open to all UM students. One hundred fifteen ideas for novel products and services were submitted, from which 16 finalists were chosen to fully develop business plans and pitch them to the judges.

To reflect even more business-world realism this year, the competition was divided into two categories: Small Business and High-Potential Venture. The winner in each category received a prize of $8,000; the runner-ups were awarded $4,000 each. The remaining 12 Honorable Mentions each received $1,000.

“The real value of this competition is getting in front of the judges,” Steven Witkoff, chairman and CEO of Witkoff Group, a New York City-based real estate developer — and one of the judges — told the winners at the awards luncheon on April 21. “There are exceptional opportunities out there if you really believe in your idea. And as a friend of mine says, ‘Success belongs to those who believe in it the most.’”

It’s easy to believe that the following winners could very well become successful entrepreneurs.
Building for Boomers
Where yesterday's hippies can retire together tomorrow

Raders of Woodstock generation age or anyone familiar with the subculture of the '60s will recall the commune concept of group living. Well, lots of those hippies are today's prosperous baby boomers, some on the verge of retiring and perhaps again looking for a place to live together in peace and harmony—but much more comfortably than their cohabitating predecessors. That's the groovy idea behind CoHousing of America, the business plan for a targeted real estate development company proposed by Alexandra Ingersoll (BBA '06) and Aaron Greenblott (BBA '06).

Both Ingersoll and Greenblott transferred to UM two years ago, enticed by the School's Entrepreneurship program. Their common paths converged in the classroom, where “we had 13 of our 15 classmates together,” Greenblott says. For one of those classes, Management 353, they teamed up to write a business plan, and thus began the brainstorming and partnership that led to CoHousing of America winning a first prize in the Rothschild Competition.

“We said, ‘Where’s the money?’” Ingersoll explains. “We want to reverse that— to find residents, specifically boomers, who want to live in cohousing developments, but who don’t want to assume responsibility for developing the communities themselves.”

The team assembled the business plan “by playing to our individual strengths,” Greenblott says. “Aaron did the financials,” Ingersoll adds, “and I’m a big market research person. Our strengths are different, but they work so well together.”

They relied, too, on the competition’s mentoring component. “Our mentor, Steven Wirkoff, gave us some great real-world advice that we incorporated into the plan,” Ingersoll reports. “He made us think about this not as a presentation for school but as an actual sales pitch to an investor.”

The next step toward making CoHousing of America a reality is “to get experience and a better perspective on how to get this done,” Greenblott says. They plan to meet with several of the competition’s judges, especially those in real estate. “We’re only 23-year-olds, but we’re going to surround ourselves with good, smart people and learn from them,” Ingersoll insists. Hardy a far-out idea, man, for budding entrepreneurs.

HONORABLE MENTION $1,000
The following teams received honorable mention awards for their business concepts.

SMALL BUSINESS CATEGORY
DRINKMATE
Rebecca Adam
Dawn Matthews
MYCOLLEGECRIBS.COM
Anna-Marie Wascher
PAPERBANC
Brian Nadson
Bryan-Michael Suarez
THEJUMPSTART.COM
Adam Weiss

HIGH-POTENTIAL VENTURE CATEGORY
3RD CHANNEL
David Crystal
COLD FUSION FAT FREE CREAMERY
Sam Pearlman
Jeremy Singer
COLLEGE STAFFERS
Rishi Kapoor
EDORMS
Alex Phillips
EZ ORDER
Nicholas Gigantes
INTELFRIDGE
Jason Ayers
Jeffrey Blum
INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL SUPPLIERS AND RESEARCH FOUNDATION
Jennifer Kennedy
MARTI’S MEAT MACHINE
George Freund
Marti Schulman
Betting on the Net

Creating an incentive for gambling online

Like lots of college kids, I’ve played poker online,” Jeffrey Blum, a senior, says, admitting to being part of the Internet gaming phenomenon. Unlike his contemporaries, though, Blum has used the experience to further his entrepreneurial aspirations. And he’s had luck at that game, winning first prize in the Rothschild Competition’s Small Business category.

“I used to lose,” Blum says of his virtual card playing. “So I thought, How can I get on the other side and win more than I’m losing? I decided that Cash 2 Bet was the way to do it.”

Cash 2 Bet not only became a Rothschild winner, but it is already earning money too. Blum’s venture falls squarely into the “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em” camp. “I knew I couldn’t start my own business, so I was running it on the fly. The competition forced me to do research and find out more about my target market.”

“Cash 2 Bet reaches people who either don’t want to risk their own money, or maybe they’re too afraid to go ahead and play online. They deposit a minimum, usually $50 to $100. They then use that money to gamble and, regardless of winning or losing, return to Cash2Bet.com to apply for a cash rebate equal to or greater than the amount deposited into their casino account.”

“The casinos capture new customers who are likely to return,” says Blum, explaining part of the business equation, “and the customer, who might not have tried it before, may find it fun and play again.” Cash 2 Bet receives a set fee for each referral, plus opportunities for further commissions depending on the partner relationship.

This win-win-win scenario exemplifies the innovative relationships Cash 2 Bet has been accepted by a panel of judges. “He was critical in helping me revise my plan to reflect Cash 2 Bet’s growth potential, which I think is what hooked the judges in my presentation,” Blum contends. Indeed, some have expressed interest in investing.

While he hardly ever gambles online anymore, Blum plans to take his chances on entrepreneurship. “I’ve always been interested in working for myself,” he says, recalling the Web design business he started in high school. “The fact that Cash 2 Bet has been accepted by a panel of judges is a great feeling.”

Jeffrey Blum is going all in with his Internet venture, Cash 2 Bet, which allows people to try their hand at online gaming virtually risk-free.

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Panel of Judges

Betty G. Amos (BBA ’73, MBA ’75)
The Alley Companies

Cynthia R. Cohen
Strategic Mindshare

David Deutch (BBA ’90)
Pinnacle Housing Group

Scott Deutch (BBA ’89)
Orange Clothing Co.

David Epstein
Presidential Capital Partners

Mike Fernandez
MBF Healthcare Partners

Mehdi Ghomeshi (BBA ’78, MBA ’80)
Great Florida Bank

Sandy Goldstein (BBA ’91, MBA ’94)
Cappuccino Group

William Hieflner (BBA ’77)
Agg Risk Materials Co.

Andrew Heitner
New Frontiers Information Corp.

Ivan Ho (BBA ’95)
Ivanho Enterprises, Inc.

Robert Newman
Greenwood Gulch Ventures

Leigh M. Rothschild (BBA ’73)
Rothschild Trust Holdings

Robert Rumitch (BBA ’87)
Marlin Group

Jeffrey W. Sass
Connected Media Technologies

Matthew W. Shain (BBA ’91, MPhC ’92)
Crossfire Ventures

Steven Witkoff
Witkoff Group

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FIRST PRIZE: SMALL BUSINESS $8,000
"I WANTED TO DO EVERYTHING MYSELF, BUT IN THE REAL WORLD, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE — UNLESS YOU WORK 23 HOURS A DAY."

**Strapping Lads**

**RUNNER-UP: HIGH-POTENTIAL VENTURE $4,000**

This year’s idea, TranSupport, is the big winner in last year’s Rothschild Competition. That play on words about stick-to-fasten carpet squares or shipping tape to the straps to protect the boats, “he says, “but they can come loose and fly off when you’re going down the road.”

TranSupport’s solution: the “Rhino-Rub” strap system. The system uses heavy-duty, nonabrasive protective sleeves that cover the straps where they meet the boat’s surface. “They stay on all the time, so the result is a durable strap that will not mark exposed finishes,” Jorge says. RhinoRub straps are designed in various strengths and lengths, and can be used not only for hauling boats, but for cars, trucks and other vehicles, as well.

“I was fascinated by the idea, even though I come from an automotive background,” Jorge says, referring to the family’s auto-accessories business in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. He and Osborne, both of whom graduated from the School of Business in Entrepreneurship majors in May, roomed together as sophomores and have known each other since freshman year. “We work well together, because we think in similar terms but approach things from different directions,” says Osborne, a soloist on last year’s business plan. “Ralph has an education background in finance, whereas mine is more technical. His knowledge of risk management was huge, because there’s so much liability involved with these products.” TranSupport also plans to manufacture and market a line of rubber rollers for loading and cradling boats on trailers, as well as a line of truck beds made specifically for hauling boats. Along with the knowledge and experience gained in assembling the elements of the business plan — product development, marketing, operations and such — both students learned the value of teamwork. “When I first came to UM, I hated group work,” Osborne admits. “I wanted to do everything myself. But I’ve learned that in the real world, that’s impossible — unless you want to work 23 hours a day. There are very capable people out there, and you have to be willing to split up responsibilities.”

“You have to trust other people’s competencies,” Jorge adds. “You couldn’t try to do everything yourself, but you’re only going to get so far.” After getting this far, Jorge and Osborne appear tethered to the entrepreneurial world.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

**FIRST PRIZE 2003: CRUE CLOTHING**

Three years ago, Zach Schlachter (BME ’05) and Kurt Stange (BBA ’05) walked away from the very first Rothschild Entrepreneurship Competition with more than first prize. They also left with a financial backer for Crue Clothing (www.cruewakeboarding.com), their winning idea to launch a line of hip apparel for wakeboarding enthusiasts. Scott Deutsch (BBA ’95), the owner of Stange Clothing Co. in Miami and a competition judge, took the pair under his wing, and the business has soared — albeit on a slightly different flight pattern of late.

“The Crue brand is still selling well in specialty retail stores,” reports Stange, whose presentation at this year’s awards luncheon undoubtedly inspired the latest group of winners, “but we’re using the designs of our board shorts and T-shirts to also build a private-label business.”

Stange, now a partner at Orange and head of its “surer bettor” line of product offerings, is busier calling on Wal-Mart, JCPenney, Kohl’s and other retailer giant than he is the surf shops that carry a more limited Crue brand. “This takes away the high marketing costs that Crue has,” he explains. “It’s a smarter way to do business and a quicker way to grow.”

Schlachter, meanwhile, has waxed road-bye to the entrepreneurial world for the time being. “I just finished my first year at Vanderbilt Law School,” he says from Orlando, Fla., where he is working as a law firm this summer, but he and Stange have been best friends since fourth grade back in their native Wisconsin, so their partnership is likely to resume in the future. “We still have plenty of ideas,” Stange says, adding that they’re “looking to start another company, something completely different.”

**FIRST PRIZE 2004: COLLEGE HUNKS HAULING JUNK**

Things are moving along smoothly for Omar Soliman too. Literally. The very first first-prize winner’s College Hunks Hauling Junk (www.collegehunks.com), started up in his hometown of Washington, D.C., last summer, “is making giant strides forward,” Soliman says. The enterprise now owns five trucks and employs 24 brawny college students to load them with residential customers’ furniture junk bound for local dumps. Soliman, who projects that revenues will reach $1 million in 2006, is in the process of franchising the concept, with hopes of hailing two opened within a year. “We’re writing manuals for each position so it can be a turnkey system that will fit anywhere in the U.S.,” he says. While his original business plan has been tweaked, as “we continue to perfect the system, it was a great, necessary first step,” Soliman insists. “Without the Rothschild Competition, I wouldn’t have started this business.”

And the connection is still paying dividends, as he has enlisted the ongoing advice of one of the judges, William Heffner (BBA ’77), the president of Agg Rok Materials in Columbus, Ohio. “Omar is already doing very well,” Heffner observes, “and he’s going to do exceptionally well in the future.”
Gravity puts a new twist on an old idea

Innovation comes in many flavors — or even no flavor at all. Such was the case with a bottle of plum water that sparked the idea for Pure Gravity, the runner-up in the Rothschild Entrepreneurship Competition’s Small Business category. “I was sitting in the library and had a plastic water bottle that made that annoying cracking sound every time I squeezed it,” says Sam Hill, recalling the inspiration for the idea he and his partner, David Gunnarsson, came up with last January.

The two foreign-exchange students, both going into their senior year — Gunnarsson from Uppsala University in Sweden, and Hill from Glasgow University in Scotland — heard about the competition only a few days before the entry deadline. Recalling the noisy bottle, they thought, Why not invent a better bottle cap — one that would eliminate the squeezing and thus the confounded cracking — and form a company to patent it and license it to beverage and container makers?

“The force of gravity is the crux of the idea,” says Hill, a mechanical engineering major, explaining the basic workings of the plastic device pictured in their business plan for Pure Gravity. “What Gunnarsson and Hill willingly talk about is the collaboration behind their winning effort, which apparently bubbled over at times. It’s like a marriage,” says Gunnarsson, a finance and management major, about conmilling their distinct educational backgrounds. “You have to have arguments, otherwise it doesn’t work.” (Neither is married, although Gunnarsson does have a longtime girlfriend, he notes.) Adds Hill: “It works well to come from different disciplines and to challenge each other. You have to explore different options in order to get things done.”

They readily agree, however, that the RothschildEntrepreneurship Competition has been a highlight of their time spent at UM. “I came here for the type of hands-on experience I couldn’t get back home,” says Gunnarsson, who will graduate in January. “I like the international diversity in my classes and the fact that so many of my professors have actually accomplished things in the business world.”

Hill, on track to graduate in May, says he’s always had the notion of inventing things and becoming an entrepreneur, yet merely taking part in the competition has been rewarding enough. “The money wasn’t the important part of winning,” he insists. “It was really more to enjoy the experience and to try our best.” It would seem that that thirst has been quenched.

For students who have viable concepts, the question we keep getting is, ‘What’s next? How do I get this business started?’” says Philip Needles, a lecturer in the Management Department who coordinates the School’s Entrepreneurship curriculum and serves as the primary advisor to Rothschild Entrepreneurship Competition participants. The answer may well lie in the latest wrinkles in the always-existing competition when it goes into its fifth year, a few months earlier than in the past, in September rather than January.

“We’re starting what we call the Venture Launch Program,” says Needles. “It will be a mechanism to help the School’s Entrepreneurship majors and finalists from the competition launch their businesses.” The program will offer students to a network of investors and lenders, support services such as lawyers, accountants, technical experts, human resources and other start-up components. “We want to provide mentoring and guidance from the School’s faculty and alumni, as well as the competition’s judges and their companies,” he says.

In a related move, this year’s competition instituted a mentor program, matching student teams with judges. “They want to share their knowledge and experience in helping students strengthen their business plans,” Needles says. “Our mentor, Steven Wilkoff, gave us some really great real-world advice that we used in finalizing our CoHousing of America plan,” says Aaron Greenblott, who with Alexandra Ingelsten won first prize in the High-Potential Venture category. “He made us think in different ways.”

Another judge and mentor, William Heffner, is behind yet another boost to aspiring entrepreneurs. He is funding the Heffner Entrepreneurship Internship Endowment, which will cover expenses for two student interns each summer. “Internships are extremely valuable, because they allow students the opportunity to get real-world experience under their belts,” Heffner says. “Not every student can afford to live in places like New York and [they] wouldn’t be able to take internships.”

Heffner is coordinating the endowment with Marc Junkunc, an assistant professor of management who also teaches Entrepreneurship classes. “This doesn’t help the students find internships,” Junkunc says, “but pays up to $2,500 for their travel, housing, utilities and other living expenses.”

Two UM students, both seniors this fall, were selected from a list of finalists who applied for the endowment. They are Adriana Vanderlely, interning at UBS Financial in New York, and Kermit Michel Hunter, interning at Forbes magazine in New York, and Kermit Michel Hunter, interning at Forbes magazine in New York.
Guiding Future Business Leaders

BusinessWeek ranked the B-School’s undergraduate program No. 1 in Florida and says the Mentor Program “wows students”

BY BARBARA BRYNKO

What do two School of Business entrepreneurship majors and the CEO of the largest homeownerr association management organization in the United States have in common? Plenty. Just ask 2006 BBAs Tom Hacker and Aaron Greenblott. For Greenblott, the Mentor Program “was as much of a real-life exposure to a successful entrepreneurship venture as I could have asked for,” while Hacker remembers being “blown away from the first meeting” with mentor Gene Gomberg (BEd ’70), CEO and founding partner of The Continental Group, Inc.

Hacker and Greenblott were president and vice president, respectively, of the undergraduate Entrepreneurship Club this past year. Gomberg is a self-proclaimed “down and dirty entrepreneur” who has worked on his own for the past 35 years and launched The Continental Group, a residential property management and maintenance service firm, in 1990. When the young entrepreneurs met Gomberg, the first time, their meeting was only supposed to last half an hour; it ended four and a half hours later after a whirlwind session that tackled what Greenblott calls “real aspects of business.” Their yearlong relationship created a business and personal bond that all see continuing.

Mentors in the School’s program are business professionals from South Florida who help ease the transition for juniors, seniors and graduate business students from classroom to workplace. When asked, most share Hacker and Greenblott’s enthusiasm. The recent BusinessWeek ranking of undergraduate business programs nationwide (which put the School at No. 44 in the country and No. 1 in Florida) reported that the Mentor Program “wows students.”

COMPETITIVE EDGE

Faye M. Harris, the School’s Director of Alumni Relations and the director of the Mentor Program, is the quintessential matchmaker when it comes to pairing mentors with students to enhance specific career objectives or professional development. Last year, Harris worked with 189 mentors and 231 students; each mentor was handpicked to offer a competitive edge to one or more students.

The personal interaction encourages a deeper understanding of corporate culture, career direction and networking, with mentors and students meeting at least monthly. Hacker, Greenblott and Gomberg met at The Continental Group’s headquarters, at off-site business operations or over dinner, keeping up-to-date with e-mails and phone calls in between. Hacker says the experience was “even better than I thought it would be, especially since our mentor was a true entrepreneur. He was pretty close to being perfect.”

Mentors and students set their own agendas. Once initial contact is established, Harris doesn’t micromanage. “They are on their own,” she says, although she does provide basic guidelines for successful mentoring relationships in the Mentor Program Handbook, and is in touch with the mentor-protégé teams throughout the year.

Gomberg described his two protégés as “driven and enthusiastic,” calling his first mentoring experience with the program “a great experience for all three of us.”

Hacker and Greenblott, who were primed for the mentoring experience, left no stone unturned. “If anything, they pushed me,” says Gomberg, who sees mentoring as a way to teach students about corporate realities where the classroom leaves off.

During their sessions, “Gene discussed with his company to see from the inside what it is like to run such a large and successful company.”

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

For Gomberg, mentoring made him look at his business in a new light. He found the experience to be “extremely rewarding. It made me refocus on the past. I started digging through my business records from 35 years ago when I started as a single-person entrepreneur.” (His company now has more than 5,000 employees and more than $300 million in annual revenues, while providing service to 650,000 residential homes.) Service is key to The Continental Group, which is proud of its 97 percent client-retention rate from year to year. Gomberg even included his two protégés in his actual strategy sessions and developing a five-year business plan.

Gomberg packaged the realities of business into practical exercises. “We’d take an everyday idea, something simple like shining shoes, and create a game plan to launch the idea into a multimillion-dollar business. We talked about executing business theories. There’s always the potential for starting a successful business. You just need to develop a sound business plan and be willing to work harder than you could have imagined.”

Applying some of what he learned, Greenblott and a partner entered the School’s Rothschild Entrepreneurship Competition this year and won first prize in the High-Potential Venture category (story, page 14). He says that Gomberg “gave us some advice that really helped us go into the presentation knowing the perspective of someone on the other side of the table.”

Hacker adds, “We learned specifics in the classroom, but the Mentor Program is about an overall experience. It’s a great transition into the real world of business.”

“Aaron and Tom are fine examples of our students who realize the value of fully participating in the School’s Mentor Program” says Harris. “The Program’s success rate is a direct result of the students’ commitment and that of mentors like Gene who generously share their time and expertise.”
Six years after being featured as students, these 16 international MBA alumni have taken the business world by storm.

TAKING A GLOBAL VIEW

AS A FULBRIGHT FELLOW AT UM IN 1999, CHRISTIAN PETERSMANN had already begun the four-and-a-half-year course of study required for the advanced degree program in Germany. “I realized I could get an MBA in Miami in the 10 months I was there by taking a massive amount of courses in the two semesters,” Petersmann says. Not one to languish, he then did back-to-back internships — one at Morgan Stanley in London, the other at Goldman Sachs in Frankfurt — before returning to his German university to finish a master’s in business administration and economics.

With two advanced degrees under his belt, Petersmann joined Morgan Stanley’s corporate finance department, working for two years in London and one in São Paolo. After a year and a half at the special opportunities investment fund D.B. Zwirn, Petersmann joined Silver Point Capital, a multi-strategy credit opportunity fund that saw its start in 2002 in Greenwich, Conn.

Now based in the firm’s London office, Petersmann sources, analyzes and executes investment opportunities, mainly in German-speaking countries. His work involves investing along the entire capital structure. Although he maintains that one can’t learn the attributes that breed success in the financial world (“analytical capabilities, commercial mind-set and diligence”), he says he gained much from his studies at UM. A class taught by Associate Professor of Computer Information Systems Robert Plant “was a stand-out,” he notes, “because he made students understand and think about businesses and business models in his case studies.” Petersmann also cites Associate Professor of Finance Tie Su’s derivatives class as having been “highly interesting.”

Petersmann originally chose finance because he “loved working with math and numbers, with a view of being able to apply them.” Now, he says, he enjoys “thinking about and understanding businesses in the larger context of the global economy they are operating in, as well as on an individual level of the company itself.” He chose to live in London because of the diversity of its population and its vibrant and varied arts and cultural offerings. Reflecting on both the global economy and what he has learned in his career thus far, Petersmann offers this: “The simplest questions usually yield the best insights.”

— Karen Bennett
GLOBAL NETWORKER

STAVELY LORD
(MBA 01)
Business Development Specialist
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C.

“I decided to stay for a while, and then 9/11 happened, pulling the rug out from under the job market,” recounts Lord, who, when 9/11 happened, dramatically changed her career prospects. “I’d made a stopover in Washington, D.C., to visit family and apply her MBA and knowledge of French, Spanish and Italian, and interest in helping people would be a perfect fit. Today, as a business development specialist for the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Office of Development Credit, Lord works on projects to support economic growth in more than 80 developing countries. “In Rwanda, for example, more than 90 percent of the population works in agriculture, and coffee is a major crop,” she says. “But until four years ago the quality of the coffee beans grown there was extremely low. USAID has been working to help Rwanda’s coffee farmers produce specialty coffee for export rather than the lower-quality beans.”

Lord’s role in Rwanda involved encouraging private banks to make loans to new specialty coffee producers by offering U.S. Treasury credit guarantees. With the loans, coffee washing stations can be built and coffee cherries bought from farmers. USAID’s activity has drawn overseas coffee buyers. “Major buyers, such as Starbucks in the U.K., have been buying up all the coffee they can,” she says, noting that the project has been a huge success. “What was undrinkable four years ago is now some of the finest coffee in the world.”

Lord credits UM for nurturing her interest in international development, through her coursework and her ultimate career choice. “Major institutions have a great program to support consultants like me,” she says. “Many friendships I made at UM are going strong today. Some of those people are here in the U.S., but a number are spread around the world, creating a great global network.”

— Jennifer Pellet

CHANGE LEADER

MANUEL STEREMBERG
(MBA 00)
Product Manager, Consumer Laptops
Hewlett-Packard

Some call it instability and are frightened, others call it dynamism and are energized. Manuel Steremberg is firmly in the latter camp. “I was fortunate to graduate right after the Internet boom, which created a lot of dynamism in the marketplace,” says the Colombian native. He views change as opportunity, and he has let the constantly shifting global business environment propel his career upward ever since.

Before attending UM, Steremberg worked in Buenos Aires as an operations manager for Carvajal, SA, a Colombia-based multinational whose primary business is printing and publishing. After receiving his MBA, he rejoined the company in a new role, one that allowed him to remain in Miami, as business development manager for a line of electronic data interchange services for retailers in Colombia as well as Peru and Venezuela — countries to which he helped open the door.

In 2004, Steremberg moved to Miami-based Sysgold Corp., the largest supplier of wireless applications in Latin America. As business development manager, he helped change the corporate focus from traditional software provider to service solution provider for small to midsize businesses, designing marketing plans and campaigns to implement the new business model.

SCHOLARSHIP AND SOCCER

THOMAS BAUER
(MBA 00)
Senior Consultant
McKinsey & Company
Munich, Germany

“Miami is great,” he says. “I enjoyed the ethnic diversity on campus and in the city, and the nightlife. Since I graduated in 2000, I’ve come back to visit friends from school at least once a year.”

Those friends include several of Bauer’s former professors. “I particularly enjoyed my strategy classes, and am still in touch with Jeffrey Kerr and John Mezias of the Management Department,” he says. “Also with Robert Plant from my Computer Information Systems course. We try to meet when I’m in Munich.”

Coming from Germany, Bauer was impressed by the UM campus and what it had to offer. “I was excited to see the great facilities, from the classrooms to the gym. And the research options, like free access to online journals. That’s something we didn’t have at my school in Germany.”

As a soccer fan, Bauer was also taken by the passion for UM sports. “I’ll always remember my first visit to a Hurricanes game at the Orange Bowl,” he says. “What I just could not believe was that there were many more people in the stadium than would fit into the arena of any professional soccer club in Germany — and soccer is big in my country, as anybody who followed the World Cup this year would know.”

— Carole Bodger
RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

ROBERTA SILVA
President
Anauê Café & Gourmet
CAMPINAS, BRAZIL

Robert Silva juggles many hats. She’s a wife, mother and gourmet cook. But she’s also a business owner and the driving force behind Anauê Café & Gourmet in Campinas, Brazil. The restaurant has been a huge success since it opened, despite the fact that working in the food industry was the furthest thing from Silva’s mind when she entered the School’s MBA program.

“My undergraduate degree is in systems analysis,” she says. “In fact, I met my husband, Ricardo, while I was interning one summer as a systems analyst at Robert Bosch Company in Campinas.” In 1998, the couple married. Ricardo, a business development executive with General Motors, helped her to UM. He left that position in 2002, and the couple returned to Brazil. In 2004, using their own capital, Roberta and Ricardo opened Anauê Café & Gourmet. Anauê means “be” in Tupi Guarani, an indigenous language from the Amazon region. Modeled after European cafeterias and peppered with a Brazilian flair, Anauê was an instant success. Revista Veja O Melhor da Culinária, a culinary magazine, named it the best cafeteria in Campinas.

“The business garnered $1.3 million in revenue in our first year and has provided its own working capital ever since,” says Silva. Her husband is her business partner; he focuses on marketing while she manages the financial and operational responsibilities. “Our current projection is to franchise five cafeterias throughout Brazil by 2010,” she says. At the moment, though, her life is gloriously full thanks to the birth in July of her daughter, Raíssa. “I have the best of all worlds,” she says. “I adore what I do, I love where I live, and I have a magnificent family.” — Stephanie Levin

TRIUMPH OVER TERRORISM

In early 2002, he resumed the search, spending April through June in New York, but the market was still depressed. In July, he went back to Ecuador, where he hadn’t lived in 10 years, and did some teaching and small business consulting. His wife was working in the U.S., so he spent a year traveling between Miami and Ecuador. Nonetheless, “I felt better,” Leon says, “because I was earning money and using my knowledge.” Ultimately, however, the long-distance arrangement was hard on his wife, so he returned to Miami at the end of 2003, when her company sponsored her for a visa that allowed Leon to work too.

Finally, things began looking up. At the end of 2004, Leon was hired as a project manager for Niutech, an Internet marketing company in Boca Raton, Fla. Since then, he’s been promoted twice and is now the director of finance, in charge of budgeting and financial planning. “It’s a field I know and can contribute a lot to,” he says. Leon credits the School’s MBA program with rounding out his technical background and making him a skilled professional. He praises the education he received from the extramural courses, especially in management and technology. — Ellen Ullman

MAYUREE TREEPASERTPOJ
(MLM ’01)
Managing Director
TEN Group
BANGKOK, THAILAND

When Thailand-born Mayuree Treeprasertpoj came to UM, she felt immediately at home. “Even though Miami is so far from Thailand, I have to say, ‘So far and yet so near,’” she says. “Weather-wise, it’s very similar to Bangkok, and the people are really nice. Moreover, Thai food in Miami is so delicious!” Moreover, Thai food in Miami is so delicious!”

“Summer 2006 is real great in trust,” she says, but she acknowledges there are downsides to handling the Thai government.

“She found it hard to leave Miami after earning her MBA, so she worked for a year managing a hot restaurant then,” she says — before returning to Thailand to join the family business.
OLIVIA PEREYRA
(MBA '98, BBA '98)
Vice President
HSBC Private Bank
International
MIAMI

always wanted to work in international banking. Today, thanks to an amazing array of connections to UM, she is armed with one degree in economics and two in finance and is happily ensconced as a vice president at HSBC Private Bank International in Miami. “I serve wealthy clients from Latin America and manage their portfolios,” she says. Pereyra enjoys every bit of it. “I love learning about different places and the different needs and concerns that people have,” she explains. Her overall focus is on wealth management, which includes the delivery of tailored investment, insurance and estate planning solutions. Pereyra also enjoys the interactions with her clients. “I feel like I become a part of their families,” she says. Her degrees also help her bond with them because “a lot of wealthy families in Latin America send their kids to UM.”

Helping her clients safeguard their wealth so they can take care of their families rings true with Pereyra, who is married with a 2-year-old son. Her job entails a lot of traveling, which she finds “very challenging when you have a family and a husband [Alejandro Pereyra, MS ’02] who travels even more than I do.”

She looks forward to business trips to her home country of Bolivia because she can bring her son (also named Alejandro) with her and leave him with her parents while she attends to meetings. “I still get to see him in the evening, so I don’t miss him as much as when I travel to other places,” she explains.

Travel is nothing unusual for Pereyra. She came to the U.S. when she was 18, ultimately earning her undergraduate degree at UM. In doing so, she was following in some family footsteps — both her father, Juan Carlos Fernandez (BBA ’73), and her uncle, Pablo Fernandez (BSCE ’73), attended UM. But the ‘Cane connections don’t stop there. Her cousin, Oliver Dueelsberg, just received his MBA in May. And she found her job after Manuel L. Diaz (MBA ’79), the president of HSBC, posted the position at the School’s Sanford L. Ziff Career Services Center. Despite loving her job, she admits to missing her days as a student. “I enjoyed studying and miss the dynamic classes and meeting different people,” she says. “I enjoyed the whole university experience.”

— Jill Colford

KARIM ZIWAR
(MBA '06, M.B.A. '09)
Manager
Tejari FZ LLC
ARAB EMIRATES

Egyptian-born Karim Zivar loves to travel, and he isn’t afraid to journey halfway around the world for the right opportunity. When he began looking at universities in the U.S., a major requirement was proximity to Egypt and Europe. UM was closer than other schools he considered.

But what really attracted him were the multicultural environment and the quality of a UM education. “Miami in general and UM in particular stood out for their international mix,” he says, “and I wanted to study in the finance program at the School of Business.” His focus on finance prepared him well for the multifaceted job he now holds at Tejari FZ LLC, the Middle East’s first business-to-business online marketplace, launched in 2000 in Dubai. He was recently promoted to corporate finance manager. “I work between the Finance Department, the International Business Department, and the New Ventures and Commercial Department, as well as the CEO’s office,” he says. In addition, he is part of the team responsible for the launch of new subsidiaries as Tejari, a semigovernmental corporation owned by Dubai World, expands into 18 countries over the next three years.

“Tejari is the Middle East’s sole online procurement service platform with a demonstrated knowledge of the unique challenges and traditions of the region’s business community,” says Zivar. As it expands, he adds, it’s diversifying from an online procurement platform to a full-service platform.

Zivar traveled for a year after earning his MBA, then spent a year in Cairo working as a financial analyst. He visits friends and family in Egypt often, and expects one day to return to his roots. But for now, he’s happy in Dubai. “It’s very fast-paced and growing faster than anywhere in the world,” he says. “It’s multicultural, with 80 percent of the population being expats. It’s a new city, and always evolving.”

It’s the perfect place for someone who adapts to good loving a time. “I partied a lot while at UM. I couldn’t avoid the South Beach scene and even worked for some of the largest clubs on the beach,” he says. “This is one of my hobbies, and I hope in the near future I will open up my own places, once I decide where to relocate for a few years. I never plan way in advance. As long as there are new opportunities for growth, I am always open to change.”

— M.R.T.
BARKING UP THE RIGHT TREE

MICHAEL NAGTEGAAL
(MBA '00)
President
Belina SA
ALAJUELA, COSTA RICA

Nagtegaal planned to use his degree as a launching pad for a career with a Fortune 500 company. But when visa status trouble precluded his acceptance of an offer to join Cartier, the marketing major found himself embarking on a doomed startup venture. “I started a company marketing waterproof cement that a friend of mine invented,” he explains. “The combination of the size of investment required and the difficult county requirements drove me to drop the marketing eight months later.”

But the experience gave Nagtegaal a taste for entrepreneurship. He launched a new business, Belina SA, in Costa Rica that distributes pet food and care products.

“Most of the pet food available in Costa Rica is made locally or imported from Brazil or Mexico, where there are few restrictions on quality control,” explains Nagtegaal, who was born in Curagao, grew up in Aruba and Costa Rica, and speaks Dutch, Spanish and Papiamento in addition to English. “People who love their pets want U.S.-made pet food, because the controls in place ensure good quality,” he says.

Belina now distributes $100,000 worth of dog, cat, horse and fish food, as well as pet care products.

After graduation, Nagtegaal spent a couple of years working for Internet companies that targeted the U.S. Hispanic market. During that time, she had a side business as a personal trainer, working with clients in the morning, at night and on weekends. As the Internet industry began collapsing,

Belina now distributes $100,000 worth of dog, cat, horse and fish food, as well as pet care products.

Nagtegaal decided to expand her business and become a certified trainer with a focus on pre- and postnatal care. Today, she owns a very successful personal training studio called Belly-n-Kicks that caters to pregnant and postpartum women. Working with such a specified niche has paid off — Boom’s customer base has increased by 150 percent each year. “I work one-on-one with each mom,” she says. “It’s incredibly rewarding.”

Boom says that UM helped her succeed in both the corporate world and on her own. The people she met and the relationships she developed exposed her to new ideas and were a source of constant growth. “Since one-third of the student body is international, it makes for a very rich learning experience,” she says.

ACCIDENTAL ACADEMIC

MIN (“ENYA”) HE
(MBA '01)
Assistant Professor
University of North Texas
College of Business
DENTON, TEXAS

When Min (“Enya”) He graduated in 1992 from No. 3 High School in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China, her sights were set on medicine, not academia. “I was going to be an MD, not a PhD,” says He, who has just received her PhD from the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business.

The year He entered college, China’s top medical school’s quota had places for only four applicants from her province. “I wasn’t one of them,” she says, “so I made a U-turn, charted a new course and entered the Central University of Finance and Economics in Beijing.”

After receiving her bachelor’s degree, He entered a graduate program at the University of California in Beijing. “To finance her first graduate degree, she worked full time for Swiss Life Insurance, which furthered her interest in risk management and her desire for an MBA grew stronger. “MBA programs are not as popular in China as they are abroad. I looked at programs in both Australia and the USA,” she recalls.

UM was high on her list, yet studying in the U.S. was an expensive proposition. When her acceptance into the School’s MBA program came accompanied by a generous financial aid package, He caught the next plane to Miami. “The program was an enormous investment of time and money, but I knew in the end the return would be a handsome one,” she says.

He credits a cadre of professors at the School with shaping her way of thinking. “I don’t think I appreciated Professor [and Finance Department Chair Douglas] Emery’s Introduction to Finance class until I really understood it.”

For someone with an undergraduate degree in industrial engineering, the School of Business was a real eye-opener. “My background was almost entirely theoretical, and I had zero knowledge of business,” she laughs. “UM let me put into practice a lot of what I learned in class.”

Another benefit was that UM is where she met her husband, Nicolas Vivero (MBA ’00), a fellow Colombian who helped her come up with the Belly-n-Kicks concept. “It was a blend of my love of exercise and his love of children,” she says.

Not surprisingly, Boom develops quite a bond with her clients. “I enjoy seeing them becoming empowered as they watch their children,” she says. “They feel good all the way through, because they are taking such good care of themselves. When they come back after the baby is born, they know I’m there and that I can help them.”

SHAPING A GROWTH BUSINESS

ERIKA BOOM
(MBA '00)
President
Belly-n-Kicks
ALAJUELA, COSTA RICA

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Boom says that UM helped her succeed in both the corporate world and on her own. The people she met and the relationships she developed exposed her to new ideas and were a source of constant growth. “Since one-third of the student body is international, it makes for a very rich learning experience,” she says.

IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY, YOU CAN LEARN FROM THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU. I’M VERY GRATEFUL TO UM FOR THAT.”

FOR SOMEONE WITH AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING, THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS WAS A REAL EYE-OPENER. “MY BACKGROUND WAS ALMOST ENTIRELY THEORETICAL, AND I HAD ZERO KNOWLEDGE OF BUSINESS,” SHE LAUGHS. “UM LET ME PUT INTO PRACTICE A LOT OF WHAT I LEARNED IN CLASS.”

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NOT SURPRISINGLY, BOOM DEVELOPS QUITE A BOND WITH HER CLIENTS. “I ENJOY SEEING THEM BECOMING EMPOWERED AS THEY WATCH THEIR CHILDREN,” SHE SAYS. “THEY FEEL GOOD ALL THE WAY THROUGH, BECAUSE THEY ARE TAKING SUCH GOOD CARE OF THEMSELVES. WHEN THEY COME BACK AFTER THE BABY IS BORN, THEY KNOW I’M THERE AND THAT I CAN HELP THEM.”

—— EU
I had no idea that Miami was tropical,” says Antonia S. (Dontcheva) Cameron, recalling her arrival in South Florida in 1999.

“The weather was a shock to me. I couldn’t breathe. I thought, Is this normal? Or is it just the airport, with all the planes and cars? It was a complete surprise. I’d been focusing on UM, not Miami.”

Having researched American business schools online, the Bulgarian-born Cameron knew UM offered a lot to international students. “I was looking forward to a good program and meeting a lot of people,” she says. “But UM surpassed my expectations.”

Cameron credits the School’s Sanford L. Ziff Graduate Career Services Center with helping her find her first job. At a career event held two months before graduation, she had an opportunity to speak with a representative of the World Fuel Services Corp. “There was such a line in front of that booth!” she recalls. “But the person there wasn’t just an HR rep, he was the chairman and CEO of one of the divisions, as well as executive vice president of the whole company. Later he became president and COO of World Fuel Services.”

It took months of steady pursuit, but eventually Cameron was hired as a financial analyst in the Marine Division, then promoted to senior financial analyst two years later. “Being a foreign student looking in the very depressed job market of 2001, I consider myself lucky to have found a career job and sponsor company,” she says. “I spent a total of four years there, working closely with the management team on a variety of projects, and for the most part reporting directly to the vice president of strategic planning and analysis.”

Married last year, Cameron and her husband, Daniel, relocated to Boston. Since last August, she has been working as a senior business analyst at Grace Performance Chemicals, a business unit of W.R. Grace & Co. “Boston is a very fast-paced place to live and work,” she says, “so it took some adapting from Miami.”

While Cameron appreciatively recalls the teaching skills of specific professors, she speaks warmly of her School of Business experience as a whole. “UM for me is all the relationships I built, all the good times I had, all the hard work. I’m thankful to UM for being such a wonderful springboard for my career and my life in the U.S.”

— D.R.

A COLORFUL CAREER

Irena Chang-Yen has lived in London, Trinidad, Miami, Puerto Rico and now New York, but her transcontinental career path has led her to a field she loves — the beauty industry. A brand manager in the Professional Color Division at Procter & Gamble in Stamford, Conn., Chang-Yen decided to pursue an MBA while an undergraduate at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad, where she was raised. A professor there recommended UM, and after working for PepsiCo Bottling in Trinidad for three years, Chang-Yen was accepted into the School’s MBA program.

An internship at Procter & Gamble led to a job in the Fabric and Home Care Department in P&G’s Puerto Rico division immediately upon graduation. “It was a dream job,” says Chang-Yen. “The Puerto Rico division’s focus, she notes, is on marketing to Hispanic consumers in Puerto Rico and the U.S.

In April 2004, Chang-Yen was offered a job as an assistant brand manager in Stamford, and she moved to New York City. “From a professional standpoint, it was wonderful because I was going to work in beauty care, which was very different,” she says. “I was interested in the scope of the job. From a personal standpoint, I wanted to experience New York.” New York also brought exciting change to her personal life; this summer, she married Javier Bonilla, a creative director at Grey Advertising.

Promoted to brand manager last year, Chang-Yen now works directly with stylists to find out what consumers want in the salon. “It’s a complex category, very different from mass marketing to the consumer,” she says. “It has been a great learning experience to find out just how relationship-based the whole industry is. You have to make deep, meaningful connections to the stylist for them to trust you. If a stylist gets a bad result with a hair color, he or she loses a client, who then tells other clients. You have to get them to trust the brand, to be a loyal one.”

Chang-Yen appreciates the courses that involved team projects and leadership. “With marketing,” she notes, “you learn more as you put theory into practice, so case-study-based classes were very helpful, too.” Other pointers? “Getting a good internship was a great step. It gave me a good flavor for what existed out there and made the job search easier.” — K.B.
Richard E. Jaffe, BBA '50

FOLLOWING THE MONEY

They say working for the IRS is steady but boring. Just don’t say it to Dick Jaffe.

Jaffe enrolled at the University of Miami and became a CPA after he returned from field artillery service during the Korean War. But a quiet life working as a Special Agent for the Internal Revenue Service wasn’t in the cards.

“After Korea I decided to stay in the Army Reserve,” says Jaffe. “At that time I was in the early stages of my IRS career and began to interface with Coast Guard intelligence, where I won accepted a direct commission as a reserve officer, from which I retired in 1980 as a Commandery.”

Jaffe volunteered for reconnaissance flights during the Cuban missile crisis. “We’d be out there for eight hours flying off the north coast of Cuba, taking pictures of Soviet Bloc vessels bringing supplies in,” Jaffe recalls. “I guess I’m a risk taker. It’s long been one of the major components of my personality. It irritates me when I see lack of integrity. It bothers me when I see people violating the rules.”

Some of the rule-violating Jaffe aften were prominent businesspeople and alleged mobsters. By 1973, he was running Project Haven, an IRS investigation into tax evasion using Bahamian banks. With assistance from an informant, he was able to copy the contents of a Bahamian bank official’s briefcase while the official was out to dinner with a female associate. The documents produced a list of 350 depositors in Bahamian Bank and implicated several prominent American tax attorneys and many of their clients. Federal legal wrangling with that case created major issues that were later addressed.

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“The last three years of my career were marred by the unsuccessful efforts of corrupt interests within the government to have me prosecuted for doing my job well,” Jaffe wrote to author John D. MacDonald in 1981, proposing that they collaborate on a book. MacDonald politely declined, though he called Jaffe’s files “juicy.”

In 1980, Jaffe went to work for the Miami State Attorney’s Investigation Division as their supervisory investiga- tive accountant. In 2004, he retired again, although he freelances as an independent contractor for troubled Miami banks—as recently as March he was still chasing bad guys through else Florida bank’s ruined records. And he’d still tell his story today. “Maybe it’s time to write a letter to John Grisham,” he says. —Catherine G. Neil Garage

Ruben D. Nava, MBA ‘70

FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY LEADER, SOUTHWEST REGION

DeLoffe & Touche, Los Angeles

NEVER A DULL MOMENT

Ruben Nava has been with DeLoffe & Touche for 37 years. That’s a long time with a single employer. “I guess spending 37 years at one company is a little unusual,” he says, “but it’s a great firm and I love it.” Those years have been anything but dull.

Nava joined the partner in 1979, 10 years after joining the firm. In 1986, he became head of DeLoffe’s insurance practice, which meant he regularly rubbed elbows with top people at Equitable, Prudential, TIAA-CREF, GEICO, Pacific Life and other leading insurance companies.

He was part of the DeLoffe team that helped the Union Mutual Life Insurance Co. transform itself into UnumProvident, a publicly owned company.

This was the first time a major U.S. mutual had converted to public ownership, and Nava became, as he puts it, “something of a specialist in the field.” He frequently called on to provide expert testimony at state hearings on insurance company reorganizations, mergers and acquisitions. He is also a sought-after speaker for insurance industry seminars.

Through other professional connections, Nava has become something of an expert on terrorism.

From 1980 to 1993, he was on the 99th floor of One World Trade Center. He was at work during the September 11th, and had to walk down 99 floors to evacuate. DeLoffe moved out of the World Trade Center in 1991, and Nava moved to Los Angeles in 1997, but as luck would have it he was in New York on business on September 10, 2001. He had dinner that night at Windows on the World, leaving at 10 p.m., which meant he was one of the last people to have eaten at the restaurant.

The next morning he was on a 7:30 flight out of Newark, bound for Los Angeles. “Obviously,” he recalls, “we didn’t make it to [Los Angeles]. I still remember our pilot coming on the intercom at about 9 a.m. and saying ‘due to extreme terrorism in New York’ she FAA is grounding all airplanes in the U.S. After getting on the phone we discovered what had happened at the World Trade Center and learned that more planes — possibly ours — were potential hijack candidates. It was a big relief to land in Omaha about an hour later.”

—Lawrence A. Armstrong

1940s–1950s


WALTER A. COTTER (BBA ’57) is a retired Baptist pastor living in Columbus, Tenn. He is a tax accountant for Disciples House, a transitional housing facility for women recently released from jail, which he established with his wife in 2005.

TAYLOR LAMOUR (BBA ’49) has co-authored The Bigfoot Hunter’s Guide to Investigating, published by Wiley & Sons. He lives in Miami with his wife of 55 years.

JACK NERDIN (BBA ’49) lives in Calabasas, Calif.


1960s

LANCE HARRISON (BBA ’14) is a CPA with Levine & Smolin, LLP in New York City. He lives in P. L. Air.

RICHARD NAVA (BBA ’69) was recently named executive vice president of Ocean Bank, the largest com-

pany owned and operated by a Hispanic in Miami. He lives in Coconut Grove.

ROBERT HORMAND (BBA ’63) is CEO of Lighthouse Marketing, LLC, which he founded in 2005. The company is headquartered in Tampa, Fla., and has offices in Los Angeles and Cincinnati. He lives in Lutz, Fla.

MELTON B. IRWIN (BBA ’60) was recently named City Commissioner of the Year by the Miami-Dade County League of Cities. He lives in Miami Beach.

H.W. MIKE MYRICK (BBA ’64) has an agency owner with State Farm Insurance for 27 years and lives in Knoxville, Tenn. He plans to retire in 2007 to focus on security consulting as well as volunteering for Ambassadors of Christ Jesus.

SUZETTE S. POPEN (BBA ’69, MBA ’71) has retired as chief accountant for the Delta County Public Schools. She was recently awarded the President’s Award by the Alliance for Aging, recognizing her contribution of outstanding service to the elderly of South Florida. She has also been elected to a third term as president of the American Legion Auxiliary, Canton Galatia, Unit 849.

PAUL H. TOCKER (BBA ’60) has been an attorney in private practice in Schenectady, N.Y., for 34 years. He was recently presented with the Bar’s Riff Distinguished Service Award for his involvement in the operation.

ALBERTO L. VEGA (BBA ’68) was recently named exec- utive vice president of Ocean Bank, the largest com- mercial bank headquartered in Florida. He lives and works in Miami.

1970s

PHILIP ALESSI (BBA ’71) is an account manager with Darnerk Seline & Douglas, Inc., in New York City. He lives in West Islip, N.Y.

C. ROBERT DRAKE (BBA ’72) is a real estate de veloper in Marina, Calif. He also serves as president of the Marina Rotary Foundation and is advisor on real estate to the Monterey Peninsula School District. He was recently named City Commissioner of the Year after chairing the Marina Planning Commission.

WILLIAM N. EVANS III (BBA ’70) is president and managing director of the Petionville Club, a golf and tennis club in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti.

NOEL C. FRANK (BBA ’71) is an attorney and senior partner with Frank, Weissman & Blum, PC, in Plantation, Fla., where he also lives. He was recently tapped and initiated into the Iron Arrow Honor Society.

MITCHELL J. LANDE (BBA ’79) serves as controller of The Innovation Factory in Duluth, Ga., which is a nationwide medical-related incubator that creates, launches and manages its own emerging businesses. He lives in Atlanta.

JAY LONDY (BBA ’73) is President and co-owner of Lont Enterprises, Inc., in Pensacola, Fla. In 2004, he and his wife purchased the Pensacola Window Co.

PETER C. MILLER (BBA ’72, MBA ’79) is president of Coastal Systems Corp., in Marietta, Ga., where he lives.

DAVID P. PAULSEN (BBA ’77, BSSA ’77) was recently named United States director of human resources for Accenture in Boston, Va. He lives in Henderson, Va.

WILLIAM P. SKAL (BBA ’77, JD ’79) is counsel to Edwards, Angell, Palmer and Dodge and also has served as an adjunct professor in the UM School of Law’s Real Property Graduate Law program for more than 27 years. He and his wife, LORI SKAL (BBA ’81), have founded Genetic Information to Stop Breast and Ovar- ian Cancer, which launches specific population groups through Reach Global (www.reachglobal.org) and just launched International (www.jacobsite.org). The orga- nization focuses on educating women about the bene- fits of genetic testing to ascertain their hereditary risk for breast and ovarian cancer.

TIMOTHY SUMMERS (BBA ’78) has been a securities analyst with Stanford Group Co. in Chicago for 15 years and has worked on Wall Street since graduation. He chairs the alumni relations committee at UM.

ROBERT VAN DER MERWE (BBA ’78) is president and CEO of Paces Corp., in White Plains, N.Y.
Ralph Alvarez, BBA ’76

A SIZZLING CAREER

Business: Miami caught up with Ralph Alvarez on a typically busy day for the president and COO of McDonald’s Corp. Following a 6 a.m. interview with the magazine, he planned to spend the rest of the day with other company executives — including fellow alumna Jose Amatriain (MSPM ’03), president of McDonald’s Latin America — at a think tank in California.

Alvarez is responsible for setting strategy for more than 31,000 McDonald’s restaurants around the world, most of which are owned and run by more than 5,000 franchisees. His professional experience since graduating from the School 30 years ago has made him uniquely qualified for the job.

“When I first got involved with McDonald’s — I learned early on that diversity can be a great strength,” says Alvarez. “At the University of Miami, I was exposed to a lot of different cultures. That helped me understand the differences in the way people work.”

“He has done a great job of balancing a demanding career and family life,” says his wife, Mary. “He understands the importance of having a good support system.”

Alvarez says he “learned early on that diversity can be a great strength.” Also, “the University of Miami — the real world — was not just for passing the CPA exam.”

He did pass the CPA exam, though, and after working for a couple of years at a major accounting firm, Alvarez got a job in the quick-service restaurant industry. “I liked the industry right away, even more so as I got to know the business better,” he recalls. “The fast pace, the rapid growth, the young people who were running it — it all appealed to me.”

Alvarez held a variety of positions at Burger King and at Wendy’s before joining McDonald’s in 1994. Over the past dozen years, he has been a regional vice president for the company’s Sacramento region, a regional director for Chipotle Mexican Grill (a McDonald’s partner brand), president of McDonald’s Mexico, and president of the 4,300-restaurant central division of McDonald’s USA. He subsequently held the titles of COO and then president of McDonald’s USA, and most recently president of McDonald’s North America, before being promoted to his current position.

Alvarez remains involved with UM, serving on the President’s Council and the School’s International Board. He’s also part of a UM family — his brother Orlando is a professor in the school, and his son Kyle received a bachelor’s degree from the School of Communication in 2005. He and Amaris, friends for 27 years, attend a couple of Hurricanes games together every year and still play touch football before the Florida State game. “The young guys ask if we can join us, but we always say no,” Alvarez laughs. “We get enough pulled hamstrings as it is.”

“Michael J. McDermott

Marianela Hernandez, BBA ’83, MBA ’85, MS ’86

MAINTAINING HER BALANCE IN BANKING

When it came time for college, Marianela Hernandez had a choice. Born in Venezuela but living in Miami at the time, Hernandez was accepted to both Columbia University and the University of Miami. Would she choose Ivy League or stay close to home? She chose UM and she has no regrets.

“I don’t feel like I missed out,” says Hernandez. “If anything, I feel connected because the community in Miami and South Florida has become so diverse and so vibrant, and watching this diversity grow has been an important part of my career development and knowledge base.”

As a vice president at Terrabank, which serves South Florida, Hernandez manages two types of clients: major private banking clients — generally, individuals who own a company that is an important part of their portfolio — and entrepreneurs who run small to midsize businesses.

Before joining Terrabank three years ago, Hernandez spent 17 years at Chase Manhattan Bank (now JP Morgan Chase). Toward the end of her tenure there, she managed the emerging markets portfolio and securities business in Venezuela.

“It’s an exciting time to be in the business,” she says. “I hope up a few years ago, the banking business was much more static.” When she began her career, “people said that banking was 3-6-3.” Hernandez says. “You would pay 3 percent interest, charge 6 percent on loans, and you would be at the golf course by 3 in the afternoon.” But by the late 1980s, “the banking industry was being deregulated and becoming much more competitive. It was evolving into a different world.”

Hernandez says her interest in banking was sparked and sustained by her professors at the School. They helped her prepare for career opportunities. When it came time to find a job, Chase was “looking for international students who would be willing to relocate. At the time, I was single, just graduating, and it was a nice fit.”

Later, when she decided to marry and have a family, Hernandez found that although there are some obstacles, especially if you’re a woman, but you deal with them.” She and her husband have two children, a 13-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son.

Despite the challenges of balancing a demanding career and family life, she remains active in the UM Alumni Association and keeps in touch with friends from her university days. “UM is known to be an excellent school,” she says.

“The fact that the whole university has improved so much over the years has added a lot of value to my diploma.”

—Hannabi Rabo

—Michael J. McDermott
COOKING UP IDEAS

Ivan Ho may be a highly successful restaurant entrepreneur — he’s launched 300 restaurants in 29 states and nine countries — but it’s no accident that he’s now washing dishes or mopping a floor in one of his many establishments. “I don’t have any qualms about getting my hands dirty or my feet wet,” says the hands-on executive who is as comfortable in jeans and a T-shirt working next to his cooks and waiters as he is in a suit negotiating the fine points of franchise deals.

When Ho received his degree from the School, he already had hands-on knowledge of the restauran
t business, having worked in his uncle’s Chinese restaurant in Miami Beach since he was a boy. “I learned the business from the ground up,” he says. That practical knowledge, coupled with what he learned in management courses at UM, gave him the foundation he needed to deal with employe
customers, and business associates, as well as the problems that can arise in running his wide-
spread network of restaurants.

With his uncle, Kelly Young, as his partner, Ho founded QSR (Quick Service Restaurants), whose main business was in shopping-mall food courts. They called their restaurant Chinese Cafe, opening their first one in Bayside Marketplace in downtown Miami in 1987. Since then, the restaurants have been so successful that the systems are franchised out to such heavyweights as Host Marriott and The Mills Corp. They have more than 10 different concepts to date, with Kelly’s Cajun Grill being the most sought-after franchise in their food court systems.

Ho then decided to try a new cuisine concept: a steakhouse in a food court with mid-range prices, speedy service and high-quality food, a proposition made possible by QSR’s formidable buying power. The flagship Tago Grill opened in the Aventura Mall in Florida in 1999. Others followed in the Dolphins, Dadeland and Sawgrass Mills malls in the Dade-Broward area, as well as in malls in Orlando, Tampa and West Palm Beach.

He no longer has about 100 employees working in his restaurants, but he is always looking for the next restaurant concept, and he says his next move might take him “back to my roots.” He’s thinking of opening a restaurant specializing in Asian cuisine. —Bella Kelly
ELVIN POLO (MBA ’02) has been promoted to partner at accounting firm of Bercikfeld, Spiro, Schwader and Sheer in Coral Gables.
CARLOS ANGEL REYES (BBA ’04) was recently promoted to assistant parts and service manager at Toyota Motor Sales in West Palm Beach, N.L. He lives in Hackettsvile, N.J.
DAVID RODRIGUEZ (BBA ’04) works in the Mortgage Interiors Office of Loomis Brothers in New York City.
JEFFREY HUANGI (MBA ’05) is an assistant controller manager for Chip Pan-Porter & Bagnou in Coconut Grove, Fla., where he works on the Volkswagen account with the national brand team.
ERIC SCHREIBER (BBA ’04) is manager of electrical services in the engineering group within Marine Operations for Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd. He and his family recently celebrated the birth of their second child.
MARGARET (HEROLD) SIERDSMA (BBA ’05) is a marketing specialist at CB Richard Ellis in Santa Ana, Calif.
KANNA TOMIOKA (MBA ’05) has been promoted to director of corporate communications at Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg, Fla., where she also lives.
SHARRI WEISS (BBA ’05) is manager for planning and strategy for UBR Property in Miami Beach, Fla.
DOUGLAS L. WALLACE (MBA ’04) is the Vice President of the sales and marketing national accounts division of the R.G. Barry Corporation/The Dearfoams Co. He recently moved to Columbus, Ohio.
THERESA MARIE YONG (MBA ’01) is a marketing specialist at Sanford L. Ziff Graduate Career Services Center.

OBITUARIES

ROBERT O. ARONHEIM (BBA ’63, L ’76) passed away on April 20, 2006. He is survived by his wife and three children, his parents and five siblings. He lived in Providence, R.I.
PHILIP B. BEIRMAN (BBA ’78) passed away on October 1, 2005. He is survived by his wife and two children. He lived in New Windsor, N.Y.
RICHARD KAPLAN (BBA ’50) passed away on January 17, 2006. He lived in Randolph, Mass.
WILLIAM MERRILL (BBA ’52) passed away on April 10, 2006. He retired as a colonel in the U.S. Army after 30 years of service and lived in Springfield, Va. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.
LUIS J. MONTERO (BBA ’80) passed away on December 8, 2005, at the age of 90. He retired in 1989 as president of the board of directors for La Vitalia Insurance Co., and lived in Lima, Peru. He is survived by his wife, four children and 15 grandchildren.

—Compiled by Stacey W. Betts

Alberto Manrara, MBA ’03
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/CFO, TOTALBANK, MIAMI

A SPONSOR OF SUCCESS

You’re never too old for spring break. At least that’s what Alberto Manrara and his classmates felt when they headed to Manhattan for a tour of the New York Stock Exchange and to take part in St. Patrick’s Day festivities during their time off.

Manrara was not your typical college student on break. That’s because he was at least 15 years older than his classmates in the School of Business’ MBA Executive Program. But the 56-year-old says his age was never a hindrance: “My class never made it an issue. I never felt like the old person in the group.”

Quite the contrary. Manrara was embraced and respected by his classmates, in part because he was already a successful businessman. He has been executive vice president and chief financial officer for TotalBank in Coral Gables for nine years. He has also worked at Deloitte & Touche, in a family business and in his own firm doing public accounting.

Going back to school was a challenge Manrara welcomed: “I am not a person who believes I know it all,” he says. Education is an important part of his family life. His wife is finishing her doctorate, his son just finished a master’s degree, and his daughter is in law school. “I looked around my house, and everyone was in school,” he jokes. He says he chose UM because of the School of Business’s strong reputation.

His time there yielded many benefits. “There were a lot of takeaways that I have been able to implement in my job. I am a better manager and better administrator,” he explains. “I have also hired people from my MBA class and received referrals for business from them.”

Manrara was “impressed by the quality of the professors as a general group.” He cites Linda Neider, chair of the Management Department, and Steven Ullmann, also of the Management Department, as examples of professors whose superior teaching skills and knowledge added greatly to his educational experience.

He especially loved the camaraderie and diversity of the group. A native of Cuba, he bonded with his classmates—from all over the world—and went with 35 of them to Las Vegas to celebrate their graduation.

That closeness is one of the reasons Manrara is now a walking billboard for the program. “I would absolutely go back again,” he says. “It was challenging and interesting and such a wonderful experience.”

—Jeff Colford