

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
COM Outlook SPRING 2020

DR. KIRAN C. PATEL COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

NANCY KLIMAS, M.D.
Fighting the Good Fight

PAGE 8



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ON THE COVER: Nancy Klimas, M.D., has shifted research gears throughout her medical career to benefit soldiers (such as those who served during Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield); patients with AIDS, ME/CFS, and other neuro-immune challenges; and fellow researchers and clinicians. Pictured, from left, are members of the INIM team: Maria Vera-Nunez, M.D., M.S.; Irma Rey, M.D.; Alison Bested, M.D.; and Irina Rozenfeld, M.S.N., A.P.R.N.

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“Moments of Greatness: Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership,” written by Robert E. Quinn, is the ninth chapter in a book I’m currently reading called *On Managing Yourself*, published by Harvard Business Review books.

In this fascinating chapter, Quinn introduces the concept that “leaders do their best work when they don’t copy anyone. Instead, they draw on their own fundamental values and

capabilities, operating in a frame of mind that is true to them yet, paradoxically, not their normal state of being.” He calls it the fundamental state of leadership.

Quinn says it is the way leaders lead when they encounter a crisis and finally choose to move forward. In my strong desire to thank everyone involved in building, and then opening, the new Tampa Bay Regional Campus, I realized this is what I consistently saw in everyone who worked together to successfully make the campus a reality.

Elaine Wallace and I, through the wonderful support from NSU administrators George Hanbury II, Harry Moon, Fred Lippman, Irv Rosenbaum, and many others, consistently worked the problem at hand by entering the fundamental state of leadership—not always knowing what to do next, but facing each crisis and moving forward. All the Nova Southeastern University vice presidents, deans, directors, and faculty and staff members were amazingly dedicated and generous as they also moved forward after each crisis became obvious.

Drs. Kiran C. and Pallavi Patel, M.D.s, also entered the fundamental state of leadership and helped move us all forward to success. We are humbled and extremely grateful for everyone who helped us move forward.

Quinn’s chapter ended with him saying, “We can learn the value of challenging ourselves in this way—a painful process, but one with great potential to make a positive impact on the people and us.”

To all of you at the KPCOM, thank you for all you do. Go Sharks!

Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG

Executive Associate Dean

Tampa Bay Regional Campus

Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine



The new year began with some exciting news—the establishment of the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Veterans Access Clinic, which is providing much-needed opportunities for veterans and their families to receive health care services that are unavailable at various South Florida VA medical center clinics. We are now providing care to this patient population through our full spectrum of health care clinics available throughout the Health Professions Division (HPD) and other programs at the university.

We are thankful to the governor's office and the Florida legislature for providing NSU with significant initial funding for this initiative. Our goal is to justify that ongoing annual funding to NSU for this enterprise is pivotal to providing vital health care services to these great American heroes and their families.

In addition to the creation of the NSU Veterans Access Clinic, the university is set to launch another major initiative—NSU Health—which is being led by Harry Moon, M.D., NSU executive vice president and chief operating officer, to enhance and consolidate the myriad health care clinics that are overseen by NSU's Division of Clinical Operations.

Preliminary discussions are underway for the repurposing of the 82,000-square-foot Dolphins Training Facility, which will become available within the next year or so when the Dolphins move to a new site in Miami Gardens, Florida. The overarching goal is to create a collaborative facility for the provision of all our NSU clinical services.

For example, a patient at one of the College of Optometry clinics can be referred to other NSU clinical services in the same building if evidence of cardiac or diabetic disease is observed during a routine eye exam. This upcoming consolidation will provide a multiplicity of collaborative opportunities to better serve NSU's large patient population.

The creation of NSU Health, and the consolidation of clinical services to the repurposed facility, will also allow us to revamp the Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center building and utilize it in a more efficient way. For instance, it will allow us to provide additional student health services to our growing student population and provide desperately needed space for the expansion of the College of Dental Medicine.

I commend the administration and the NSU Board of Trustees for supporting NSU President George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., in creating a new paradigm of health care service that will offer the type of all-encompassing care patients both want and expect from their health care providers.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Frederick Lippman".

Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.
Chancellor, Special Projects
Health Professions Division



Left: B.S. in Public Health students Joshua Dela Fuente and Jasenia Beckford volunteer with the American Red Cross in New Orleans to teach elementary school students how to prepare for natural disasters. • Right: Melissa Boguslawski, Ph.D., M.P.H., assistant professor of public health, top row, in middle, and public health student Sohil Parmar, top row, right, with elementary school students in Ahwa, India, after educating them on proper sneezing and coughing prevention and proper hand-washing techniques.

CHALLENGE

KPCOM UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS
MEET HEALTH CARE DEMANDS



BY JOEY GARCIA, B.S.



Left: B.S. in Human Nutrition students prepare acai bowls during the monthly Teaching Kitchen class in partnership with NSU Shark Dining. • Right: The B.S. in Public Health and B.S. in Human Nutrition programs join first-year KPCOM osteopathic students and faculty members in networking and mentorship socials throughout the year.

How does one improve upon success? NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM), with its two campus locations, has become a model in academics and community impact. The KPCOM boasts a D.O. program in its 40th year, five master's degrees, and seven certificate programs, making it the largest medical school in Florida.

The only missing piece? A platform that fills the need for more undergraduate programs, provides a vertical integration to graduate education, and meets the growing demands of health care professionals. The idea stemmed from George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and chief executive officer, and his

Vision 2020 campaign for NSU to become a premier university.

Phyllis Filker, D.M.D., M.P.H., associate dean of undergraduate, graduate, and community education, helped answer the call by leading an effort to establish three bachelor's degree programs—in public health, human nutrition, and health and wellness coaching—all within a three-year time span.

“The purpose for the establishment of the three bachelor's programs and an accelerated option of the dual D.O. degree admission is to meet the increased demands for a competent health care workforce,” Filker said. “All three of these majors are interdisciplinary in nature and are conducive to an undergraduate curriculum, giving

students an opportunity to apply core concepts to myriad fields in health care, business, or industry.”

Public Health in Action

The fall 2017 semester welcomed the first of the KPCOM undergraduate programs with the Bachelor of Science in Public Health. The program builds upon the success of the Master of Science in Public Health program, introduced in 1994.

The KPCOM used mentorship opportunities with its faculty members and first-year D.O. students to better connect the new class with the college and develop a sense of accountability. B.S. in Public Health students are also able to get involved with



leadership roles in student associations and partake in annual medical outreach trips, further incorporating a balance of classroom and community.

“Not only is the faculty some of the most supportive

public health student leaders are driven young professionals who are passionate about impacting our community and the world. They take pride in their efforts and will be the faces of public health in the decade to come.”

From majors and minors, gateways to graduate and physician careers, or even as stand-alone courses, the college’s undergraduate division has created a solid foundation that can take on as many roles as the students see fit.

and academically inclined population here at NSU, but the entire program fosters a real-world and out-of-the-classroom approach,” said third-year student Jhanvi Patel. “Whether it’s discussing some of the nation’s most pressing epidemics in a public health seminar or bringing awareness about what is going on in the world around us, we are constantly learning and being provoked to learn with not just a textbook-based approach.”

Kristi Messer, M.S.W., M.P.H., Bachelor of Science in Public Health director, saw the program grow from 20 students in the major to more than 150 by the fall 2019 semester, while adding 50 students in the minor program.

“This growth is a direct reflection of faculty members’ mentorship and the values embraced by our college,” Messer said. “Our

Nutrition Needs

With the undergraduate blueprint mapped out, the KPCOM was able to incorporate its experience two years later into the Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition program. Since its fall 2019 debut, the new degree program has doubled its enrollment goal—a good problem to have, according to Stephanie Petrosky, M.H.A., RDN, FAND, nutrition department chair.

“For the inaugural term, all three sections offered in the program were filled to capacity, prompting the program faculty to expedite the curriculum offerings in the subsequent terms,” Petrosky said. “As campus awareness of the program grows, there is definitely a lot of energy and excitement from students who want to explore the benefits

of nutrition as the foundation of health and wellness.”

Raphaela Garces, a second-year student who is starting a nutrition club, attributes her pride in being in the program to its ability to conform to the students’ needs. “In my opinion, being part of the inaugural class is a privilege,” she said. “Luckily, I have a nice relationship with the faculty members, because I met with many of them several times last year in order to create my four-year plan even before the program opened. I am extremely thankful to them for being so supportive and helpful, especially during class registration.”

Much like the B.S. in Public Health, students take advantage of how interactive the major can be. “The KPCOM is engaged at a high level within the university and presents the opportunity for its students to get the most out of their college experience through innovative courses, unique hands-on experience, and networking with distinguished health care providers,” Petrosky said.

One of these methods is the Teaching Kitchen—a partnership with Shark Dining and Publix Aprons Cooking School where students make healthy recipes each month while learning the nutritional components.

Future Outlooks

The college continues to advance its undergraduate outreach with the upcoming

addition of two degrees. First is the Bachelor of Science in Health and Wellness Coaching (HAWC). The program, which will launch in fall 2020 in collaboration with NSU's College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS), will allow students to continue their education into an accelerated D.O. program, along with the option for dual admission into the CAHSS's Master of Science in Family Therapy program.

"This degree prepares students for health professions careers," said Arlene Brett Gordon, Ph.D., LMFT, director of the CAHSS's Brief Therapy Institute. "There are many distinct, inviting aspects and advantages for applicants interested in working directly with people to support their health and wellness."

The HAWC program is expected to enroll 15 students, with the expectation to increase each semester, as the health care field is projected to see an 11 percent increase in job demand from 2018–2028 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

As the KPCOM looks beyond Vision 2020, it will incorporate its fourth undergraduate program. In collaboration with NSU's College of Computing and Engineering, the pending Bachelor of Science in Health Informatics will allow graduates to tackle the latest in medical technology and data. From majors and minors, gateways to graduate and physician careers, or even as stand-alone courses, the college's undergraduate division



From left: Phyllis Filker; Kristi Messer; and Ioana Scripa, Ph.D., RDN, LDN, director of the Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition program

has created a solid foundation that can take on as many roles as the students see fit.

"The KPCOM has intentionally structured the undergraduate degrees to academically complement each other and offer curricular flexibility within the programs," Messer said.

"My hope is that more KPCOM students take advantage of the natural synergy that exists between the academic programs, with an increasing number of students declaring major and minor configurations within the college's undergraduate options." □

SHIFTING GEARS

NANCY KLIMAS FULFILLS MEDICAL DESTINY

BY JOEY GARCIA, B.S.

shift gears \ˈʃift ˈɡɪrz\

phrase : to start thinking or acting in a new way, especially more quickly than before

With stories and features in everything from ABC News to *The Washington Post*, millions of dollars in grants, and hundreds of publications, it's no surprise that Nancy Klimas, M.D., wears many hats throughout Nova Southeastern University (NSU), including clinician, educator, politician, and researcher. She also serves as director of three departments, including the NSU Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine (INIM), along with being the assistant dean of research at the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM).

The Power of Rosie

If you were to ask Klimas at a young age if she ever envisioned such a fulfilling life in medicine, the answer would have been an emphatic yes. This assertion can be traced to a supportive system that surrounded Klimas, who grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the aftermath of World War II.

"I knew I wanted to be a doctor as a small child," Klimas recalled. "My mom encouraged this. It was her unfulfilled dream—a result of postwar Rosie the Riveter assuming the duties of a 1950s housewife. But it was my dream, too, and I used to craft doctor's tools, including stethoscopes and hammers, out of tree branches and shale, which I used to examine all the dogs and cats."

Klimas, the fifth of six children, grew up in the typical American-dream lifestyle many Americans experienced after the war. Her father, Charles Vincent Klimas, was a loving and involved parent with an engineering background, while Klimas's mother, Mary Grace, stayed home to raise the children in a setting that seemed like a scene from *Leave It to Beaver*.

Reality Intervenes

Like all shows, there are joyful moments shared, followed by family hardships. When Klimas was in the third grade, her father developed a brain tumor, causing the family to move from Pittsburgh to northern Virginia, where her mother was able to find work as a lab technician. The passing of Klimas's father when she was in ninth

(continued on page 10)



*Nancy Klimas, M.D.
Immune Medicine*



“

**I knew I wanted to be a
doctor as a small child.”**

—NANCY KLIMAS

(continued from page 8)

grade wasn't the first time death took its toll on the household, as her older sister died of leukemia six weeks after Klimas was born. These tragedies fueled Klimas's fire for medicine during her formative years.

Klimas demonstrated her usefulness by developing new skills in the kitchen and learning mechanics. She also grew determined to find innovative ways to spend her time—a mindset Klimas continues to apply today in her personal life and in her many medical roles.

"I think my early experience with compassionate doctors taking care of my dad did influence me, as did the awe he conveyed as a scientist himself at the early surgeons who used his open brain during surgery to help map out the brain," Klimas said.

Pink Cards, Blue Cards

Having your mind made up careerwise is one thing; overcoming a male-dominated profession is another. Thankfully, from a young age, Klimas was surrounded by her brothers, Chuck and Bill, whose rambunctious ways instilled in Klimas a tomboy mentality that would soon pay off. Her mother also encouraged Klimas's career path in medicine.

"One story I remember involved my mom being a hero. My high school counselor told me that girls could not be doctors, and that the available premed scholarships were only for boys. He pulled out his index-card box of scholarships for girls, which were pink, and handed me



Nancy Klimas performs a comprehensive examination on a patient.

nursing school applications," Klimas explained.

"I told my mom, and she was at my school the next morning," she continued. "I sat outside the counselor's office and heard some shouting and crashing, and then my mom marched out. The counselor called me in as he was picking up all of the scholarship index cards, pink and blue in a tumble, and handed me the information for premed scholarships."

Upon graduation from Annandale High School in 1972, Klimas's higher education pursuits and soon-to-be involvement in feminism took root. Klimas split her undergraduate career, first at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, before transferring to the University of South Florida in Tampa, where scenes of hippie coffee clubs and feminist communities

offered respite during Klimas's premed days.

Klimas viewed her undergraduate days as weird at times, as hundreds of men and only a few women surrounded her in her classes. Nevertheless, she excelled, with physics, microbiology, and writing being her favorite subjects. When it was time to consider medical school applications, Klimas saw the University of Miami (UM) as the perfect fit. The university embraced Klimas from her initial interview, which she came to wearing a ripped feminist T-shirt, frayed cutoffs, and flip-flops.

Still, medical school reminded Klimas of the gap between her and her male peers. From being told her acceptance took the spot of qualified males, to being 1 of only 12 women in her classes, Klimas was determined to not let the negatives get in the way of her medical journey.

(continued on page 12)



“We stuck together, and more importantly, the very few female faculty members stuck up for us. There were lectures with nude women tucked among the slides and lots of tasteless pranks by a small handful of men. But the female faculty members, led by Janet Canterbury, Ph.D., and Mary Ann Fletcher, Ph.D., dealt with the discrimination. Very quickly, things changed for the better.”

—NANCY KLIMAS

Clockwise from top left: Klimas with daughter Cady; Klimas enjoys a moment with her daughter Ellie; Klimas's daughters (from left) Casey, Cady, and Ellie; Klimas, center, with her UM professors Janet Canterbury, left, and Mary Ann Fletcher at the wedding of Klimas's daughter Ellie.

(continued from page 10)

“We stuck together, and more importantly, the very few female faculty members stuck up for us,” Klimas said. “There were lectures with nude women tucked among the slides and lots of tasteless pranks by a small handful of men. But the female faculty members, led by Janet Canterbury, Ph.D., and Mary Ann Fletcher, Ph.D., dealt with the discrimination. Very quickly, things changed for the better.”

Immunology Immersion

After Klimas earned her M.D. degree in 1980, her focus turned to expanding her medical knowledge. Having completed her pediatrics internship in 1981 at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, Klimas returned to UM to complete her residency in 1983 and her clinical immunology fellowship in 1984. The struggle Klimas’s mother faced with fibromyalgia led her down this path, while Fletcher’s mentorship furthered her journey.

During her fellowship, Klimas began working with what would soon be named HIV/AIDS, counting CD4 cells (white blood cells that fight infection as a major immune defense), and served as an instructor at UM. A big breakthrough came when the Bruce W. Carter Veterans Affairs Medical Center offered her a position, complete with a lab, mentors, and the opportunity to establish an HIV clinical and research program at the VA hospital. Her dream to work in immunology turned into reality.

Klimas’s early efforts resulted in the clinic being distinguished

as one of only three centers for excellence in HIV/AIDS—a gratifying accomplishment that saw her AIDS patients surviving to live healthier and longer lives by 1995. The University of Miami Clinical Immunology Lab also brought Klimas into the field of myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS)—the foundation for her future research.

“Most of these patients were women, and many had fibromyalgia and tremendous pain,” Klimas said. “But they also had autonomic dysfunction, cognitive problems, neuroendocrine issues, and immunologic dysfunction. This all pointed to the brain, and that was what brought me to neuroimmunology.”

Gaining an Edge

While UM set a solid foundation for Klimas as a clinician and researcher—including a tenured professorship, founding the International Association of ME/CFS, and being the director of the UM Diagnostic Immunology and Chronic Fatigue clinics—Klimas knew a change was needed for her future goals to flourish.

“While my generation made sure the next would see even more opportunities, we still have more to do to find equality in our job opportunities, our salaries, and the balance of our household responsibilities and relationships.”

—NANCY KLIMAS

“I decided that the University of Miami could not grow our research program in the direction we needed,” Klimas said. “I was looking for an institution that would let us break out of our silos—clinical care, research, and education—and adapt the program into something that allowed our team to be a part of an integrated format.”

Though various offers came close, it was at NSU in 2011 where Klimas was able to find a home that catered to her medical vision. Working at the KPCOM, Klimas found the college’s holistic principles of medicine and big-picture goals of cross-disciplinary medicine appealing. The next step involved creating a team that would carry out Klimas’s goals—a task she acknowledged would have been impossible without the support of philanthropist Robert Schemel in 2013.

“He grinned at me, said he would like to help support us, and offered us \$2 million,” Klimas recalled. “When I picked myself up off the floor, I found that we now had the funds to bring Fletcher’s group from UM to



Members of the Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine team gather for a group photo at NSU's Oceanographic Campus.

NSU, establish the INIM Discoveries to Diagnostics Laboratory, and endow her position.”

Klimas not only selected familiar clinicians and researchers from UM, but also brought in international personnel and experts from various educational backgrounds. Creating an institute with physicians, nurses, and STEM Ph.D.s would allow Klimas and the INIM to dive into various areas of medicine and diseases.

“One of the many things I am proud of is this amazing clinical group,” Klimas said. “Taking care of people with long-term, chronic, painful, and disabling diseases is taxing and takes a tremendous amount of compassion. That is the rootstock of this group. Proof of the team members’ ability to go and pursue the knowledge they need to be effective clinicians goes far beyond the research portfolio.”

Paying It Forward

Along with a renowned institute, Klimas has created a culture that revolves around the inclusion and continuous support

for women in medicine. In so doing, Klimas honors the strong role models, including her mother and several of her professors, who instilled in Klimas the importance of continuing to open doors for women in the field.

“I truly live by this rule,” Klimas explained. “While my generation made sure the next would see even more opportunities, we still have more to do to find equality in our job opportunities, our salaries, and the balance of our household responsibilities and relationships.”

Klimas lives her values by inviting and encouraging accomplished and up-and-coming female researchers to work on groundbreaking initiatives. Two of her former D.O. students, who happened to be women, helped design online platforms to aid in research. She also joined the American Medical Women’s Association to help women in the field network while giving back.

The current cohort of 62 male and female team members continues to make impressive strides in the INIM. Recent

FAST FACTS

NANCY KLIMAS, M.D.

Hometown

- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Education

- M.D., University of Miami
- Fellowship, University of Miami
- Residency, University of Miami
- Internship, Baylor University

Memorable Life Experiences

- kayaking the white waters of Virginia with FBI agents and Attorney General Janet Reno
- seeing every Cirque du Soleil show
- traveling to Australia, Japan, Kenya, New Zealand (her favorite), Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, and most of Europe
- being there when her granddaughter Callie was born, along with raising her daughters
- witnessing her AIDS patients surviving and living longer, healthier lives

institute accomplishments include an additional \$8.5 million awarded in 2018 to further the next phases of Gulf War illness research, implementing the next phases of ME/CFS research after years of fundraising, and continuing traditional research for various diseases.

“I hope I have established a long-lived institute, dedicated to advancing knowledge, translating science to care, and providing that care in a teaching environment that passes the same ideals on to the students of the KPCOM,” Klimas concluded. □

METAL



PROGNOSIS

Trading Baseball Success for Surgical Ambitions

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

When fourth-year Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) student Tej Desai was born, his astrologist grandfather boldly predicted that Desai would excel in a career where metal would be his primary tool.

“My family took this to believe I would one day become a surgeon,” said Desai, whose dream job growing up was to become the general manager of his hometown Chicago White Sox baseball team. “However, I spent my childhood telling my family it meant I would be scouting baseball players who played with metal bats. Ironically, the tables have turned.”

Desai, who grew up in the northern suburbs of Chicago, Illinois, said he never had a desire to become a physician. “I had a fascination with numbers and the business of baseball growing up, and that is what led me to major in applied mathematics at Saint Louis University in Missouri,” he said.

Texas Home Run

Unlike those who dream of becoming a star player, Desai yearned to use his skills to assemble a Major League Baseball (MLB) team that could win the World Series. However, he soon learned that breaking into the industry is a challenging enterprise.

After earning his bachelor’s degree, “I had to network tirelessly,” Desai admitted. “I mailed my résumé to all 30 MLB teams and secured a handful of interviews during the annual Winter Meetings—an event that takes place every December and is publicized as a conference of baseball executives meeting to make trades and sign free agents. It also serves as an opportunity for teams to interview candidates for potential job openings, so I pitched my background to anybody who would listen.”

To his delight, Desai received a call from the Texas Rangers to work in the team’s baseball operations department starting in January 2015. “Working with the Rangers was a completely surreal experience,” he recalled. “I felt incredibly honored to live out my childhood dream. I worked on projects that ranged from looking at recovery times from a Tommy John surgery to analyzing potential free agent and trade acquisitions.”

While his day-to-day role mainly focused on analytics, Desai occasionally participated in scouting potential players. “The thing I enjoyed most

SIDELINE PASSION

After earning his bachelor's degree in May 2014, Desai spent a summer working in Washington, D.C., with the Hindu American Foundation—a political advocacy organization that advocates for the rights of minority religious groups. “I had the opportunity to work, and attend meetings, with organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union,” said Desai, who also interacted with several politicians, including Tulsi Gabbard, a 2020 presidential candidate and congressional representative from Hawaii.

“When I applied for my political advocacy internship, I was just another fourth-year college student looking for postgraduate employment,” he explained. “My grandfather found the program and told me I should look into it. A few interviews later, I got the job.”

During his time with the Hindu American Foundation, Desai tackled issues that misrepresented Hindu Americans in society. One such example involved collaborating with public education officials on how social studies textbooks grossly misrepresented Hindu philosophies.

“What really stood out to me, however, was our work highlighting the plight of Hindu refugees in South Asia,” he said. “This was actually my first avenue to medicine, as I found that physicians from our organization were going overseas to provide care for this disadvantaged group. It was during this time that I became passionate about outreach work in developing countries, as I witnessed socioeconomic disparities firsthand.”



Clockwise from top left: Tej Desai, holding his younger brother Dev, enjoys the 1999 holiday season with his cousin Avni Patel; Desai's love of baseball started early, which is evidenced by the Chicago White Sox pants he's wearing in this photo; Desai with his parents Yash and Jay Desai at the 2016 KPCOM White Coat Ceremony.

was that I worked with a very dynamic group that included some of the most forward-thinking people I have met,” he said. “To make a strong playoff run, our group constantly looked for ways to improve, whether it be through in-game strategy or player acquisition via free agency or trades. Overall, we made a strong push and ended up winning our division that year.”

Despite the satisfaction he derived from achieving his lifelong ambition, Desai realized something significant was amiss. “During my time with the Rangers, I felt lucky to be there,” he said. “However, even though it was an industry I grew up idolizing, I felt unfulfilled.”

Desai found himself reflecting fondly on the work he had done with the Hindu American Foundation shortly after graduating college (see sidebar). “I knew there would be no job more gratifying than being able to serve those who needed help the most,” he explained. “I wanted to refocus my career on global outreach, so I decided that medicine would be the perfect avenue to do so. Although my journey into baseball was an unorthodox path, it allowed me to reflect on and ensure I would have no regrets about going into medicine.”

Surgical Home Run

When it came time to choose a medical school, Nova Southeastern University's KPCOM stood out for its renowned international medical outreach programs and opportunities to earn a dual Master of Public

EMBRACING THE FUTURE

According to Desai, urology is a very specialized field, so there is a substantial need for genitourinary care from both a domestic and international perspective. “I hope to pursue a fellowship in pediatric urology or genitourinary reconstruction and practice within an academic setting once I complete my residency training,” he said. “My final goal is to lead long-term, sustainable outreach camps in third-world countries that work to establish and maintain comprehensive care for those in need.”

Desai, who will begin his urology residency at The University of Texas at San Antonio in July, also hopes to use his background in applied mathematics to conduct research using big data in global urology. “Big data is becoming a hot topic in urology, and it’s ironic that I was able to find a field that combines my experience in baseball analytics and interest in public health to work on improving population health outcomes,” he said.

Health (M.P.H.) degree. “Because of my interest in global outreach, I was targeting programs that allowed me to concurrently pursue an M.P.H. The KPCOM’s subsidized program for medical students gave me the perfect avenue to pursue this,” Desai said.

“During my first year at the KPCOM, I was able to participate in the India medical outreach trip, where we worked with medical professionals in a village hospital setting,” added Desai, who also enjoyed the selective rotations he did in India and Argentina. He also enjoyed his new U.S. home base. “Coming from Chicago, I also wanted a new experience. I had previously lived in a few cities in the Midwest, as well as in Washington, D.C., and Texas. It was hard to beat the beaches and beautiful South Florida weather.”

With his four-year KPCOM journey culminating in May at the graduation ceremony, Desai is making good on his grandfather’s prognostication that metal will be the primary tool he uses in his career. “I have

chosen to pursue urological surgery, as it aligns very closely with my future endeavors,” he explained.

During his clinical rotations, Desai worked with a group of pediatric urologists in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who host a bladder exstrophy camp in India every year. “They have created a model that treats children with this congenital abnormality and trains Indian surgeons at the same time,” he said. “Being able to do something like this was the reason I chose to leave baseball for medicine. It also combines my passions for public health and global outreach.” □

Desai hones his osteopathic manipulative treatment skills.



india

Students Savor International Medical Outreach Experiences

The college's annual medical outreach trip to India, held December 7–19, allowed 47 Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) students and a mix of Nova Southeastern University faculty and staff members to provide health care services to more than 1,000 patients. In addition to D.O. students from the Fort Lauderdale/Davie and Tampa Bay Regional campuses, nine students from the KPCOM's Bachelor of Science in Public Health program had the opportunity to participate in the humanitarian effort.

In the following accounts, three students recap their insights.

initiative

INSIGHTFUL EXCURSION

BY CHARLES DE LA ROSA

It is common for first- and second-year medical students to lack hands-on experience with actual patients. This is due to the purely academic nature of the first two preclinical years of medical school. However, medical outreach trips are a great way to gain hands-on experience with actual patients who are in dire need of medical attention.

Students who embark on a medical outreach trip are expected to be team players and help wherever they can. In India, students were separated into different stations each day, including pharmacy, triage, osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM), and clinical.

In the pharmacy station, students were exposed to a variety of drugs used to treat different illnesses. In the triage station, students obtained vital signs and made an initial evaluation based on acuity. At the OMM station, patients were treated for symptoms ranging from back pain to headaches. At the clinic stations, students were able to interview patients, perform physical exams, and provide differential diagnoses with the help of the attending physician.

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“In India, students were separated into different stations each day, including pharmacy, triage, osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM), and clinical.”

—CHARLES DE LA ROSA

Medical outreach trips not only allow you to translate what is learned in class to medical practice, but they also let you see how a basic clinic functions with its many individual stations—each as important as the other. The patients at each station are also important, and the impact students had on the people of Ahwa is both a psychological and physical one. Many times, patients just wanted to be heard and given some vitamins to take home. Other times, patients suffered from acute illnesses we were able to treat.

By using the biopsychosocial model, students were able to treat patients holistically for a variety of complaints. Students who choose to go on outreach trips for the medical experience typically do so because of the rewarding nature of helping others. As future osteopathic physicians, it is not only our passion, but also our duty to help those in underserved areas.

(continued on page 20)



First-year student Charles De La Rosa performs osteopathic manipulative treatment on a female patient.



First-year student Michelle X. Wu checks a patient's heartbeat.

EXPLORING RULES OF THUMB

BY MICHELLE X. WU

While Ahwa, a rural village in Gujarat, is known to be one of the most economically distressed districts in India, I couldn't help but admire the residents' contentment regarding their way of living. "We boil our laundry water once. We boil our water for food twice," is their rule of thumb.

Upon arriving, we were told that bottled water and Pepto-Bismol were our best friends, and that even brushing our teeth with tap water could be detrimental to our health. Ironically, as we cruised around the steep hills of Ahwa, children jumped out of their houses to greet us with the biggest grins on their faces.

During clinic downtimes, I spent time talking to local citizens. Gujarat residents are very conservative and family oriented, much more so than what we experience in the United States. As patients told their stories, I could see their eyes sparkle as they spoke about their children.

Body language and hand gestures are also a big part of their lives. Shaking their heads could represent "yes,"

"Upon arriving, we were told that bottled water and Pepto-Bismol were our best friends, and that even brushing our teeth with tap water could be detrimental to our health. Ironically, as we cruised around the steep hills of Ahwa, children jumped out of their houses to greet us with the biggest grins on their faces."

—MICHELLE X. WU

"no," "thank you," or a simple acknowledgment of your presence. This cultural experience not only provided me with insight on their ethnic inclusiveness, but it also showed me how they still emanate kindness during the most arduous moments.

PAVING YOUR PATH

BY TIMOTHY P. CROWE

“How much can I do? I’m only a medical student.” As I prepared for the trip, these thoughts lingered in my mind.

When the first day of clinic began, I, along with my classmates, felt nervous about whether we knew enough to help. During medical outreach trips, volunteers are morally responsible for practicing within scope (i.e., only practicing procedures we are trained in). As a first-year student, I only had one semester of knowledge and basic physical exam skills, so I was apprehensive about my potential during the first few hours. Up until that point, I had only taken the vital signs of classmates and family members.

Day one started out slow and chaotic. Students were grouped into teams of five or six. Many students worked individually but didn’t communicate, resulting in clinic-flow delays. However, by the afternoon, hardheaded students—myself included—adapted and transformed into efficient team members.

Fueled by the productivity, our student teams began to thrive, and the clinic ran smoothly. The confidence boost over the week was evident, as students took pediatric blood pressures, blood glucose readings on diabetic patients, and the temperatures of toddlers who were

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“By the end of the trip, and after evaluating more than 1,000 patients, we realized how much we do actually know—and have the potential to do—as future health care providers.”

—TIMOTHY P. CROWE

thermometerphobic. By the end of the trip, and after evaluating more than 1,000 patients, we realized how much we do actually know—and have the potential to do—as future health care providers.

Medical outreach trips provide a unique opportunity to grow as both a student and as an individual outside the classroom. There

will always be more facts to memorize, but there are also certain clinical skills that require ongoing maintenance and care. As we work toward our clinical years, we must set time aside from the books to practice confidence, communication skills, and providing reassurance to our patients. □



First-year student Timothy P. Crowe examines a patient.

Timothy Crowe, Charles De La Rosa, and Michelle Wu are first-year KPCOM students.

HOWARD NEER

HONORING A LEADER AND BENEFACTOR

In the early morning hours of November 24, the osteopathic profession and NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) lost a beloved leader when Howard Neer, D.O., FACOFP, passed away at the age of 90. During a career overflowing with accomplishment, Neer spent nearly seven decades furthering the cause of osteopathic medicine both statewide and nationally.

After graduating in 1954 from the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine, Neer became an impactful leader and was named president of the Broward County Osteopathic Medical Association in 1960. Two years later, he helped found Doctors General Hospital in Plantation, Florida.

When the hospital was sold in 1986, a significant portion of the proceeds was used to establish Doctors Hospital Foundation, with funds earmarked to benefit future generations of osteopathic physicians. During the ensuing years, the foundation donated approximately \$10 million to the KPCOM to fund all aspects related to osteopathic student education.

Neer enjoyed helping students realize their potential so much, he joined the KPCOM team in 1992. During his time as an NSU administrator, he served as associate dean of clinical affairs, followed by associate dean of alumni affairs, and finally as executive associate dean for professional affairs for the entire Health Professions Division. □

AWARD HIGHLIGHTS

- 1986** Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine Distinguished Service Award
- 1997** Florida Osteopathic Association Physician of the Year Award
- 2001** American Osteopathic Foundation Horizon Award
- 2001** Florida Society of the American College of Family Physicians Lifetime Achievement Award
- 2007** Florida Osteopathic Medical Association Lifetime Achievement Award
- 2007** NSU Health Professions Division Distinguished Service Award
- 2016** Broward County Osteopathic Medical Association Lifetime Achievement Award



Howard Neer (left) and Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D., M.S., FACOFP dist., FCPP, KPCOM dean emeritus, at NSU's 2014 commencement ceremony



Neer with daughter Cindy Burkey (left) and wife Gloria



Neer (center) receives the 2007 NSU HPD Distinguished Service Award from Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D., HPD chancellor/special projects (left), and Ray Ferrero, Jr., J.D., NSU chancellor.



“

I got interested in osteopathic medicine after I began playing high-school football. I was 6'3" but only weighed 155 pounds. Because I was skinny as a rail, I got beat up pretty badly and kept dislocating my shoulder and experiencing back sprains. My dad sent me to a D.O. who would fix me up in one treatment, but then two weeks later, I'd be back with another injury. When it kept happening, I decided to give up my football career. But that exposure got me interested in osteopathic medicine, and that's when I decided to become a D.O.”

—HOWARD NEER



RISK EQUALS REWARD

FORENSIC ARCHAEOLOGIST TRANSITIONS TO STUDENT PHYSICIAN

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

As a child growing up in a tight-knit historical neighborhood in Jacksonville, Florida, Kelsey Reinsch, M.S., embraced her creative side, which she felt precluded her from ever pursuing a career in law or medicine.

“Both of my parents were lawyers, so I knew I definitely did not want to go into law, but I never entertained the idea of becoming a physician either,” said Reinsch, a first-year student at the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) at the new Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Tampa Bay Regional Campus. “The idea of becoming a doctor didn’t really occur to me until I was in my mid-20s.”

Reinsch’s fondest childhood memories revolved around the house she grew up in with her parents, brother, and sister—a Victorian mansion in Jacksonville that was going to be demolished before her parents purchased it. Her parents had the mansion cut in half, placed on a barge, and relocated down the St. John’s River to a plot of land they had purchased on the Cedar River.



Left to right: Kelsey Reinsch displaying her fierce determination and go-for-it attitude; working in Germany during a service personnel recovery mission in 2016; and, third from left, assisting with the wet screening of airplane wreckage on a recovery mission to Palau, also in 2016.



“It was my mom’s dream to see the house completely restored, but she was diagnosed with lung cancer in 1996 and passed away in 1999,” Reinsch said. “My dad continued the restoration, which took about 14 years to complete. My dad and stepmom still own the house today.”

Archaeology Appeal

When it came time to attend college, Reinsch chose to stay close to home and attend the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology. “When I was in college, I worked the night shift as a telemetry technician at UF Health to pay for my expenses,” she said. “I adored my job and loved interacting with the patients, nurses, and physicians, but I lacked the self-confidence needed to pursue medicine at that point in my life.”

While at UF, Reinsch also volunteered at the C.A. Pound Human Identification Laboratory (CAPHIL). It proved to be a life-changing experience.

“Many of the researchers who earned their Ph.D.s in anthropology at UF went on to work for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), so I was exposed to the kind of work they do early in my professional career,” Reinsch said. “I was fascinated by U.S. personnel recovery efforts from the moment I began

volunteering at CAPHIL and made it my life goal to work for the DPAA as an archaeologist.”

Sometimes, however, life takes you on an unexpected detour.

United Kingdom Diversion

During the summer she turned 21, Reinsch celebrated her milestone birthday by taking a sightseeing trip to Ireland. Within days of arriving, she made friends with some Irish college students and invited them to visit her in the United States that same summer.

During the next year, she began a long-distance relationship with one of the students she met overseas—a talented musician who was attending music school in Ireland. “Because he wasn’t as far along in college as I was, we felt the best way to bridge the distance between us was for me to pursue my postgraduate education in the United Kingdom (UK),” she said. “The easiest way for an American to move to England is on a student visa, so I applied for a few master’s degree programs in the United Kingdom and figured I would see if any of them had an interest in me.”

Unfortunately, the geographic distance proved too difficult to overcome, and the two eventually ended their relationship. Reinsch earned her bachelor’s degree and was in the process of mulling her next move when she received an unexpected acceptance letter from Bournemouth University. “I was shocked,” she admitted.

At the time, Reinsch was enjoying life and living with her godparents in their Jacksonville Beach condominium. “The beach



The Victorian house where Reinsch lived as a child was uprooted and split in half so it could travel to its new home on a plot of land along the Cedar River in Jacksonville, Florida.

was my backyard, my friends were all in town for the summer, and I worked a cushy job for my godfather that allowed me to make my own hours and work by the pool,” she said.

Remaining true to her adventurous spirit, Reinsch accepted Bournemouth University’s offer to study forensic archaeology in the UK. “The idea of moving to the

university and pursued her postgraduate studies, earning her Master of Science in Forensic Archaeology in November 2014. “So much of who I am today is a direct result of my time abroad,” she said. “I met my best friend there, learned a great deal about archaeology, and experienced some of the most magical moments of my 20s.”

“The idea of moving to the United Kingdom on a whim was intoxicating and felt like a continuation of my summertime high. I applied for a student visa and loans, packed my bags, and hopped on a plane.”

—KELSEY REINSCH

United Kingdom on a whim was intoxicating and felt like a continuation of my summertime high,” she said. “I applied for a student visa and loans, packed my bags, and hopped on a plane. Although my decision-making process wasn’t necessarily the soundest, the decision itself was my most inspired yet.”

During her time in the UK, Reinsch lived in a small coastal town called Poole near the

Archaeological Adventures

Following her return to the United States, Reinsch found it difficult to land a job. As she soon discovered, there wasn’t much of a demand to hire a forensic archaeologist who didn’t possess a Ph.D. degree, so she worked for her godfather’s company again while she widened her job search.

Finally, Reinsch’s fortitude paid off. “I was researching archaeology jobs in Florida for what felt like the

100th time when I stumbled upon the SEARCH, Inc. website,” she said. “I immediately fell in love with the biographies of every single employee and was absolutely floored when I found out they had a Jacksonville office.”

SEARCH, which is the largest, private, cultural resource management firm in the United States, provided several intriguing opportunities, including participating in international World War II soldier repatriations. “I knew I had to work for SEARCH, so I took a chance and went straight to the top. I emailed the company’s president directly, and to my surprise, he emailed back and offered me an interview shortly thereafter,” Reinsch explained.

“In my case, timing was everything,” she continued. “SEARCH had recently been in talks with the DPAA about some repatriation opportunities abroad, and they were in the market for a few forensic archaeologists to add to their team. When I sent that email to the company’s president, I had no idea he was going to make my wildest dreams come true.”

Working as a forensic archaeologist on U.S. service personnel recoveries allowed Reinsch to assist with mission logistics, recovery, and evidence documentation. “I helped identify human remains, dug units, screened dirt, handled evidence, and filled out chain-of-custody forms. I also worked on three projects as an osteologist for SEARCH and even appeared on a television show for the History channel,” she said.

“As an osteologist, I determined the biological profiles for unidentified individuals based on skeletal markers for age, sex, stature, and ancestry,” she added. “When I wasn’t working abroad on human remains projects, I worked in the office or in the field as an archaeologist for SEARCH’s energy division, which handles cultural resource management surveys for large-scale oil and natural gas pipelines, as well as renewable energy projects.”

Medical School Mindset

During one of her overseas recovery expeditions, however, a conversation with a female physician permanently altered Reinsch’s career course. “She started talking to me about hyperbaric medicine, and by

the end of our chat, she said, ‘You seem really interested in medicine. Why didn’t you become a doctor?’ I replied that I had never really considered it, and now I was too old to try,” Reinsch explained.

“She laughed at me, described how she had been a nurse before she went to medical school, and encouraged me to give it a shot,” Reinsch continued. “That was really all it took. I started researching medical school requirements and enrolled in community college courses while still working as an archaeologist full time before transferring to the University of North Florida to finish the rest of my prerequisite courses.”

According to Reinsch, the time she spent working as a forensic archaeologist solidified her desire



to learn about different cultures and people—and played a significant role in her decision to pursue medicine. “As an archaeologist, I always felt like I was living through the lives of people who lived before me instead of having a profound impact on the lives of people in the present,” she said. “I felt medicine was a field that could challenge me long-term and satiate my need to interact with people from different backgrounds.”

Painful Interlude

Ultimately, Reinsch’s decision to attend an osteopathic college resulted from a painful experience she endured while she was suffering from a curious case of debilitating neuropathic pain. “A few years ago, I couldn’t get a doctor to listen to me when the pain I was experiencing seemed to have no apparent underlying cause,” she explained.

“I was desperately looking for a doctor to validate my pain and tell me I wasn’t crazy,” she added. “I must have seen six or seven allopathic physicians, many of whom questioned my sanity, before one begrudgingly wrote me a referral

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“Having someone take the time to listen to me, validate my pain, and use their hands to correct the structural cause of my pain quite literally saved my life. I was able to throw away the antidepressants, get out of bed, and continue fighting for my health and my future.”

—KELSEY REINSCH

for physical therapy. It was through physical therapy that I learned the profound healing properties of touch. Having someone take the time to listen to me, validate my pain, and use their hands to correct the structural cause of my pain quite literally saved my life. I was able to throw away the antidepressants, get out of bed, and continue fighting for my health and my future.”

Because Reinsch’s goal as a future physician is to use her hands to help ease her patients’ pain, osteopathic medicine was a strategic educational choice. “As a practicing osteopathic physician, I will be able to explore alternative treatment

modalities for my patients who have tried every kind of medication and allopathic intervention with little to no improvement,” she said.

Although she only began her osteopathic studies in the summer of 2019, Reinsch already has her post-NSU plans in sight. They include going into internal medicine and possibly pursuing a hematology-oncology fellowship.

“My mom passed away from lung cancer when I was eight, so oncology is a field I’m passionate about and believe I could contribute to in a meaningful way,” she explained. “However, I am keeping an open mind until I do my clinical rotations, which is when I will hopefully develop a better understanding of the demands and rewards of each specialty.”

Reinsch is also determined to continue to pursue her passion for forensic archaeology work. “I am still employed on an as-needed basis and hope to spend some of my summer working for SEARCH,” she said. “I don’t think I’ll ever stop seeing myself as an archaeologist, no matter how established I become as a physician. Keeping my employment status active with SEARCH is my way of keeping my inner archaeologist alive.” □





THE WATCH THAT WON THE WAR

HAUNTING INSIGHTS OF A FORENSIC ARCHAEOLOGIST

BY KELSEY REINSCH

An experience I'll never forget happened on my very first soldier repatriation to Palau. We were recovering a pilot whose plane was shot down over the Pacific Ocean during World War II (WWII), and I oversaw evidence collection and turnover for the second part of the mission.

We were wet screening the sediment that was dredged up from the ocean floor when a coworker handed me a round metal object and asked, "Is this the pilot's watch?" It was corroded, and all that remained was the watch casing, but it was unmistakable. I can recover human skeletal remains and divorce myself from what they represent fairly easily, but the emotional connotation of something as intimate and important as a WWII pilot's wristwatch is not easily ignored or forgotten.

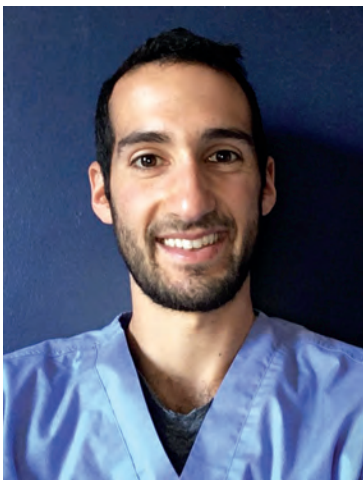
In fact, the American A-11, which was standard issue at the time, was nicknamed "the watch that won the war," so that should give you an idea of just how

important those watches were in keeping our boys safe during WWII. I think of that lieutenant often, and I always circle back to my memory of how I felt holding his watch in my hand. I think about all the emotions, both his and mine, that his watch represents. It still tears me apart to this day.

Another emotional moment occurred when I was working on a Japanese WWII sailor repatriation on Guam. I was responsible for the skeletal analysis of several individuals from two mass graves, which had to be completed in about a week. Every time I read the age section of an individual's biological profile, I was overcome with sadness. They all died between the ages of 18 to 25, which was the same age range I belonged to at the time. I remember thinking that we might have been friends in another life. Thoughts like that still haunt me. □

MASS MIGRATION CRISIS

WORKING WITH WAR AND CLIMATE REFUGEES IN GREECE



BY ZACHARY BURNS

While in between jobs in September 2015, I had an opportunity to provide basic life support on the Greek island of Lesbos for refugees fleeing violence in Syria and Afghanistan. War in those countries had spurred an exodus of people heading west. By the time they reached the west coast of Turkey, they had already been through a life-threatening, or at least undignified, journey.

Their final obstacle before stepping foot on Greek, and thus European Union (EU), soil was crossing the 10 miles of Aegean Sea between Turkey and Lesbos. Turkish smugglers charged top dollar for a seat in each perilously overcrowded, five-horsepower dinghy.

The rough seas often caused rafts to take in water—frightening, if not overturning, the passengers. Coast guard and volunteer surveillance was inadequate for the number of crossings. Occasionally, an entire group—babies, elderly people, and everyone in between—would drown.

Most groups did arrive, with 50 nauseous or hypothermic voyagers stumbling out of their rafts onto Lesbos beaches. Grown men hugged me, crying in relief; women collapsed in prayer to Allah; and teens used pocket-knives to puncture their rafts, gesturing across at Turkey in defiance.

Perilous Passage

Easy crossings produced happy passengers, some of whom took selfies or lit cigarettes moments after reaching dry land. Scary crossings produced acutely ill or injured passengers. There were gory lacerations to clean and dress and blue-lipped children to warm. I was considerably over my head as a newly certified emergency medical technician (EMT). One girl dry heaved to the point of rupturing her facial blood vessels and fainting. I checked her pulse and wrapped her in rescue blankets as frantic family members screamed in Arabic around me. Fortunately, she soon regained consciousness, and something compelled me to force-feed her pieces of

(continued on page 32)

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A boatload of refugees arrive safely on the shores of Lesbos.

Afghan teenagers pose for the camera.

(continued from page 30)

banana. Although I was glaringly underqualified, there were times when I was still the most medically experienced volunteer on the scene.

The volunteer relief effort in this seaside village of Sikaminias was somewhat disjointed. International aid organizations like the Red Cross were not permitted to set up due to local politics, so small organizations and individuals like myself devised a makeshift infrastructure.

A Norwegian couple cooked chickpeas all night for incoming refugees, and a Palestinian-Danish group set up an outdoor boutique of donated clothing. The village café became an operations command center for volunteers. We sipped coffee on the patio, debating logistics and how best to utilize personnel and donated goods.

Our role in the larger effort was to make wet and exhausted refugees healthy enough for a two-hour walk and one-hour bus ride to Mytilini, the island capital, where there were long-term camps and immigration processing. Some refugees would be cleared to catch a ferry to Athens, while others would be condemned to live in these apocalyptic tents indefinitely. Their lives were directly influenced by the conference-room decisions of EU leaders, several of whom responded to the refugee crisis by closing their borders.

Vexing Predicament

One of the harder things I had to do was abandon an Afghan family at one of these long-term camps. A British volunteer and I



had driven them to the hospital earlier to get the little girl's thumb, which she had somehow severed while crossing the Aegean Sea, checked out. She calmly sought my attention on the beach in Sikaminias to show me exposed bone and loosely tethered soft tissue.

Luckily, a nearby physician gave her medicine before we drove two hours down the winding road to the hospital. Just one of the nine extended family members in our van spoke some English. He had worked for the U.S. military in Kabul before the Taliban found out and sent him a letter explaining two options.

Either he could continue working for the United States and be publicly killed by the Taliban, or he could fulfill a suicide-bombing mission in Europe and go to "paradise." He escaped with his family, and now we were all in Mytilini, pleading with the hospital staff to examine the girl's thumb for free.

Other children and teens made the journey from Afghanistan or Syria with no adult guardianship. They grabbed whatever would fit in a backpack and said goodbye to everyone in their lives for what

could be the last time. I was reminded that no one chooses to be a refugee, and that displacement is always the last resort.

Many of the orphaned travelers adapted unbelievably well. On an EMT shift at the bus stop between Sikaminias and Mytilini, I met a crew of Afghan teens who were dancing to Farsi rap and devouring canned falafel balls. They wanted to know about American girls and seemed genuinely devoid of worries.

Yet, nothing in their lives was certain. Did they wind up in Germany or the Netherlands? I cringe to think they still could be trapped in a Greek refugee camp for lack of proper immigration status. If they did settle somewhere, are they finishing high school? Do any of the teachers know Farsi? We can hope that their European classmates appreciate the sociopolitical mess they fled—and what it might be like to leave home for good.

Back by the water in Sikaminias, aid workers crashed the café during lulls in raft arrivals and looked with binoculars toward Turkey. If we saw a bobbing black dinghy with orange life jackets, we could



Several Syrian children enjoy a snack after their harrowing journey.

approximate the time and location of its arrival based on the wind. Sometimes, we would zip down the coast by car to meet a raft. Otherwise, we jogged over goat paths to a rocky cove where rafts landed.

Mistaken Identity

With my olive skin and dark features, I was mistaken for a refugee dozens of times. Scandinavian volunteers smiled warmly and greeted me with *salaam* while handing me sandwiches. It was funny, but also showed how little removed I am—we are—from being in the soggy shoes of these refugees.

What can we do as conscientious health professionals? We might choose to work at community health centers or safety-net hospitals where immigrants can receive primary care regardless of their legal status. We can also elect leaders who understand that war refugees are victims of circumstance and should not be turned away by wealthy countries.

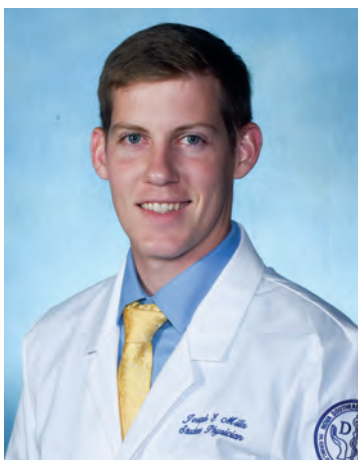
Additionally, we can recognize the link between climate change and human displacement. It is widely acknowledged that climate-exacerbated drought and agricultural failure in Syria helped

destabilize the economy and catalyze the civil war.

Environmentally aggravated political conflict, and consequent displacement, is considered one of the major reasons climate change matters. On Lesbos, I saw firsthand that mass migration is a health issue. It is one of many environmental health issues that should compel health professionals to advocate for climate change mitigation. □

Zachary Burns is a third-year KPCOM student.

Balance and Blessings



Getting Through the Grind

BY JOSEPH MILLS

Medical school is a tough, grinding process that tests your level of determination and commitment if you are not mentally and physically prepared.

When I was an incoming first-year Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) student in 2018, I made my way through the midsummer humidity of South Florida and opened the door to my new apartment. As I did so, I knew I was also opening the door to uncharted territory, with many sleepless nights ahead. However, I'm not only referring to that grinding process mentioned previously. I'm also referring to the baby my pregnant wife Cassidy had been carrying the previous four months.

Clearly, I had more to worry about than grades and board exams when I arrived at the college. I had just uprooted my family from a lifelong home in the western United States, and we were now establishing a new home—one that would soon serve as our first child's first home.

It didn't take long to get comfortable with the everyday routine.

School was a lot of work, and finding an OB/GYN for Cassidy was harder than expected, but we found the way and made it work through good communication.

The inaugural semester was a blur as I balanced my biochemistry and anatomy exams with the tests performed at the OB/GYN's office. Finals week was tough. I worked hard to focus, studying whenever I could, while also helping Cassidy prepare for our new addition.

Finally, the big day came. On December 17, 2018, Lincoln Joseph Mills was born. There is no greater feeling than becoming a dad. My white coat ceremony—a day I had dreamt about since I was 12 years old—paled in comparison to the feeling of witnessing my baby boy open his eyes to take in the world around him for the very first time.

I was blessed to have a few weeks off during the Christmas break, and I spent every moment of it with my wife and precious baby. Sadly, all good things end. I started school again and was tasked with discovering how to balance studying with caring for my family. Fortunately, it didn't take long for my perception

of the medical school grind to change for the better.

I began to see my peers and professors for what they truly are: family. Everyone was aware of us, especially little Lincoln. This principle was solidified in my mind by a special experience I had one evening during the KPCOM's anatomy cadaver memorial ceremony.

Lincoln, who was a few months old at the time, was generally easy to keep calm as he rested quietly in his car seat. However, as soon as the college's dean, Elaine Wallace, stood to speak, Lincoln began wailing. I couldn't have been more embarrassed as I stood up to take him out the door while the dean tried to talk over Lincoln's cries.

Suddenly, anatomy professor Nicholas Lutfi stopped me. He grabbed my arm and told me to sit back down because "babies are babies" and it was "all part of the natural course of life." Still slightly embarrassed, but beyond grateful, I took my seat next to Cassidy again.

When the ceremony ended, we made our way outside, where, to my surprise, stood Dean Wallace, who was searching for me. She was not upset. In fact, it was the exact opposite. She was eager to meet Lincoln to admire him and congratulate us. At Nova Southeastern University, we truly are one big family, and knowing that has helped me get through both the good and difficult times.

Another paradigm-shifting experience happened gradually over the course of my second semester. As the struggles of a new semester became overwhelming, I began to hear the phrase "physician burnout," which is something to be taken seriously.

We each need to find some way to combat those feelings. I found that having Lincoln around helped me find joy in the little things. Even on the toughest days, I was privileged to hurry home excitedly to hear Lincoln's little palms slap the tile as he raced to see me, or to test the Babinski reflex on him for the 50th time.

Cassidy and Lincoln make the hardships of school worth it every day. This is not to say there haven't been rough days. Having to care for a crying baby at 3:00 a.m. before an exam that morning certainly isn't ideal. In addition, I would be lying if I said I wasn't scared that Lincoln was infected with every virus and bacteria mentioned in our microbiology book at some point over the past year.

However, as I write this, our little boy is 13 months old. He has brought more sunshine into our lives than can ever be expressed in words. Although I initially questioned having a child during medical school, I know it is a decision I will never regret. □

Joseph Mills is a second-year KPCOM student.



Joseph and Cassidy Mills with their newborn son Lincoln

“At Nova Southeastern University, we truly are one big family, and knowing that has helped me get through both the good and difficult times.”

—JOSEPH MILLS



Access Granted

Florida Blue Funds Mental Health Support

Thanks to a nearly \$300,000 grant from the Florida Blue Foundation and the efforts of people like Nicole Cook, Ph.D., M.P.A., mental health outreach in South Florida is becoming more accessible.

“I’m a public health professional who has worked for 20 years to help improve access to care among vulnerable populations in South Florida,” said Cook, associate professor of public health in the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine. “Then the Marjory Stoneman Douglas (MSD) High School shooting happened in Parkland, Florida, in February 2018 and rocked my world, both personally and professionally.”

Cook’s two daughters were in the school when the incident occurred. Both lost close friends and

experienced firsthand trauma. Understandably, her family began to think about and access behavioral health services in a completely new way. Stigma, asking for, and receiving help were clearly challenges for the Cook family and many in her community. However, these challenges were even more pronounced for Cook’s friends who did not speak English as their first language.

Cross-Cultural Aid

“What I first noticed was that almost all the announcements and information about programs and services being provided after the MSD shooting were offered only in English,” Cook said. “Following the tragic suicides in our town at the one-year anniversary, I worked with some of my NSU students and parents in



“What we need—what the community needs—is for us to go into neighborhoods and listen to what people have to say about the issue of behavioral health, including what they are comfortable talking about and what they aren’t.”

—NICOLE COOK

the community to translate information on signs for suicide prevention and resiliency services into Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and other languages to help those who may need it. Unfortunately, I found that these materials never made it into the hands of the agencies providing services or, more importantly, the people who needed them.”

From her years of experience designing and implementing programs for Florida’s most vulnerable populations, Cook understood that, in some cultures, the issues of mental health and mental health awareness weren’t topics easily discussed. In fact, she knew that for people in some communities, the stigma attached to someone in need of mental health assistance was so great, it stifled any chance of talking about it.

As she sat at the planning table for resiliency services in Broward County, and later for suicide prevention, Cook recognized that Broward might not have the bandwidth to fully focus on populations that may be left behind. She also discovered she wasn’t the only one with a desire and passion to address this gap.

To tackle the issue, Cook collaborated with various organizations, including Broward County Public Schools, the Children’s Services Council, and the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition. Cook then wrote a proposal that earned a six-figure, three-year grant from the Florida Blue Foundation.

“What we need—what the community needs—is for us to go into neighborhoods and listen to what people have to say about the issue of behavioral health, including what they are comfortable talking about and what they aren’t,” Cook explained. “We want to start with a subtle conversation about overall

wellness and how this ties into student achievement in school,” Cook explained.

Cross-Agency Tools

One existing resource Cook points to is the school district’s use of the ParentLink notification system to engage parents in the dialogue. The system is programmed to contain the contact information of more than 20,000 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) families whose children attend Broward’s public schools. Messaging can now be crafted specifically for the Haitian Creole and Hispanic communities.

“We are very fortunate to partner with Dr. Cook and NSU, with the intent of meeting the needs of our multilingual families,” said Victoria B. Saldala, director of the Broward County Public Schools Bilingual/ESOL Department. “Mental health issues can be caused by various factors. Many of our families fear deportation, separation of families, or the simple process of arriving to a new country with limited resources and no command of the English language. Being able to educate our families on mental health in their language and providing them with free resources available in our community will have a positive impact on their wellness as they acculturate to life in the United States.”

“It truly is not a ‘one size fits all’ when it comes to this issue,” Cook emphasized. “Mental health is a public health issue, which includes everyone. Hopefully, thanks to the Florida Blue Foundation grant, we can begin laying the groundwork and make inroads into parts of our community that otherwise may have been overlooked.” □

Alumni in the News



Maryam Abid, who did her family medicine residency training at Ocala Regional Medical Center, joined the medical staff at BayCare Medical Group in Plant City, Florida.



Christy Baggett, D.O. ('16), and **Evan Bergmann**, D.O. ('16), joined the medical staff at Cohen Medical Associates in Delray Beach, Florida. Baggett completed her residency training at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, while Bergmann did his residency at Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah, Florida.



Carisa Champion, D.O., J.D., M.P.H. ('16), resident adviser to the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Board of Trustees, was profiled in the AOA's online magazine

The D.O. in the article "Why This Surgery Resident Is Excited About the Future of Osteopathic Medicine."



Emily Chang, D.O. ('03), joined Atlantic Medical Center in Atlantic, Iowa, and will be primarily focused on gynecological care and surgeries. Chang is board certified through the American Board of Obstetrics and

Gynecology and is a fellow of the American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology, as well as a diplomate of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology.



Tyler Cymet, D.O., FACP, FACOPF ('88), chief of clinical education for the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, completed a two-year project developing the curriculum for the Armed Forces College of Medicine in Cairo, Egypt. He is also writing book reviews for the Washington Independent Review of Books.

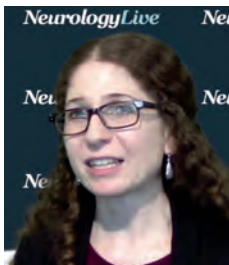


Kevin M. Donohue, D.O. ('15), former chief resident at Largo Medical Center's Internal Medicine Residency Program in Largo, Florida, was named Physician of the Year at Saint Joseph Hospital—a 468-bed tertiary

medical center in Lexington, Kentucky. He has been working as a hospitalist with Sound Physicians since 2018 and was selected to participate in its national class of 2020 Emerging Leaders Program.



Marlow B. Hernandez, D.O., M.P.H., M.B.A., FACP ('11), was named a top 50 Hispanic business leader by the Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.



Carrie Hersh, D.O., M.Sc. ('09), a multiple sclerosis specialist at the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health—Las Vegas, is the new chair of the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America Healthcare Advisory Council.



Amber Hurley Johnson, D.O., D.M.D. ('13), one of the inaugural graduates from the KPCOM's D.O./D.M.D. program, is the first graduate from the program to be board certified in oral and maxillofacial

surgery. After completing her oral and maxillofacial surgery residency at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2017, she opened a private practice in her hometown of Stafford, Virginia.



Claude L. Jones, D.O., M.P.H., M.Sc., FACOI ('05), is the new president and chief executive officer of the Care Alliance Health Center in Cleveland, Ohio—a nonprofit community health center that provided comprehensive

primary and preventive medical, dental, behavioral health, and wrap-around services to more than 16,000 patients in the past year.



Daniel F. Leiva, D.O., M.S., FAWM ('16), completed the requirements to receive the designation of Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine from the Wilderness Medical Society. The fellowship program offers a

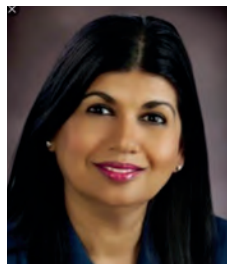
means to identify those who have fulfilled a demanding set of requirements that validate their training and experience through a combination of learning and demonstration of the advanced practice of wilderness medicine through experience, teaching, scholarly activity, and leadership.



Kyle Linsey, D.O. ('11), a board-certified ophthalmologist whose interests include cataract and refractive surgery, is employed at Perich Eye Center in the greater Tampa Bay area of Florida. He is involved with

the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Osteopathic Colleges of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery.

Etan Marks, D.O. ('13), is a new dermatopathologist at Advanced Dermatology and Cosmetic Surgery (ADCS) at its Delray Beach, Florida, location. ADCS is the largest dermatology practice in the United States and has practices in 13 states.



Asha Ramsakal, D.O., M.B.S., FACP ('97), is chair of the Moffitt Cancer Center Department of Medicine in Tampa, Florida. She also serves as an associate professor at the University of South Florida Morsani

College of Medicine and provides direct oversight of internal medicine resident education at Moffitt.

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Nicole Ross, D.O., ('17), a third-year family medicine resident at West Kendall Baptist Hospital in Miami, Florida, received the 2019

Florida Academy of Family Physicians (FAFP) Foundation scholarship. The FAFP Foundation has been awarding \$1,000 scholarships to outstanding third-year family medicine residents in Florida since 2006.



John J. Venezia, D.O., M.P.H., M.A. ('06), a lieutenant colonel and army senior flight surgeon, received the 2019 Association of Military Surgeons of the United States Awards Program Training and Education Award. The award recognizes the major role a team or individual plays in health care education and training. Venezia serves as the director of medical education, as well as the program director for the Army's aerospace medicine residency program at Fort Rucker in Alabama.

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Do you have a compelling story to share with the readers of *COM Outlook*? If you do, please contact Scott Colton at scottc@nova.edu.

In Memoriam

David Alan Clark, D.O. ('96),

of Winter Garden, Florida, passed away on November 30 at the age of 52. After graduating from NSU-KPCOM, Clark joined the United States Army, where he obtained the rank of major and worked as a flight surgeon. After serving for eight years, he opened his own practice—South Alabama Orthopedics and Sports Medicine—in Ozark, Alabama.

David Henry Hill, D.O. ('14),



a pathology resident at Naval Medical Center San Diego in California, passed away on December 2 at the age of 38 after he was struck by a minivan while jogging. According to his family, Hill was born in Guam, traveled to more than 20 countries over the course of his lifetime, and was a “committed physical fitness fanatic” who ran marathons on six

continents, plus one on a treadmill aboard a ship while on a trip to Antarctica in March 2019.

Andrew S. Lepoff, D.O. ('86),

of West Palm Beach, Florida, a general and vascular surgeon who practiced in Palm Beach County for more than 25 years, passed away on December 3 at the age of 63. Lepoff, who enjoyed teaching and being a mentor to many residents and students, including those from NSU-KPCOM, lived a life defined by selflessness, compassion, generosity, and honor.

SHARKS DO MORE THAN SURVIVE. THEY THRIVE.



Sharks are strong, fast, resilient, and adaptable. Their presence enables the entire ecosystem to flourish. At NSU, we appreciate Sharks.

The world needs forces of nature like **YOU**.

Our distinguished KPCOM alumni are making significant contributions to health care and humanity on many levels. If you have a compelling story about your life or career that we can share with the readers of *COM Outlook*, please contact Scott Colton at scottc@nova.edu.

NSU
Florida

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OUTSIDE THE BOX

BOLD CHOICES
DEFINE ECLECTIC
CAREER

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

Physician. Pilot. Real estate agent. Hearing aid specialist. Business consultant. TV extra. Philanthropist. Celebrity friend. These are just some of the words that describe the unconventional career of Trevi Sawalich, D.O., M.P.H., a 2003 Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) alumna.

As a child growing up in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, Sawalich dreamed of becoming an actress and practicing medicine with her older sister, Tina Horth. Even as a senior in high school, Sawalich remained undecided about her vocational plans.

“My father was an Air Force colonel who taught us discipline, how to be goal oriented, and to achieve results—but to always be smart in life and have fun,” said Sawalich, who also has two older brothers. Consequently, when the two began discussing what she might want to study in college, Sawalich’s father pressed her for details.

“My father told me I couldn’t be undecided about what to study in college, so I told him I wanted to be a doctor, a pilot, or an actress,” she recalled. “He said a hard no on becoming an actress, but said he would pay for me to get my pilot’s license if I could do so in the minimum hours required.”

Sawalich earned her pilot’s license before graduating high school, but said she realized she loved it as a hobby, not a profession. Because she still harbored a dream to practice medicine



ALUMNI Spotlight



Above: Trevi Sawalich and her longtime boyfriend Matt Dagilis enjoy a tropical adventure with her children Gianna and Jake.

Right: Sawalich fits a hearing aid to a child as the child's mother looks on.



with her sister, she decided to volunteer in the emergency room at Torrance Memorial Medical Center, which was across the street from the airport where she took her flight lessons.

Following her sister's example, Sawalich enrolled in the University of California, Riverside to study biology and premed and worked whenever possible at the University of California—Los Angeles Harbor General Hospital's Allergy/Immunology Clinic, focusing on HIV/AIDS and the various clinical trials that were being conducted.

"It was an eye-opening, humbling experience to work with patients who didn't know if they were receiving a placebo or an experimental drug to treat their HIV/AIDS-related illnesses," Sawalich said. "I got to know them very well and wanted to help them in any way possible."

Switching Coasts

When it came time to apply to medical schools, Sawalich only considered those located in warm U.S. locales. "I couldn't imagine living where it was cold or it snowed, but I wanted to try somewhere other than

California," she explained. "I researched many schools, and when I came across Nova Southeastern University, I saw that it had a Master of Biomedical Sciences (M.B.S.) program where you take the same core classes as the osteopathic medical students."

Her academic success allowed Sawalich to skip the second year of the M.B.S. program and progress directly into the osteopathic college. "I became class president, studied hard, and helped a handful of fellow students make the transition into the KPCOM the following year," she said.

Sawalich enjoyed her KPCOM education, earning her Master of Public Health in 2002 and her D.O. degree in 2003. "No matter who you were or what level you were at, someone was always there to help you progress and achieve your goals," she added. "This philosophy made me want to help others in any way I could."

With her NSU education now complete, Sawalich headed back west with the intention to begin her family practice residency in California. A confluence of events, however, would set Sawalich on a new career course.

FAST FACTS TREVI SAWALICH, D.O., M.P.H.

Hometown: Rancho Palos Verdes, California | **Education:** D.O., NSU Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (2003); M.P.H., NSU Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (2002); B.S. (biology/premed), University of California, Riverside

Switching Course

“By the time I graduated from NSU, my dream of working with my sister had ended,” said Sawalich of the unexpected development. “She married a cardiologist, had three beautiful children, and stopped working to focus on her growing family.”

A memorable KPCOM senior year experience also altered her postgraduate plans when Sawalich went to Africa for two weeks to work with the Starkey Hearing Foundation to help fit hearing aids for the disadvantaged. “It was the experience of a lifetime—somehow, it just clicked,” said Sawalich, who bypassed her residency training to accept a position with the foundation. Next thing she knew, she was back in California to run the foundation’s office and assist with overseas missions.

“I became a licensed hearing aid dispenser and was able to go back to my hometown in California, where I was a concierge doctor for high-profile clientele and celebrities,” she said. “I focused on hearing health and wellness, cerumen management, and custom in-ear products.”

During her long career with the Starkey Hearing Foundation, Sawalich added the skill of expert fundraiser to her burgeoning list of talents. In 2013, Sawalich was named senior associate director.

“I attended star-studded events and traveled with a team throughout the world to fit underprivileged people with our hearing products,” Sawalich said. “It was an incredible opportunity to see the world and learn about different cultures while being able to work with the sponsors/donors, as well as with the recipients of the gift of hearing Starkey provided.”

Hollywood Hobnobbing

Due to her participation in the foundation’s annual gala fundraiser, Sawalich worked with a celebrity who’s who that included several former U.S. presidents, Garth Brooks, Bradley Cooper, Billy Crystal, and Trisha Yearwood.

I LOVE THAT I CAN SAY
I AM A **DOCTOR**; A **PILOT**;
A **REAL ESTATE AGENT**;
A **CONSULTANT**; AND A
MOTHER OF TWO BEAUTIFUL,
INCREDIBLE CHILDREN.

TREVI SAWALICH

During one outreach trip to Guatemala, country music star Yearwood accompanied the Starkey team and learned how to fit the children with hearing aids as she sang to them. In other instances, *Dancing with the Stars* cast members traveled to Mexico to participate in hearing-aid fittings, as did National Football League players in Uganda.

An unexpected offshoot of Sawalich’s celebrity interactions was having the chance to serve as an extra in various hit TV shows, including *Frasier*, *Friends*, and *Scrubs*, as well as in the 2008 film *Changeling*, directed by Clint Eastwood and starring Angelina Jolie. Although she enjoyed her occasional work as a Hollywood extra, Sawalich received her greatest satisfaction from helping others.

Like Father, Like Daughter

Having mastered medicine and fundraising, Sawalich turned to her dad for inspiration about what else she could do to add to her vocational arsenal. “My father had a real estate license, and he encouraged me to do the same,” she said.

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ALUMNI Spotlight



Sawalich and her family believe in giving back to the community by raising awareness about issues such as hydrocephalus—a condition involving the buildup of fluid in the ventricles deep within the brain.



Sawalich fits a woman with a hearing device during a Starkey Hearing Foundation trip to Egypt.

(continued from page 45)

For the next decade, Sawalich happily balanced her foundation work with her growing real estate career. In December 2018, however, Sawalich made a bold move, leaving her longtime job with the Starkey Hearing Foundation to launch TreviConsulting—a business development, fundraising, and brokering company.

“I launched TreviConsulting to utilize all the skills and networks I had accumulated over the years to help nonprofit organizations, start-up companies, and a wide range of other businesses reach the next level of success,” said Sawalich, who earned her life-coaching certification in April 2019.

No End in Sight

Because of Sawalich’s real estate background, several clients started asking her how they could get involved in real estate investing. This line of

questioning led her to become a one-stop shop of options by joining forces with Compass—a fast-growing real estate technology company. “What I like about real estate is its flexibility,” she said. “You aren’t tied to a desk, and you really get to learn about the city you live in. It’s about relationships, people, and life investments.”

Although she no longer works with patients as a physician, Sawalich remains involved with several of them through her consulting business. “I now help them with their businesses. In fact, many of them call me Dr. Trevi,” she said.

“I love that I can say I am a doctor; a pilot; a real estate agent; a consultant; and a mother of two beautiful, incredible children,” she concluded. “I have traveled the world and plan to keep having lifetime adventures with my family.” □

FAST FACTS TREVI SAWALICH, D.O., M.P.H.

Personal: mother of 10-year-old Jake and 7-year-old Gianna | **Words of Wisdom:** “We may think we know what’s best for us, but if your life seems to go upside down, embrace it and get ready for something even bigger and better than you ever could have imagined.”

TREVI'S CELEBRITY HALL OF FAME

STAN LEE



“Stan was a client for many years, and we were very close. He was the first person I told I was pregnant with both my children, and he helped me name them. We would have lunch every month for about 10 years. For three years, our offices were next to each other. He was one of the kindest, funniest, and most caring people I have ever known. He would read comics that involved fire to my son Jake, who was into firefighters. He was always trying to show me how popular he was, because I didn't know much about all his characters. He even invented a character for me, a Trevi Superhero, where I could give people bionic hearing and take care of all their problems.”

—TREVI SAWALICH

Throughout her career as a hearing-aid specialist, Sawalich treated and interacted with hundreds of famous actors, musicians, and writers from the entertainment world. When she was asked to name some of her most memorable celebrity friendships, two men rose to the top of her list: **Stan Lee**—cocreator of iconic comic book characters Iron Man, Thor, Spider-Man, and X-Men—and **Ozzy Osbourne**—reality TV star and former lead singer of the heavy metal band Black Sabbath.

OZZY OSBOURNE



“Ozzy was the most surprising person I ever met. When I first met him, he asked, ‘Do you like my music?’ I’m not a good liar, so I said, ‘not really.’ He tried so hard to get me to like his music or the new material he was working on, so I would listen to what he was working on in his studio, half the time not being able to understand what he was saying. That was the best part, because he would call me out on it. It was so embarrassing, but we would laugh.”

—TREVI SAWALICH

SGA Leadership Advocates on Capitol Hill

While Capitol Hill rarely takes a break from its active life of politicians, tourists, and everyday citizens, the Capitol witnessed the arrival of another demographic when 26 teams of osteopathic medical students representing the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) went to Washington, D.C., for the annual COM Day on the Hill event held October 17.

The event aims for osteopathic medical students to network, raise social media awareness, and voice their opinions to politicians regarding policies that directly affect medical students. The KPCOM was represented by two of its Student Government Association (SGA) leaders—Regina Zambrano, third-year student and SGA president, and Charles Bisbee, second-year student and SGA president-elect.

“Getting the opportunity to be there and advocate for medical students in person was indescribable,” Bisbee said. “AACOM showed up in full force to speak up for graduate medical students and residents.”

One of the federal programs that demanded attention was Grad PLUS Loans—a topic Zambrano felt strongly about preserving to

maintain and increase the number of U.S. physicians. “I advocated for preservation of the Higher Education Act, which is an umbrella policy that maintains Grad Plus Loans,” she said. “I am extremely passionate about keeping Grad PLUS Loans available and uncapped for all graduate students, because not all students are fortunate enough to come from families that can cover the costs of medical school.”

Another KPCOM value is aiding the medically underserved. For Bisbee, advocating for the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Program is a way to facilitate more residency opportunities and care in areas

of need—a win-win for students and patients.

As medical students being directly affected by politics in higher education programs, taking action is necessary to ensure the future of medical education is attainable for aspiring students, Zambrano explained. “We had differing opinions regarding the Higher Education Act and Grad PLUS Loans in 2018, which led to an interesting conversation that taught me a lot about how to handle opposing political viewpoints,” Zambrano added. “I was excited to sit down with Florida Senator Marco Rubio’s team once again in 2019 and grow on my experience from 2018.” □

From left: Regina Zambrano; Eric A. Goldsmith, D.O., FACOS, assistant dean of clinical affairs and president of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association; and Charles Bisbee





Nutrition faculty members pose with the inaugural cohort of students.

M.S. in Nutrition Program Hosts Inaugural RDN White Coat Ceremony

The KPCOM's Master of Science in Nutrition program held its inaugural white coat ceremony for graduate student dietitians on November 13. Family members, faculty and staff members, and senior leadership enjoyed a touching ceremony that celebrated the students as they entered practicum training.

Students were welcomed into the profession of nutrition and dietetics as they proudly donned their new coats after pledging to follow the

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' code of ethics. The white coats displayed a new patch design, closely resembling that of the D.O. program, but with a fun twist to symbolize nutrition with an apple.

"The evening provided warm and fulfilling moments that captured why we do this," said Stephanie Petrosky, M.S., RDN, LDN, FAND, program director and department chair. "We are proud of the hard work and dedication of our students and faculty members to this new program." □

Clinical Partnerships Flourish in Tampa Bay

Osteopathic medical students are participating in increased clinical experiences, starting earlier in their education. One new partnership is allowing first-year Tampa Bay Regional Campus students to learn alongside physicians at Community Health Centers of Pinellas, Inc. In upcoming years, various classes of D.O. students will have the opportunity to do clinical rotations at one of the Community Health Centers' numerous sites.

In its continued partnership with military veterans, the college established a partnership with Bay Pines VA Medical Center. The inpatient psychiatric care

provided at this site will be an especially rich learning environment.

"Bayfront Health is also opening several of its hospitals for student rotations," said Jill Wallace-Ross, D.O., M.S., assistant dean of osteopathic clinical education. "Additionally, Bond Clinic, P.A., and Chapters Health System have opened their doors to our students, providing a rich variety of ambulatory rotations. These clinical partners allow our students to experience real-world learning and application of their newly acquired knowledge and skills." □



On January 9, NSU held a dedication ceremony to commemorate the opening of the Veterans Access Clinic.

Health Care for Our Nation's Heroes

On January 6, Nova Southeastern University (NSU) opened its Veterans Access Clinic, which is providing veterans with integrated, interdisciplinary care and shorter waits to schedule appointments thanks to a \$5-million appropriation received from the Florida Legislature. Financial assistance is available to those who qualify.

Veterans and their family members can access a range of services at NSU's Fort Lauderdale/Davie and Miami Campus clinic locations, as well as at additional NSU clinic sites. Services include medical, dental, vision, audiology, speech, psychology, physical therapy, family therapy, occupational therapy, and nutrition coaching. A dedicated team of staff members is available to coordinate care for NSU health services or other providers as needed.

"NSU's commitment to the community can be seen in our longstanding and robust clinical offerings to the South Florida community," said George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and chief executive officer. "Designated as a Military Friendly School, we've worked hard to make NSU a university veterans want to attend. Currently, we're home to more than 1,000 student-veterans. Through our clinics, we are

proud to serve the veterans in our community who so courageously served our county."

"The KPCOM and other members of the NSU community welcome the opportunity to serve the health care needs of those who have courageously served our country," added Eric A. Goldsmith, D.O., FACOS, assistant dean of clinical affairs for the KPCOM. "We are thankful to the state of Florida for giving us this opportunity to give, and we appreciate the financial support in making this vision a reality."

The new Veterans Access Clinic is the latest step in the university's outreach to the veteran population. In 2015, NSU unveiled its Veterans Resource Center, which is the centralized location for resources and services specifically designed for veterans and military-affiliated students. In 2019, NSU debuted its U.S. Army ROTC program, which encompasses an elective curriculum students take along with their required college classes that provides the tools, training, and experiences needed to help students succeed in any competitive environment.

For additional information, please contact (954) 262-FLAG (3524) or nova.edu/healthcare/veterans. □

Public Health Students Provide Outreach in New Orleans

In December, students from the KPCOM's Bachelor of Science in Public Health program traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana, to implement a public health project developed in partnership with the American Red Cross. During the fall semester, the students worked diligently to address a curricular gap in disaster preparedness for elementary school children.

In addition to the undergraduate public health students, one D.O. and one Master of Public Health student participated. The team was led by Kristi Messer, M.P.H., LCSW, director of the Bachelor of Science in Public Health program, and Shari Ramchal, M.P.H., student

outreach coordinator, who served as mentors to the undergraduate students as they planned and implemented their project.

While in New Orleans, the students volunteered with the American Red Cross to teach the Pillowcase Project to elementary school students. The Pillowcase Project engages young children, teaches them to prepare for natural disasters, and encourages them to speak with their parents to develop a family plan in response to natural and man-made disasters.

The students also volunteered with Youth Rebuilding New Orleans (YRNO), a nonprofit focused on rebuilding homes

destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. YRNO heavily relies on volunteer labor to build the homes to keep costs low. The homes are then sold at a reduced cost to teachers, first responders, and other public service individuals.

"I'm so glad I had the opportunity to help in guiding these students through the development and execution of this outreach project," said first-year D.O. student Brooke Landry. "In the process, we gained such valuable insight about the people of New Orleans in terms of their culture, the hardships they've experienced, and the resilience of their community." □



From left: Shari Ramchal, Joshua Dela Fuente, Valeria Malo, Taylor Klein, Brooke Landry, Alexandra Gomez, Kristi Messer, and Jasenia Beckford

COM Outlook Wins First Place for Magazines



In March, NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine's *COM Outlook* magazine captured the first-place prize in the best magazine category in the national American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) Excellence in Communications (EIC) Awards Program.

"Winning this award is a wonderful achievement," said Scott Colton, B.A., APR, director of medical communications and public relations for the osteopathic medicine college and the Health Professions Division. "It takes a truly collaborative effort to create each issue of *COM Outlook*, which makes winning the award especially gratifying."

Colton, who spearheads the magazine's editorial content, credits the talented team from NSU's Office of Publications and Creative Services for playing a major role in the magazine's award-winning success. "It truly is a pleasure to work with such wonderful colleagues who complement the magazine's journalistic strength with their artful mix of editing, design, and art direction."

AACOM's EIC Awards Program is designed to recognize the important role communications plays in advancing osteopathic medical education and the profession. It also seeks to inspire higher levels of performance among its members. □

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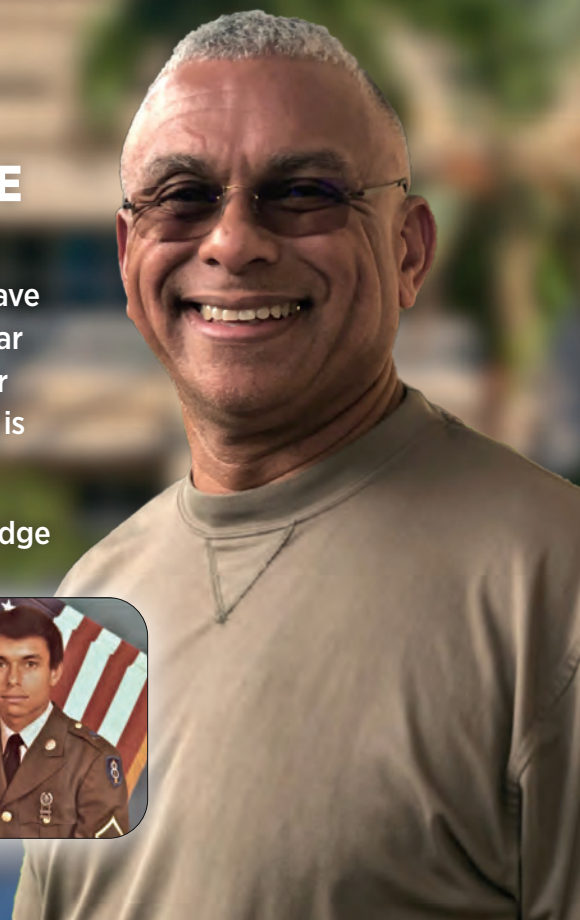
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