

# LINK

KPCOM

Nova Southeastern University Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine





## CULTURAL COMPETENCY ON DISPLAY IN JAMAICA

Following a three-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) students and faculty members were excited to return to Jamaica on December 9–17 to provide vital medical outreach to the people of St. Mary.

The 41 members of the health care team comprised an interprofessional mix from NSU's Health Professions Division, including 4 physicians, 16 medical students, 1 optometrist, 1 physical therapist, 2 occupational therapists and 2 occupational therapy students, 1 pharmacist and 4 pharmacy students, and 10 volunteers. The team, which created makeshift clinics in four churches, treated more than 700 patients during its stay.

The students appreciated the opportunity to apply the medical skills they've learned in class and utilize their osteopathic manipulative medicine skills to reduce discomfort for patients suffering with ailments such as back, knee, and shoulder pain. "It was an incredible privilege to work alongside the KPCOM faculty members, as well as the students and faculty members from other HPD programs," said second-year student Maya Barrant.

"During the journey to becoming a physician, we often end up so secluded and focused on our own discipline that we rarely get time to interact and learn about what our colleagues in other fields are doing," she continued. "This was an invaluable experience to be able to talk with the students and faculty members in the pharmacy, optometry, occupational therapy, and physical therapy programs."

Second-year student Brandon Phillips echoed Barrant's comments and discussed a medical outreach trip highlight that impacted him the most. "One of the biggest lessons reinforced on this trip was cultural competency. Every night, we discussed the importance of this skill in navigating patient compliance and follow-up," he explained.

"Through social, economic, cultural, and communication differences, the relationship between physicians and their patients can often break down, and some treatments can even become barriers unto themselves," he added. "The cultural education I received from this trip was invaluable, and watching the doctors interact with the patients highlighted the fact that, while the language of medicine is universal to other medical practitioners, cultural competency is mandatory for patient compliance and crucial in establishing a positive relationship needed for doctor-patient follow-up."

Although the pandemic caused a three-year pause in the longest-running international outreach expedition in KPCOM history—the venerable medical outreach program celebrated its 20th year of service to appreciative Jamaicans. ■

### COVER IMAGE

*The health care team created makeshift clinics in four churches and treated more than 700 patients.*

# HIGHLIGHTS



## GALÁPAGOS ODYSSEY PROVIDES UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

For the students who participated in the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine's December 3-10 medical outreach trip to the Galápagos Islands in Ecuador, the experience was a memorable one. "Having the opportunity to participate was absolutely incredible. The culture, wildlife, and people were beautiful," said third-year student Marianne Cortes.

"One of my favorite aspects was being able to see the pathologies native to the island, as well as learning how to treat the people with the resources available," she added. "I feel very grounded and humbled from my experience in Ecuador and highly encourage those who have not gone on a medical outreach trip to experience one if they can."

The Galápagos excursion included 25 participants, including 10 first-year medical students, 5 third-year medical students, 2 doctoral-level mental health counselors/therapists, a registered nurse, an ophthalmologist, a neurologist, a family practice physician, a couple and family therapy student, and a director/logistician.

"We were primarily located in the town of Puerto Ayora on the southern part of the island of Santa Cruz, which is one of the four main inhabited islands of the Galápagos, which are 600 miles west of mainland Ecuador," said Jill Wallace-Ross, D.O., M.S., assistant professor of osteopathic principles and practice. "We saw 365 patients, and since

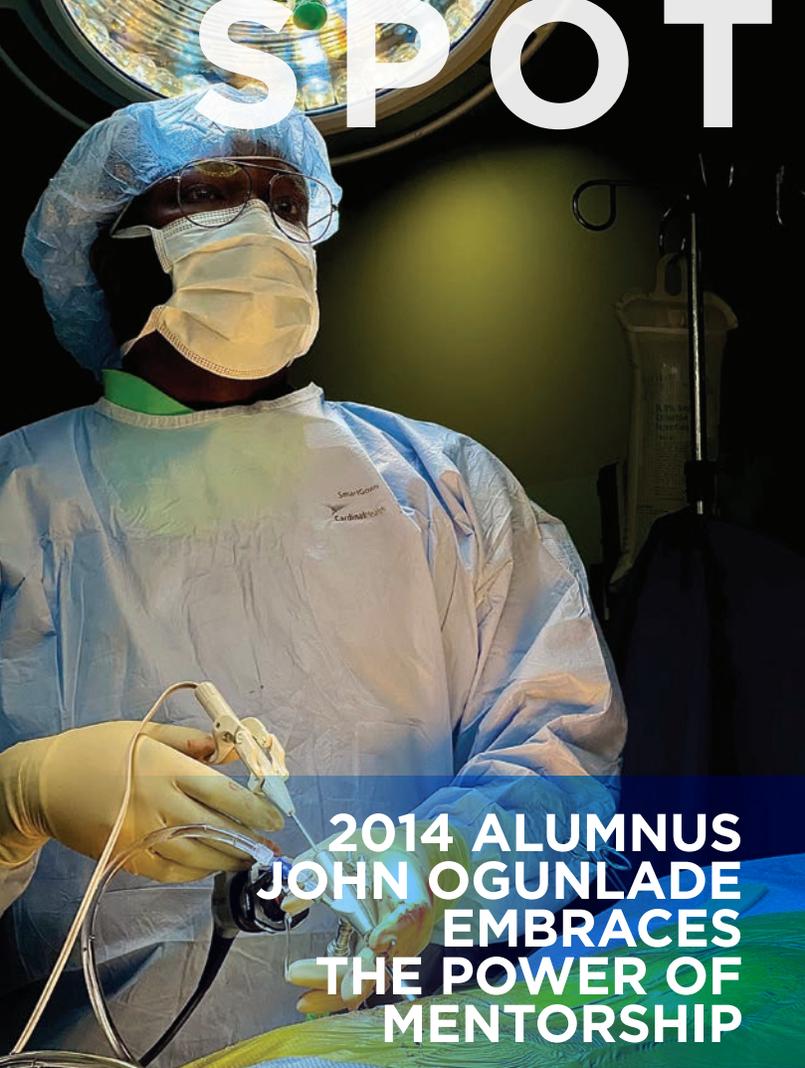
some of them saw more than one provider, we had a total of 593 health care-related visits."

According to Wallace-Ross, one specific case stood out—a seven-year-old girl who presented with a grade 5/6 heart murmur. Additionally, she had been suffering with nose bleeds, fatigue, and the inability to go to school at times. "Because we were very concerned for her well-being, we worked with our contacts to assist the family in getting to mainland Ecuador to get a full cardiac assessment and have her nose bleeds checked out," Wallace-Ross explained.

"Thankfully, the pediatric cardiologist was able to determine that it was a rather benign murmur and that her nose bleeds were only due to anemia and not a more serious condition," she continued. "The goal is for us to be able to play soccer with this little girl when we return to the Galápagos this summer, and the doctor gave her the okay to do so." ■



# SPOTLIGHTS



## 2014 ALUMNUS JOHN OGUNLADE EMBRACES THE POWER OF MENTORSHIP

John Ogunlade, D.O., a class of 2014 Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) alumnus, is a thriving assistant professor of neurological and orthopedic surgery at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. It wasn't that long ago, however, when Ogunlade thought a career in medicine was beyond his reach.

"I did not have any early exposure to medicine, so I never thought I would be able to become a physician, much less a neurosurgeon," said Ogunlade, who hails from Miami Gardens, Florida. "I had a very strong interest in math and science, and I was very active in community service, so I aspired to bring those attributes together in some way."

Following in his family's footsteps, which included both parents obtaining their degrees from Nova Southeastern University (NSU) after emigrating from Nigeria to the United States in the early 1980s, Ogunlade attended NSU. He pursued his bachelor's degree in biology, while minoring in chemistry and psychology. He worked as many as three jobs at that time, including serving as an anatomy lab assistant at the now defunct NSU College of Medical Sciences.

It was during his time as an anatomy lab assistant that Ogunlade was introduced to the enduring power of mentorship, thanks to two NSU faculty members who now work for the KPCOM—Debra McNally, M.S., and Nicholas Lutfi, M.D., D.P.M., M.S.—who became treasured advisers. "Through their mentorship, I was connected to Dr. Gary Schwartz—a prominent orthopedic hand surgeon in South Florida—who gave me the opportunity to shadow him in his clinic," he said. "This change in my environment and exposure to medicine sparked my interest, and my mentors fanned that spark into a flame."

During his time as an anatomy lab assistant, one of Ogunlade's responsibilities was to care for the cadavers and assist with and perform special dissections. "I learned to perform craniectomies on the cadavers to meticulously remove the brain while preserving the neuroanatomy on both the brain and the cadaver, which stirred my interest in neuroanatomy," he explained. "With the support of my mentors, I was accepted into the KPCOM."

After graduating from the KPCOM in 2014, Ogunlade completed his neurosurgery residency at the Riverside University Health System Medical Center in Moreno Valley, California. In his current role as assistant professor of neurological and orthopedic surgery at the Washington University School of Medicine, he has been tasked with "building an endoscopic spine surgery program, which I am passionate about," said Ogunlade, who completed an endoscopic, minimally invasive surgery, and complex spine fellowship at the University of Washington in June 2022.

Because he's always been active in community service and witnessed firsthand the benefits of having caring mentors in his corner, Ogunlade is a fervent proponent of mentoring others. "In Nigerian culture, there is a saying, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' That sense of community has been imprinted on my personality and drives my motivation to help others," explained Ogunlade, who currently works closely with the Journey to Medicine mentorship program.

"Throughout my personal and professional pursuits, I have found help from unexpected allies, and I take pride in being able to pay it forward," Ogunlade concluded. ■



## DEEP CONNECTIONS FORMED DURING INDIA EXCURSION

During a 10-day visit to Ahwa, Gujarat, India, to participate in the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine's medical outreach trip to India last December, a dedicated corps of 20 medical students and 2 faculty members, as well as 2 physicians from India, provided health care to 1,340 patients at the Dr. Kiran C. Patel Multi-Specialty Hospital.

In the following excerpts from his article about his India experiences, which appeared in the college's *SGA Rounds* student magazine, second-year student Nisarg Shah shared how impactful the trip was for him on a range of levels.

**With the nearest hospital** being more than 43.5 miles away, we served as the closest medical institution many people from small villages and towns had access to. Being a Gujarati speaker myself, it was rewarding to be able to establish a deeper connection with the patients, which, in turn, enhanced our ability to provide care to those in need.

**Since consistent screenings and proper access** to health care were challenges this population faced, we often saw patients who presented with chronic illnesses and secondary, as well as tertiary, symptoms and signs. Diabetic patients often presented with diabetic foot ulcers and peripheral neuropathy, while patients with topical fungal infections often presented with diffuse rashes and scabs.

**Many patients were prescribed medications** to help treat their illnesses, but one regimen was prescribed more than anything else—reassurance. Many people did not know how to gauge what was happening, so they jumped to the worst-case scenario until proven otherwise.

**Many times, I would see patients'** shoulders drop and relax when we told them there was nothing concerning going on, and this would immediately change their mood. This also targeted any psychosomatic illnesses patients had. This is where I realized what the art of medicine truly meant.

**Being able to understand patients'** realities and emotions and tailor my care to fit my patients' needs elevated the quality of the service I provided. Sometimes, all it takes to treat patients is a conversation, and I am very grateful I learned this lesson early on in my medical career. ■

# ALUMNI

**Lauren Allen, D.O.**

('15), recently joined West Broward Surgical Specialists in Plantation, Florida. She has a clinical interest in hernia and breast procedures, as well as robotic and minimally invasive surgery.



**Anna Cabeca, D.O., FACOG**

('95), is a bestselling author of three books—*The Hormone Fix*, *Keto-Green 16*, and *MenuPause*. She also hosts *The Girlfriend Doctor* podcast and has personally developed natural products to help women balance hormones and thrive through menopause.



**Robert Coppola, D.O. ('17),**

who completed a neurology residency and is fellowship trained in neuroimmunology and multiple sclerosis care, joined the medical staff at Palm Beach Neurology in West Palm Beach, Florida. He specializes in the diagnosis and management of adults who have a variety of neurological disorders.



**Tyler Cymet, D.O., FACP,**

FACFP, FACHT ('88), is the new provost and vice president for institutional effectiveness at the proposed Maryland College of Osteopathic Medicine at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, which is scheduled to open in 2024. According to Cymet, it will be the first osteopathic medical school established in partnership with one of the historically Black colleges and universities. Additionally, he received a COVID-19 Osteopathic Hero Award in December from the American Osteopathic Foundation. The award honors health care professionals who proved invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic.



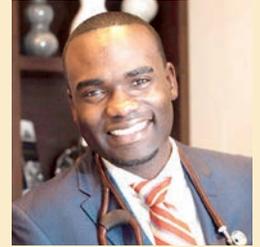
**Tiffany Sizemore Di**

**Pietro, D.O., FACC, FACOI** ('09), was elected chair of Florida's Board of Osteopathic Medicine in December 2022. The board is responsible for licensing, monitoring, disciplining, and educating osteopathic physicians to assure competency and safety to practice in Florida.



**Watson Ducatel, D.O.,**

M.P.H. ('11), was appointed to the Florida Board of Osteopathic Medicine by Governor Ron DeSantis. He also serves on the American College of Osteopathic Internists' Board of Directors.



**Steven Galkin, D.O. ('18),**

opened a direct primary care practice called Direct Adolescent Health in Baltimore, Maryland, which is focused on providing health care for children, teens, and young adults. The practice model allows for easy access to care and individualized care for patients.



**Lisa Gwynn, D.O., M.B.A.,**

M.S.P.H., FAAP ('98), received the Inspiring Women of Health Award from the Health Foundation of South Florida on March 23. The award is presented to women who have demonstrated leadership, commitment, vision, and passion in their efforts to ensure everyone in South Florida has an opportunity to live a healthy life.



**Gregory James, D.O.,**

M.P.H., FACFP *dist.* ('90), was elected chair of the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians (AOBFP). James, who has served on the AOBFP Board of Directors since 2004, received his fellowship and distinguished fellowship designations from the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians.



# ACHIEVEMENTS

**Elyse Julian, D.O., FAAD** ('15), recently opened a private practice in Plantation, Florida, called Leading Edge Dermatology, which will focus on adult and pediatric dermatology, as well as Mohs surgery.



**Randy S. Katz, D.O., FACEP** ('99), was promoted to the position of district medical director of emergency services at Memorial Healthcare System—one of the largest public health care systems in the United States. He was also named chief medical officer for the City of Hollywood, Florida, and provides consultation to city leadership on medical issues.



**David Magness, D.O., M.B.A., FCOFP** ('09), current vice president of the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians, was promoted to the position of Premise Health medical director of the Center for Living Well—EPCOT location, which oversees medical operations for the primary care office that takes care of Walt Disney World cast members, spouses, and children.



**Ravin Patel, D.O.** ('20), matched at Penn State University, where he will complete a fellowship in sports medicine.



**Brett Scotch, D.O.** ('99), was installed as president of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) for the 2023–24 term on March 4 at the FOMA Live Convention held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.



**Gregory A. Williams, D.O., FAAFP** ('92), was appointed to the Board of Osteopathic Medicine by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. Williams is a fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians and a clinical assistant professor at Florida State University College of Medicine.



## IN MEMORIAM

**Walter (Dan) Lehnhoff, D.O.**, a class of 2002 alumnus, passed away on February 10 at his home in Connecticut at the age of 48 following a hard-fought battle with brain cancer. He enjoyed a fulfilling career, which included working as a hospitalist team member at the Hospital of Central Connecticut since 2005.

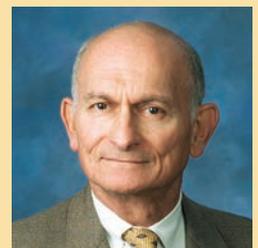


**Stephen J. Niles, D.O.**, a class of 1988 graduate, passed away on December 28 in Melbourne, Florida, at the age of 68. Niles, who enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the U.S. Air Force, practiced family medicine at numerous health care facilities throughout the Air Force and held multiple command roles.



## NEWS OF NOTE

**Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H.**, who served as the KPCOM's associate dean of research and innovation from 1999 through 2016, passed away on February 21 at his home in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, at the age of 87.



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### ESTABLISH A SCHOLARSHIP OR PROGRAMMING ENDOWMENT

With a minimum gift of \$25,000, which can be paid over multiple years, individuals or companies can establish an endowed fund to support the general operations, student scholarships, research projects, or outfit a space/area with the latest technology. Endowed funds can be named for the donor, the donor's family or business, or in memory of a loved one.

### NAME A ROOM, LAB, OR COMMON AREA IN THE NEW SIMULATION COMPLEX (SimCom)

Individuals can name a specific room, lab, training space, or common area in the SimCom for themselves or a loved one. Companies interested in branding their business or product in a high-traffic area can secure a naming opportunity for up to five years.

### LEAVE A LEGACY

Leaving a legacy gift is simple and, in most cases, does not impact your current financial situation. We accept gifts of life insurance, retirement assets, and bequests. Our advancement professionals will work with you (and your legal and financial advisers, when appropriate) to create a philanthropic plan customized for you.

All gifts to NSU are tax-deductible and can be customized. You will be provided a receipt for your records.

### Interested in Partnering?

Contact: Shannon Wayte, CFRE  
[Shannon.Wayte@nova.edu](mailto:Shannon.Wayte@nova.edu) / C: (954) 529-6776

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**Connect** with fellow graduates, **expand** your professional network, employ or offer **mentorship**, and **stay engaged** with your KPCOM community.

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