
COM Outlook

College of Osteopathic Medicine

Spring 2021

COM Outlook (Spring 2021 - Volume 22 Issue 1)

Nova Southeastern University

Follow this and additional works at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd_com_outlook



Part of the [Other Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
COM Outlook SPRING 2021

DR. KIRAN C. PATEL COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE



MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY
**INAUGURAL CLASS
CELEBRATED**



IN THE WAKE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, QUITTING SMOKING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

LET US HELP YOU GET THE SUPPORT YOU NEED FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME.

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY OFFERS FREE VIRTUAL CESSATION SERVICES VIA ZOOM GROUP MEETINGS.

BENEFITS

- NICOTINE REPLACEMENT PATCHES, GUM, OR LOZENGES
- WORKBOOK AND MATERIALS
- DOUBLE YOUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS



Preregistration is required. To register, call (954) 262-1580. For additional information, visit ahectobacco.com.



16



Features

04 **#GETITRIGHT**

OSTEOPATHIC PROFESSION DEMANDS RESPECT

08 **40 Years Later**

KPCOM CELEBRATES INAUGURAL 1981 D.O. CLASS

12 **Love What You D.O.**

BOUNCING BACK FROM ADVERSITY

16 **OB-GYN Ace**

DEPARTMENT CHAIR TRADES TENNIS SKIRTS FOR SURGICAL SCRUBS

24



Departments

02 **HPD COMMUniqué**

03 **Leadership Message**

20 **Student Perspectives**

COVID-19 TESTING: EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITY

HARDSHIPS AND HEALING

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY FOR PHYSICIANS AND PHARMACISTS TO COEXIST?

LESSONS FROM A FORMER HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

24 **Alumni Spotlights**

FELLOWSHIP FUN

BROTHERLY BOND

WOMEN UNITED

32 **Alumni News**

35 **Closing Notes**

COM OUTLOOK WINS CASE AWARD

BERKO AND NOVOTNY NAMED STUDENTS OF THE YEAR

INIM RECEIVES \$4.4-MILLION COVID GRANT

37 **2020 KPCOM Donor Recognition**

28



31



COM Outlook is produced by
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
 Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine
 3200 South University Drive
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33328-2018

osteopathic.nova.edu
facebook.com/novaosteopathic
instagram.com/nsukpcom

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D.
 President and Chief Executive Officer

HEALTH PROFESSIONS DIVISION
Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.
 Chancellor, Special Projects

Irving Rosenbaum, D.P.A., Ed.D., M.P.A.
 Vice President for Operations

**DR. KIRAN C. PATEL COLLEGE OF
 OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE**
Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S.⁴
 Dean

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott Colton, B.A., APR
 Director of Medical Communications
 and Special Projects
 (954) 262-5147 • scottc@nova.edu

ART DIRECTOR
Susan Tischenkel-Hayward
 Associate Director/Senior Graphic Designer
 Office of Printing and Publications

COVER AND #GETITRIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS
Randy McCafferty
 Senior Graphic Designer
 Office of Printing and Publications

OFFICE OF PRINTING AND PUBLICATIONS
Bernadette Bruce, Executive Director
Sheryl Koral, University Editor
Alejandro Hernández Padilla, Associate Editor/Copywriter
Ann-Marie Parish, Production Manager

Nova Southeastern University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate's, baccalaureate, master's, educational specialist, doctorate, and professional degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Nova Southeastern University.

Nova Southeastern University admits students of any race, color, sex, age, nondisqualifying disability, religion or creed, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, military service, veteran status, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school, and does not discriminate in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. Any such acts are unacceptable and strictly prohibited by the university.

02-008-21SAT



The past year has made us all incredibly aware of the importance of health care. It has also enhanced our appreciation for the hard-working professionals who provide the care we need to not only survive, but thrive.

That's why I'm so proud that Nova Southeastern University's (NSU's) Health Professions Division (HPD) is a leader in providing the highest quality education possible. This fact is characterized by the skilled graduates of our various programs who are making a positive difference in

their professions and assuming leadership roles in their respective fields.

I recently spoke with several health care leaders in Florida, including several of our alumni. I spoke to the director of emergency medicine at one of the largest hospital systems in the state, who is a physician assistant graduate from NSU's Dr. Pallavi Patel College of Health Care Sciences. I had a conversation with the lead cardiologist of a preeminent cardiac care hospital, who is a graduate of the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine. Additionally, I had a discussion with a graduate from the Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing, who is in charge of nursing operations at another large hospital system serving Florida and other parts of the nation.

The conversations I referenced made me reflect back to 1986 when Dr. Morton Terry, founder of Southeastern University of the Health Sciences and NSU's HPD, invited me to join his leadership team. At the time, I was working as both a health care provider and as a member of the Florida House of Representatives, where I spent much of my time imploring my colleagues to help our health care systems reach the highest level and availability of care possible.

Dr. Terry believed in this philosophy from the very beginning, which is why we created Southeastern University of the Health Sciences, which became the NSU Health Professions Division when we merged with Nova University in 1994. After the merger, I had the privilege of working with many forward-thinking NSU administrators to expand our health care programs beyond the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus. We created additional campuses in Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Miami, Miramar, Orlando, Palm Beach, and Tampa Bay, Florida, as well as in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This growth gave us the opportunity to offer preeminent health care education in a programmatic structure that features some of the finest administrators and faculty members not only in the state of Florida, but in the entire United States.

I am very proud of our many graduates who are offering kind, high-quality care to their patients, while also communicating the importance of wellness and health awareness.

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



“How to Lead When Your Team Is Exhausted—and You Are Too,” an article I recently read by Dr. Merete Wedell-Wedellsborg that was published in the *Harvard Business Review* in December, helps us understand the unique leadership challenges caused by the second wave of COVID-19.

I agree wholeheartedly with Dr. Wedell-Wedellsborg, who had this to say about the second wave of COVID-19, which has left many of us feeling foggy, cranky, and especially fatigued: “While good news about a vaccine is on the horizon, getting through the winter may be the toughest leadership challenge of all.”

I think of the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) and Nova Southeastern University (NSU) leadership

teams—and especially NSU President Dr. George Hanbury’s Return of the Sharks messages—as great examples of how we Sharks have kept moving forward, together, as a key to our success during this unprecedented time in history.

When exhaustion hits us as leaders, Dr. Wedell-Wedellsborg suggests we best move through the second wave of this pandemic by reexamining our personal level of resilience and that of our team members. She also suggests that we should assess the people on our team regarding their ability to overcome obstacles, bounce back, and recover in the face of challenges.

I believe we need to reach out to others and be willing to lend a helping hand. In the end, Dr. Wedell-Wedellsborg insists that enduring during the second COVID-19 wave requires leaders to understand personal resilience.

As NSU leaders, it would appear we need to take steps now that will eventually give our university and our colleagues a long-term, competitive advantage. The Return of the Sharks messages, following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and vaccine protocols, are excellent examples. We must ask ourselves, “Are we doing all we can do to enhance outcomes for everyone?”

According to Dr. Wedell-Wedellsborg, we need to be compassionate. We must be serious about mental well-being and intervene sooner rather than later. Our employees need more warmth and comfort than they may have received prior to the pandemic. Dr. Elaine Wallace, the KPCOM’s compassionate dean, has been sending the faculty and staff members a warm, encouraging—and sometimes funny—email message every morning since the pandemic began. We must also help each other snap out of self-pity and moodiness.

Finally, Dr. Wedell-Wedellsborg said we must “Energize everyone, every day.” She said we can energize each other by sharing success stories, shortening our Zoom meetings, and allowing honest feedback from our teams. In the end, our resilience as NSU Sharks is based on our ability and strength to overcome obstacles like COVID-19 by managing our minds and jointly deciding to take charge of our destiny.

Go Sharks!

Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG
Executive Associate Dean
Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine
Tampa Bay Regional Campus

Dr. Wedell-Wedellsborg said we must “Energize everyone, every day.” She said we can energize each other by sharing success stories, shortening our Zoom meetings, and allowing honest feedback from our teams.

D.O.

#GETIT

RIGHT



Osteopathic Profession Demands Respect

BY JOEY GARCIA, B.S.

“It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it.”

The famous quote above, articulated by Benjamin Franklin, is one the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) found itself echoing throughout its social media platforms during the month of October 2020 due to various attacks on the reputation and legitimacy of the osteopathic profession.

Why the need to respond to the negativity? In this case, the issue affected the profession on a national scale, as celebrities, politicians, journalists, and others led the charge toward misinformation to the masses—erroneously maligning the image of more than 100,000 osteopathic physicians and 25 percent of all U.S. medical students.

Inflammatory Feedback

The spark began when former President Donald Trump’s acting White House physician Sean Conley, D.O., was seen as contradictory after briefing the public on the President’s COVID-19 condition. Whether it was the misleading statements he made, the lack of media training, or the sheer fact that he was associated with the Trump administration, people quickly took the chance to critique him and his education, causing an influx of misinformation about D.O.s.

Examples that followed include

- tweets from Ryan Lizza, a political analyst and correspondent with more than 300,000 followers, saying the profession isn’t sending out its best physicians
- celebrities, such as Cher, tweeting that D.O.s are a half step above *Doogie Howser, M.D.*, a 1990s sitcom centered around a teenage physician
- MSNBC political analyst Rachel Maddow, who interviewed an osteopathic physician about COVID-19 in April 2020, but now questioned why an osteopathic physician was handling President Trump’s care rather than an infectious disease specialist or an internist

Thankfully, the attacks didn’t go unnoticed. The medical community immediately stepped up, with the AOA and other medical groups, colleges, and physicians from both the D.O. and M.D. worlds using their social platforms to educate and disprove the false statements being made about osteopathic medicine.

“If the AOA cannot provide a strong voice of undying advocacy for the osteopathic profession, then I submit to you that the AOA lacks purpose,” said Kevin Klauer, D.O., E.J.D., current CEO of the American Osteopathic Association. “We love our profession, and we will stand ready to defend it along with every osteopathic physician and medical student at every turn. The AOA accepts this and many other charges in service of osteopathic medicine.”

Old Rifts

As controversial as the October backlash was toward the profession, this isn’t the first time D.O.s have been labeled as inferior to their M.D. counterparts. Because it’s a newer form of medicine that originated in 1874, osteopathic physicians have consistently found themselves defending their profession, whether in medical school or in postgraduate endeavors.

Such was the case with 2007 Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) alumna Kanwal Bawa, D.O., who endured firsthand osteopathic bias. The snide remarks she occasionally heard over the years were expected, but not as blatant as when her education was discredited by an M.D. due to the price she charged for a cosmetic procedure.

“My status as a physician was in question and discredited completely. How dare he say I wasn’t a real doctor,” Bawa remarked. “I would not be treated as a secondary physician. If anything, D.O.s have more training than their M.D. counterparts.”

Bawa referred to the extra 200 hours of training osteopathic students complete in addition to the typical medical school curriculum. The hours of hard work



D.O. students put in has resulted in steady upward growth in competitive residencies once dominated by M.D.s, along with an increase in applications to osteopathic medical schools. That's why it's important to prevent such damaging insults to the profession from going unnoticed.

Digital Dilemmas

"Unfortunately, social media has often been used to repeat disproved and incorrect stereotypes about the osteopathic profession," said Joseph Shapiro, director of media relations for the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM). "This past year, we've seen political differences cause 'celebrities,' and even some journalists, to post inaccurate information about D.O.s, causing a negative impression of the profession. The challenge, and our responsibility, is using our social media reach to get the facts out."

“Seizing control of the conversation and inserting a more positive and accurate narrative has been essential to addressing the unwarranted and ignorant attacks on osteopathic medicine and osteopathic physicians.”

—Kevin Klauer

To make matters worse, an ill-timed advertisement by the popular scrubs company Figs showcased a video with a woman holding the book *Medical Terminology for Dummies* upside down with her badge labeled as a D.O.—not only fueling the fire, but creating even further bias toward women in medicine.

"It was portrayed as a classic bimbo moment," Bawa recalled. "Women are already not considered equals in the field. Figs showcased a doctor who doesn't understand medicine, so what does that say about the profession, God forbid, if you are female?"

Image Control

The good news is that osteopathic physicians across the country—including Mike Varshavski, D.O., who has 4 million Instagram followers and nearly 300,000 Twitter followers—were able to take control of the conversation in real time, as did local organizations

such as the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA), led by its current president and 2001 KPCOM alumnus Marc Kaprow, D.O., M.H.A., FACOI.

"FOMA took a leadership role by tapping into our resources locally and nationally," Kaprow said. "Joshua Lenchus, D.O., immediate past FOMA president, wrote an article featured on *KevinMD*, a large health care blog, and was instrumental in leveraging contacts across several allopathic (M.D.) institutions to garner support for us. At the same time, I led a collaborative effort to have the AOA House of Delegates pass a declaratory resolution condemning the mischaracterizations in the media and committing the AOA to further grassroots efforts to promote the profession."

On a national level, the AOA began its defense campaign by issuing statements about what a D.O. is and does on its social platforms and website. Throughout October, the AOA followed up by holding misrepresenting journalists accountable and retweeting information about osteopathic physicians who are making valuable contributions in the field. The AOA also created the hashtags *#getitright* and *#DOProud* to further amplify D.O. voices and debunk myths about the profession.

"The posture of the AOA, with respect to public attacks on our profession, is very different today than in the past," Klauer affirmed. "Now, when our profession or our credentials are attacked, we will respond swiftly with a respectful, but definitive and equally forceful, response. Attack our profession, and you will have your hands full. We don't hope for a quick media cycle now. We amplify, expand, and prolong the conversation until we can exchange the incorrect narrative for our accurate narrative."

Lessons Learned

As the field strives to educate people and command the same respect afforded the M.D. community, profession leaders caution that it must not lose sight of what makes osteopathic medicine so unique.

"Our efforts to prove equivalency may have not adequately included the message of osteopathic distinctiveness, so we must amplify the critical message that the osteopathic philosophy, osteopathic undergraduate medical education, and the practice of osteopathic medicine are truly unique and distinct," Klauer said. "In other words, a platform focused on equivalency, but devoid of our distinctiveness, is a pathway toward blending in, which is an existential threat to the profession."

The AACOM is continuing the fight by highlighting osteopathic colleges across the country, showing how choosing an osteopathic education doesn't just take you on the path to becoming a physician, but how it leads to every medical specialty—from heart surgeons and ER doctors to family medicine. AACOM's communications team aims to show D.O.s as "physicians with philosophy" and ingrain that when receiving care, it's not unlikely to find a D.O. leading the charge.

Another point for the osteopathic profession to note is the widening scope of independent practices of nurse practitioners and pharmacists. As their medical roles grow—along with the notion that they are equally qualified, more available, and less costly—it dilutes the value of a physician.

"Physicians train to a far greater depth of knowledge and skill, literally becoming subject matter experts within their fields of training, while secondary practitioners are ill prepared to address uncommon illness or uncommon presentations," Kaprow explained. "We need to do a better job of showing why and when people should expect to see a doctor, and demand that physicians be leading their health care team."

Doing a better job also applies in-house toward the treatment of women in medicine and minority groups. The AOA and AACOM were vocal during the Figs incident, causing the company to not only take down the offensive advertisement, but to issue a public apology with a plan of action on how the situation will not happen again. Their platforms have also acted upon amplifying more Black voices to further spread the profession to other demographics.

Maintaining Pressure

In a year with many challenges faced, it's important to note the accomplishments the osteopathic field has made. The use of Doximity, an online networking service, opened the door in 2020 for AOA-certified D.O.s to participate in the *U.S. News & World Report's*

Best Hospitals rankings, along with board certification status added to their profiles.

Currently, 11 percent of U.S. physicians are D.O.s—a percentage that is growing due to the fact that one in every four medical students is choosing to attend an osteopathic college. With the rise of social media, more aspiring medical students have access to prominent D.O.s serving as ambassadors in the field.

KPCOM alumni can be found working on medical TV shows as consultants, serving as deans at other D.O. colleges, and holding presidential leadership roles. Minorities, such as women and the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) population, continue to gain in exposure. This is evidenced by the fact that 42 percent of practicing D.O.s are women, while there was an 8.7 percent growth in graduated minorities in 2019.

"Our response in defense of our profession has been positively received by the osteopathic community, our M.D. colleagues, patients, and osteopathic physicians," Klauer emphasized. "Seizing control of the conversation and inserting a more positive and accurate narrative has been essential to addressing the unwarranted and ignorant attacks on osteopathic medicine and osteopathic physicians."

Still, as is often the case, D.O.s themselves are the best advertisement for the profession. How they carry themselves with a patient, act online, and represent themselves as medical students can have the biggest impact in being positive advocates for the vocation.

"The damage done to our profession cannot be undone with a campaign or an article," Kaprow challenged. "We, as a profession, have the responsibility to advance our collective reputations. By going out into the world, caring for our patients, serving our communities, and being accountable for ourselves, we all carry the responsibility for how we are perceived by the public." □



Introducing...

FLORIDA'S NEWEST MEDICAL SCHOOL



Dedicated to training Family medicine physicians who offer something more...Not something else.



Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine North Miami Beach

- Approved by the Florida State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities.
- Accredited by the American Osteopathic Association, the recognized accrediting agency for medical schools awarding the D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathy) degree.
- Recognized as a 4-year medical school by the U.S. Office of Education and the Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation.
- Southeastern, which admitted its first class in 1981, is a private, non-profit institution.
- As Southeastern matures as a training and continuing medical education center, our planned health care services and outreach programs will have a significant impact on the South Florida community, the state and the nation.

40 YEARS LATER

KPCOM Celebrates Inaugural 1981 D.O. Class

BY JOEY GARCIA, B.S.

As bell-bottoms and disco faded, and MTV began to take charge, there was a sense of excitement in 1981, when 40 individuals embarked on their first year as medical students at Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (SECOM).

Known today as NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM), which spans two campuses and graduates nearly 250 physicians per year, it's hard to imagine that the college began as a small campus in the early 1980s in North Miami Beach, Florida.

Its humble origins can be credited to the vision of the late Morton Terry, D.O., FACOI, whose passion for osteopathic medicine and education led him to establish SECOM and the Health Professions Division. Terry set his plan in motion in 1970, at a time when there were only five osteopathic schools in the country. After experiencing setbacks in linking the college with Florida International University, Terry privately funded the college with a \$12-million hospital sale.

Getting a Class

While sourcing a building was relatively easy, the work to fill seats with students interested in osteopathic medicine and faculty members eager to teach was more involved than current digital-age practices. Recruitment in the early 1980s required more word-of-mouth and physical interaction.

“I was in the process of applying to various schools, and my father was friends with Dr. Fred Lippman from his business in the Hollywood/Fort Lauderdale area,” recalled inaugural student Joel Rush, D.O., FAOAO.

“It was suggested that I apply. It was all word-of-mouth and who had knowledge of the various medical schools, including what they were like and who they were looking for. Knowing people associated with the various schools, such as college advisers, was the key.”

For other students, it was their personal experience with osteopathic physicians that sold them on applying, as was the case with Bruce Rankin, D.O., CPI, FACOPF. Rankin, who heard of the new school while completing his degree in chemistry at the University of Florida, went on to meet with an osteopathic physician in family medicine in High Springs, Florida, who gave him details regarding what the profession entailed.

“This seemed like a perfect fit for my career goals, since it offered a chance to treat a person as a whole with a hands-on approach while using all the latest medications and technology,” Rankin said. “I was more than ecstatic when I received my acceptance letter to the Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine in North Miami Beach for the charter class starting in the fall of 1981.”

Through several similar events, the class began to form until the 40 members of the inaugural class came together to begin their medical careers.



Teaching a Class

In the same way the first-year class came to be, SECOM also saw its faculty and staff members coalesce, as Lori Dribin, Ph.D., M.S., can proudly attest. Dribin, who is still a part of the university 40 years later, looks back on her first teaching experience as being both exciting and anxiety-riddled.

Dribin heard of the opportunity thanks to H. Jay Lyons, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology at the time. Lyons took an active approach in recruiting professors, even driving to the University of Miami (UM) Department of Physiology to identify someone to teach the neurophysiology portion of the physiology course. Dribin, who was a research associate at UM, met Lyons at the department hall, where she and a colleague agreed to take on the role.

“I was initially hired as an adjunct professor to teach a portion of the winter physiology course for the inaugural class,” said Dribin, who is now a professor of medical education at NSU’s Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine. “I was somewhat apprehensive, since I had never taken a neurophysiology course. Several months after teaching myself neurophysiology,



Joel Rush (bottom row with beard) participates in Tacky Tie Day with members of the inaugural class.



The SECOM campus, circa 1980s



Bruce Rankin receives his D.O. degree in 1985.

I was ready to present my first medical school lectures to the first SECOM class.”

Dribin was hired a few weeks later to take on a full-time role as an assistant professor in the Department of Anatomy as the sixth basic science faculty member. UM was also a catalyst to bring Edge Groseclose, Ph.D., to SECOM in 1983 to teach nucleic acid biochemistry.

“I had finished postdoctoral work at the UM medical school and was looking for a job,” said Groseclose, a current professor of medical education at NSU’s Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine. “I wanted to stay in South Florida and in academics. That’s when I learned that the new osteopathic medical school in North Miami Beach was looking for another person to teach biochemistry and that Dr. Lori Dribin, who I had already known from UM, was teaching anatomy.”

Learning Curves

As with any new enterprise, there was a period of adaptation. For students and faculty members alike, the inaugural class motto became “Do not get too comfortable with what’s going on. It will probably change tomorrow.”

The first semester consisted of the students being taught in a single classroom, as the labs weren’t yet constructed. Most of the students had some postgraduate training or had been out working—resulting in a bit of an adjustment period.

“It was exciting to begin medical school. It was also a little scary,” Rankin said. “There were just the first-year professors and the basic campus facilities, which were still under construction. The anatomy lab was in the previous dining area of the old osteopathic hospital, and two new classrooms that would hold 100 students each the following year were under construction. The college was

also preaccredited, so we did not know until we graduated the first class if we would be in an accredited program.”

The healthy fear was also seen in the faculty members, many of whom had to learn the material weeks before actually presenting it to the students. To combat this, faculty members became a support system for one another when learning and multitasking as a unit, participating in and getting used to the admissions process, scheduling, interviews, orientation activities, and counseling.

Proud Moments

Despite first-year adjustments, the medical school curriculum didn’t take it easy on the class. The students were expected to take exams as scheduled, follow the white coat dress code—as they never knew when a dignitary would visit campus—and to be on their best behavior.



The rapid growth of SECOM necessitated the construction of a new building after the inaugural class began in 1981.



From left: Frances Higginbotham, Ph.D., chair of the anatomy department; Lori Dribin; Gerald Conover, Ph.D., professor; and Curt Higginbotham, Ph.D., made up the SECOM anatomy department in 1983.



1981 SECOM grand opening

Still, the students found time for fun. Activities included establishing the yearly Halloween party tradition, faculty members tutoring students on campus weekends with the only double-headed microscope available, creatively using a VHF to connect to a repeater tower and make radio calls like a cell phone, or setting off smoke alarms on a cold winter day. According to Rankin, the SECOM team found joy in every possible moment.

Another aspect former class of 1985 students and faculty members agreed on was how close everyone at SECOM was—especially with its founder. Going on college picnics with Terry, who considered everyone family, and having personal walk-in access to talk with him, are some of the noted highlights.

“The fact that we were small enough that it was possible to know the names and a bit about just about everyone, student or faculty member, made the experience special,”

Groseclose said. “Certainly, the graduation of the charter class was a standout memory. Now, it’s deeply satisfying to note that many of the physicians around us serving as practitioners and faculty members were once our students.”

Fulfilled Alumni

No longer a one-classroom institution, today’s KPCOM proudly boasts two cutting-edge campuses in Fort Lauderdale/Davie and Tampa Bay. Similarly, 40 years later, members of the inaugural class continue to benchmark career achievements. In 2020, Rankin was involved with the initial COVID-19 vaccine trials in his role as medical director at Accel Clinical Research in Deland, Florida.

Meanwhile, Rush received the prestigious Morton Morris, D.O., J.D., Award for Osteopathic Orthopedic Education from the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics in 2018 for helping

establish an orthopedic residency, and even gave back to his alma mater by establishing an endowed charter scholarship, which is provided annually to students who are in good academic standing and demonstrate active participation or leadership within their class.

“The college has grown into a university of interdisciplinary health professions,” Rankin said. “The campus is amazing compared to our humble beginnings. I have enjoyed returning to the Davie campus over the years for the alumni meetings and watching the progress of our college. Being able to tour the additional campus in Clearwater and witness all the new teaching technology makes me proud to be an alumnus. I remember Dr. Terry describing his vision of the future for us and our college. He imagined big. He would be proud of what has been accomplished over the past 40 years since he welcomed us into the osteopathic profession.” □

LOVE WHAT YOU D.O.

Bouncing Back from Adversity

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR



Assad Ali's journey to becoming a medical student began in earnest more than a decade ago when he traveled to his parents' birthplace in a remote area of Mirpur, Pakistan, to establish ties to his cultural roots. "One of the life-changing experiences I had was working at an orphanage for deaf and blind children. That was the first time I truly witnessed the resilience of the human race," he said.

"These kids had nothing and no one, except for their peers and selfless teachers," he added. "Yet, every day, when I walked into that dilapidated building with no air conditioning, no proper light fixtures, and cracked blackboards, I never saw anything but smiling faces. It was a moment of clarity. If people were capable of finding light in such dire circumstances, resiliency is truly embedded in each and every one of us."

As the years passed and various obstacles emerged, Ali worked hard to continually replenish his own well of resiliency.

Emotional Turbulence

Ali was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, but spent the majority of his childhood growing up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Initially, the biggest influences on his career aspirations were his mother, Waheeda Ali, M.D., a successful internal medicine practitioner for more than 30 years, as well as his 2011 trip to her birthplace.

By the time he earned a B.S. in Biology from West Chester University in Pennsylvania in 2014, however, Ali said he felt disenfranchised from his ultimate goal. "I had about given up on my childhood aspirations. I had gotten to a point in my life where I felt I was throwing my weight



From left: Assad Ali; mom Waheeda Ali; brother Bilal Ali, a third-year student at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine in Scranton, Pennsylvania; and dad Ali Shahid, a professional engineer

into one thing, and if that one thing didn't happen, I would lose my identity," he explained.

"I felt like all my efforts to get into medical school were failing, and it was futile to continue," he added. "As a result, I applied for almost every type of nonmedical job, including a position as a financial analyst for health care equity companies. I even considered law school and business school.

While grappling with these weighty mental hurdles, however, a sudden barrage of physical ailments presented an additional challenge.

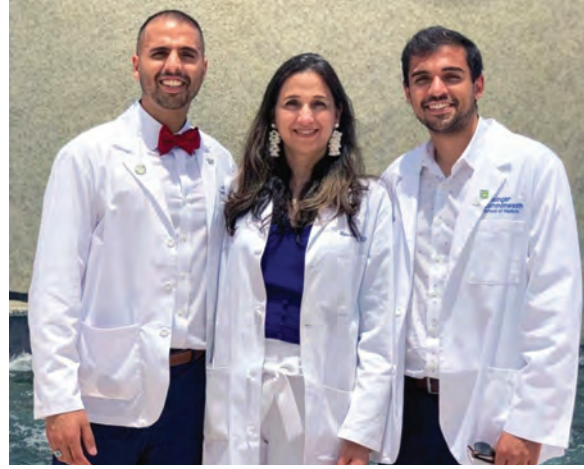
Summoning Strength

In 2014, Ali was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis, a painful inflammatory bowel disease that causes irritation and ulcers in the lining of the large intestine. "I've been on and off medications of varying intensity for years, but I'm

always scared that something might set off an inflammation cascade and land me in the hospital at any time," he explained.

A few years later, Ali was beset by another malady. "I woke up with the worst headache of my life. I got up to turn the light on, but I couldn't walk in a straight line because I felt so dizzy and delirious. The next thing I recall was waking up in the hospital to my dad dabbing ice-cold rags on my forehead and my mom anxiously holding my hand," he recalled. "After an extensive workup—and seeing confounding looks on several doctors' faces—I was diagnosed with a rare and severe case of Legionella pneumonia."

Ali forged ahead, inspired further by a Kobe Bryant video called "Dear Basketball" he watched on his cell phone in December 2015. "This video was a love letter written to the game of basketball in his final season. The line that stuck out to me



Left: Ali comforts an intellectually handicapped student at a school for disabled orphans during his December 2011 trip to Mirpur, Pakistan.

Above: From left: Assad Ali, mom Waheeda Ali, and brother Bilal Ali keep medicine all in the family.



An inspirational video from the late basketball great Kobe Bryant helped Ali shift his focus back to becoming a physician.

the most was, ‘...and this is what you do when someone makes you feel as alive as you’ve made me feel,’” Ali said.

“That’s when I realized that none of the alternate paths I had explored made me feel as alive as medicine. That’s when I decided I was going to go back to school, pursue my master’s degree with a renewed sense of purpose, and become a healer,” added Ali, who earned his Master of Science in Biomedical Science in 2017 from the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Forging Forward

Ali spent the next two years working as a research fellow and

anesthesia research coordinator at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio. These experiences, coupled with coping with his various health issues, further solidified his desire to become a compassionate healer.

“I was told as a young child that the key to life is figuring out people and caring for others. So it was fitting for me to pursue this profession, as helping someone heal is a very sacred duty and skill,” he explained. “I think my experience with my personal health has taught me many things, most of which revolve around the importance of empathy. I have not only come to understand the pain, fear, and uncertainty of such

circumstances, but also the value of having not only a competent provider, but an empathetic one.”

In August 2019, Ali’s hard work paid off when he joined the first-year class at NSU’s Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM)—just as another medical flare-up threatened to disrupt his hard-won momentum.

“I had just come off a long regimen of steroids, which is not easy on the body. I had experienced the full gamut of side effects, and starting medical school was an added stress that definitely took its toll on my body,” he recalled. “I had fought worse odds before, so I flipped the switch and went full mamba mode—a shout-out to Bryant. However, one month into my first year as a KPCOM student, I had a serious infusion reaction to my medication.”

It proved to be an ill-timed setback for Ali, who was running for class president and was scheduled to give a speech to the class that day. “I remember being in the hospital as they were setting up my IV. I was reading my speech to the nurses to rehearse. Mid-speech, my breathing became labored and my heart rate skyrocketed. I honestly thought that was it;

I wasn't going to be walking out of that center the same as I came in," he admitted.

"Eventually, I forfeited the election," he added. "And when I was ready and able, I was discharged from the hospital."

Leadership at Last

Although he was forced to abandon his inaugural run for class president, Ali rebounded. In October 2019, he worked with Ryan Nash, Josh Stephens, Praveen Prabhu, and several other KPCOM peers to establish the NSU Health Professions Division (HPD) organization Entrepreneurs in Healthcare (EIH), which he served as founding president of in its inaugural year. Since its inception, EIH has become one of the top HPD interest groups and has provided invaluable opportunities and inspiration for students in various graduate programs.

In his second year as a KPCOM student in the summer of 2020, Ali's resilience was again rewarded when he became president-elect of the college's Student Government Association (SGA) Executive Board at the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus.

When the COVID-19 pandemic burgeoned in the spring of 2020, local personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages led Ali and his KPCOM roommate, second-year student Greg Kunis, to discuss possible solutions. At the time, Ali was about to return home after the university transitioned from on-campus to virtual teaching modalities, so his mother sent him several masks to wear.

"Since my immune system was less than ideal, I needed to keep a few masks. However, I knew other people needed them, so I handed out most of what I had," he

explained. "The demand was way higher than my supply. That's when Greg and I talked about starting an initiative in regard to acquiring and distributing PPE to local South Florida hospitals as cases began to surge."

After doing some research, Kunis forwarded Ali some information about a new COVID-related initiative at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. "I met with my newly elected SGA team in Fort Lauderdale/Davie, as well as with the Tampa Bay Regional Campus Executive Board, and we fleshed out what eventually became the Med Students Against COVID-19 initiative. Thanks to the tremendous help of our 2023 executive boards and our class board, we were able to raise approximately \$20,000," he said.

"Additionally, through the great work of our treasurers, I was able to help compile a funds request from HPD PanSGA for another \$25,000 to be donated to our cause," he added. "This resulted in large volumes of PPE being distributed to our local hospitals, including Cleveland Clinic in Weston, Florida—a hospital I was able to create a close relationship with as EIH president."


Although Ali won't be graduating from the college until 2023, he's already laid the groundwork for leaving an indelible legacy. "For me, the goal has always been creating a legacy—something that stays with people long past our departure from this earth," he explained. "Through leadership opportunities, I believe we find our voice. I've tried to turn my KPCOM leadership experiences into a proverbial mirror—one that is revealing myself to myself." □

PASSION FOR PROCURO

Ali's leadership endeavors included launching a nonprofit organization, ProCuro Empowered Healthcare Solutions (ProCuro Health), to address disparities in social justice, health care access, and education.

"After gaining some leadership experience with Entrepreneurs in Healthcare and the SGA, I decided to combine my abilities with like-minded students and create an organization that could impact local communities. In August 2020, I, along with fellow second-year students Michael Kling, Shanice Walcott, and Sohni Pathan, mobilized efforts to increase voter turnout amongst patients, health care workers, and those who were afraid of contracting COVID-19 due to their preexisting conditions if they decided to venture to the polls. We have since fostered relationships with major hospital networks and sit in on leadership meetings to discuss the state of our communities."





OB-GYN ACE

Renee Alexis
Obstetrician



DEPARTMENT CHAIR TRADES TENNIS SKIRTS FOR SURGICAL SCRUBS

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

For a portion of her life, Renee B. Alexis, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., FACOG, chair and associate professor of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM), dealt with opposing ambitions—pursuing a career as a professional tennis player or becoming a physician.

Alexis, whose parents are Jamaican and Trinidadian immigrants, was born in Washington, D.C., becoming the fifth of five children. Because she was born during her father's last year of medical school, Alexis traveled the globe throughout the next decade as her father advanced his medical career.

"Shortly after I was born, I went to Jamaica, where I spent my early years living with my maternal grandmother," said Alexis, whose family moved to Jamaica in the mid-1970s before relocating to St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1978. I took my first tennis lesson in St. Thomas at the age of nine, and so began my love for tennis."

Although tennis would remain an essential part of her teenage years, it truly gained in importance when her family relocated to South Florida a few years later, which allowed Alexis to play on the high school tennis team at American Heritage High School in Plantation.

"Once we were living in South Florida, I played tennis pretty much every day," said Alexis, whose on-court skills were rapidly gaining notice.

Prodigious Prowess

By the time she was 16, Alexis was offered a two-year tennis scholarship to what was then called Broward Community College in Davie, Florida. "Since I was only 16 when I went to college, my parents wanted me to stay close to home," said Alexis, who quickly rose to No. 2 in Florida in the girls' 16 division.

After earning her Associate of Science degree in Biology in 1987, Alexis accepted a tennis scholarship to Jacksonville University in Florida. By the time she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in 1989, however, Alexis was at a crossroads. Should she continue her education and pursue a medical career or put those plans on hold to take a stab at competing on the professional tennis tour?

"When I graduated, I was 20 years old. So, with the advice of my parents, I made the decision to play professional tennis, since I was a pretty good player," Alexis said. "I traveled throughout Florida, the United States, and other countries for the next two-and-a-half years."

While Alexis enjoyed competing on the Women's Tennis Association tour, a lingering doubt

troubled her. "Being on the tennis tour was a long, grueling, expensive—and oftentimes lonely—journey," she noted. "There was a six-month stretch where I wasn't performing well, and I questioned how much I really wanted to pursue professional tennis. Although I loved tennis, and still do, I knew my first love was medicine and becoming a physician."

Focus Shift

While continuing to play on the professional tour, Alexis was already shifting into a medical mindset, which culminated when she took the Medical College



Renee Alexis at a Florida sectional junior tournament in the mid-1980s in Boca Raton, Florida



Above: Family portrait (from left): Sophia Solomon, Olivia Solomon, Renee Alexis, and Anthony Solomon, Jr.

Admission Test and performed well enough to apply to medical school. “I was accepted to the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1992, which ended my professional tennis career and began my lifelong journey of being a physician,” she said.

After receiving her Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree in 1996, Alexis started her obstetrics and gynecology (OB-GYN) residency at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital, which she completed in 2000. She then joined

the OB-GYN practice of her father Winston Alexis, M.D., who currently serves as an assistant professor in the KPCOM’s Women’s Health Center.

“There was never an expectation from my parents to become a physician like my dad. We were just expected to attend college and do our best. We were a sports-oriented family, as my father played professional soccer in his younger years, and my brother went on to play professional golf,” explained Alexis, who nonetheless followed in her father’s footsteps.

“I really can’t pinpoint a discussion or a defining moment when I decided to become a physician. It was what I call a natural evolution,” she added. “I have no doubt that my father being a successful physician had an impact on me becoming a doctor. Seeing him taking care of patients, and the joy it brought him, was an influencing factor.”

Female-Centric Care

During her first two years of medical school, Alexis planned to pursue a specialty other than OB-GYN. All that changed, however, when she embarked on her clinical rotations. “I had my heart set on becoming a pediatrician,” she recalled “But, as I progressed through my clinical years, I realized I wanted to do a surgical specialty, and I found that women’s health intrigued me.”

After working in her father’s practice for more than a year, Alexis returned to the academic realm thanks to the KPCOM students who rotated through

“I enjoy serving as a mentor to many of the medical students who are interested in pursuing a career in obstetrics and gynecology.”

—Renee Alexis



Above: Alexis (right) interacts with a patient in 2015.



Left: Celebrating her graduation from the University of Maryland School of Medicine are dad Winston Alexis, Renee Alexis, mom Cecille Alexis, and husband Anthony Solomon, Jr.

of the medical students who are interested in pursuing a career in obstetrics and gynecology.”

Doubles Partner

Another aspect Alexis enjoys is working closely with her father, who joined the college after he closed his practice. “It is truly an awesome experience working with my father at both NSU and at Broward Health Medical Center,” Alexis said.

“My dad still actively practices OB-GYN, and we perform surgery together weekly. The advantage of working with him is that he imparts invaluable knowledge from his extensive training,” explained Alexis, who continues to play tennis several times a week.

“I have learned many old surgical techniques from him that have proven to be critical in difficult surgical cases. He also learns some of the newer techniques from me, which keeps him abreast of technology that is forever changing in the medical field.” □

her father’s practice. “I truly enjoyed teaching and missed it when I entered private practice,” she admitted.

“Due to my student interactions, Dr. Kenneth Johnson (current executive associate dean at the KPCOM’s Tampa Bay Regional Campus) approached me, as he was looking for a partner,” she said. “It was a match made in heaven—having both an awesome partner in Dr. Johnson and being involved in teaching our future physicians.”

Alexis, who joined the college in September 2001 as a clinical faculty member, was named assistant professor in May 2003 and became an associate professor in April 2010. In August 2019, she

became Department of OB-GYN chair, which includes overseeing the physician team at NSU’s Women’s Health Center and playing an active role in providing compassionate care to the patients who rely on the center’s services. During this time, Alexis also managed to augment her teaching and business savvy by earning M.P.H. and M.B.A. degrees.

“Currently, I am actively involved in teaching our future doctors about women’s health in times of sickness, health, and pregnancy,” Alexis said. “I am codirector of the KPCOM’s Women’s Health course that is taken by our second-year students. I enjoy serving as a mentor to many

COVID-19 Testing: Educating Our Community

BY VANIA ARBOLEDA



Educators are the future of this country, and their health should be a priority.

When I heard that teachers and students would be returning to class this semester, I was worried. That's why I decided to get involved and help protect them as much as a first-year medical student could by participating in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools rapid COVID-19 testing program.

After volunteering for more than 60 hours, I realized people fear what they do not understand. Patients would come in with conflicting information from many sources—from the news, Google, their friends and family, and other details obtained from social media. My role had two responsibilities: first to explain what a rapid antibody test was and how it was performed, then to explain what the results meant.

The more challenging task was to deliver the test results. From explaining the differences between an antibody and antigen, to providing positive news of negative

test results, I learned that my attitude and disposition when delivering news and interacting with people could change a person's day. Likewise, their concerns when receiving a positive COVID-19 test result would affect my day.

I spent as much time as possible answering questions and providing clarity with the physicians' help. I was able to volunteer at two of the three testing sites in Miami-Dade, and in both cases, the physicians and the nurses worked cohesively to provide excellent medical care.

Due to this experience, I have learned about patient care, physician-patient interactions, and teamwork. Medical students need extracurricular activities that remind them of the humanistic side of medicine.

Applying the knowledge of my first-year classes, such as

immunology and educating patients, helped me remember the compassionate side of medicine. Trying to create a fun, but clear, analogy to aid patient understanding of the testing process was my top priority. Teaching, supporting, and providing peace of mind to students, teachers, staff members, bus drivers, and cleaning ladies was truly humbling.

This experience solidified the idea that educating community members about their health and providing them with facts can also improve their health. Seeing people's faces after telling them they had tested negative for COVID-19 and watching them cry, smile, or even scream with excitement, is why I chose medicine—to positively impact my community's health. □

Vania Arboleda is a first-year KPCOM student.



Hardships and Healing

BY ANDREW CASANOVA

Hardships prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny. It takes tenacity, but when the goals you have in mind hold meaning, nothing can stop you. My struggles with racism and getting into medical school are two examples. Helping a friend who suffered a life-changing injury is another.

My undergraduate studies were riddled with racism. One specific episode knocked me off my track to becoming a physician due to the harshness and prejudice I experienced. My initial meeting with an academic adviser began with an uninterested helper and ended with me being laughed at and told, “You will never be a doctor. Try something else.”

I was not the only student of color who was put down by this adviser. It hurt, but I persevered and eventually achieved my goal. When I got into medical school, I messaged that adviser and spoke from a place of betterment, not hatred, with a focus on showing her the error of her ways to hopefully better the experience for other future doctors.

My first semester at the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) was side-tracked by COVID-19, just like every other first-year student in 2020. The semester was off to a rough start, as thoughts of doubt and impostor syndrome circulated throughout every lecture I attended. Was I up to the challenge of becoming a doctor?

My desire was rekindled while I was in my Gross Anatomy class. I



had just, ironically, taken my first exam on the spine and back when I got a call that one of my best friends had gotten into a serious motorcycle accident. He had fallen off a ramp and into a ditch at high speeds, leading to several fractures throughout, an amputated left leg, and a complete spinal-cord tear at T4—a life-changing injury for him and everyone close to him. I tried to reach out to the hospital, but was left in the dark for days.

Before flying to the hospital, I researched everything on spinal-cord injuries. I also prepared questions to ask at the hospital to gain a better understanding of the situation and act as an advocate for his friends and family, who were confused and scared by the accident and lack of straight answers from the hospital. I stayed by my friend's side, speaking with every

medical team member who came to see him to better understand his prognosis and any hope of recovery.

He has since been told he has little to no chance of walking again, but I continue to help him in his recovery, both mentally and physically. The experience was traumatic for everyone involved, but I see what good someone who cares can do, and the hope you can imbue in others through your hard work, knowledge, and love.

Through these experiences, I hope I can motivate others to follow their dreams and not only ignore the hate, but also use the hardships that will surely come as fuel toward your extraordinary destination. □

Andrew Casanova is a first-year KPCOM student.

What's the Best Way for Physicians and Pharmacists to Coexist?

KAWTHER ELSOURI, M.S.



In 2013, I started working as a retail pharmacy technician. Over the next six years, I worked alongside pharmacists, interacted daily with health insurance companies and providers, and helped patients access their medications.

Because of this experience, I began to understand the culture between health care workers. The importance of this relationship cannot be understated, since some health care workers often neglect the important details that go into filling a medication, such as the availability, access, and affordability of prescriptions.

In this gap between diagnosing a patient and treating the ailment, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians step in and offer a helpful hand. They have a better understanding of the current world of pharmaceuticals—from prices to the latest drugs with increased efficacy.

This reality benefits from physicians who emphasize collaboration with pharmacists in prescribing medication. It also saves patients from having to search a multitude of pharmacies before finding one that accepts their insurance, has the drug their physician wants them to be on, and has it at an affordable price. The result of this reality can be lethal to disease management. Many trends in health care point to the need for increased collaboration between pharmacists and physicians. These include the presence of considerable drug-related morbidity and mortality, and the rapid advancements in medicine and treatments.

As future physicians, we must also remember it is simply not enough to prescribe a medication we feel will be helpful to our patients. We must ensure the patient has access to and can afford the medication. What good are the skills we learn if our patients cannot benefit from them?

Unfortunately, as a pharmacy technician, I saw physicians brush

off pharmacists constantly, especially if the pharmacist had a recommendation on a different drug therapy. Competitiveness and ego have the potential to take over and be extremely destructive to patients' lives.

This experience embedded the importance of teamwork and communication in every aspect of my life. No single health care worker, be it a physician or a pharmacist, has all the answers to meet patient needs. Proper collaboration, or team-based care, is an essential aspect of patient care. This approach requires a new perspective about the clinical leadership and duties a physician must take into consideration. It is our collective obligation to ensure all these elements of care are coordinated for our patient's benefit. □

Kawther Elsouri is a first-year KPCOM student.



Lessons from a Former High School Teacher

BY OMAR CADENAS

Before entering medical school, I worked as a middle/high school science teacher at a charter school in Hialeah, Florida. When I started, I had no idea what to expect. I thought my experience as a teaching assistant in college would be enough to prepare me for this challenge before I entered medical school. I was so wrong.

I was completely out of my element due to not having any experience teaching this age group. It was naive of me to expect these students to respect me and take their education seriously. On top of that, I was constantly mistaken as a student by other teachers and students who had not met me yet.

I still remember how embarrassed I felt when the school's vice principal laughed when I wore the uniform the teachers were required to wear—a white oxford with the school's logo, along with dark slacks and brown dress shoes. She probably thought a student was playing a prank when I walked past her office to clock in.

I considered quitting three days after I started, because it was impossible to teach when no one took me seriously. But I was determined to finish the year. I knew this was only a temporary job before I started medical school. I knew I would face similar challenges in the future from patients and attending physicians who might not take me seriously because I looked “too young for the part.” It became a personal goal to finish the year. If I could handle teaching middle/high school students, I could handle anything.

As time went on, and the students became more comfortable seeing me every day, I started to gain their respect and trust. They confided in me, and some even trusted me enough to share personal hardships and the struggles they faced at home.

Many of these students were born to immigrant parents who came to the United States to provide a



better life for their children. I understood how they felt, because I also came from immigrant parents who did the same. I knew how difficult it was to make friends and learn English in a new country, since I lived through those same experiences.

I am a second-year medical student now, and that experience is long behind me. I learned so much about myself during my short time as a teacher. My students taught me that I can't assume trust and respect when coming into a new situation. I will still need to earn the trust and respect of my patients and attending doctors, even though I will have the title of physician.

I was also happy I was able to inspire many students at the school where I taught. Most importantly, I never gave up on myself and learned to not quit—even in situations I am not comfortable in. □

Omar Cadenas is a second-year KPCOM student.

FELLOWSHIP FUN

Inquisitive Alumna Savors *Grey's Anatomy* Stint

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

While she was in the midst of doing a general surgery residency last year at the University of Florida College of Medicine—Jacksonville, 2016 alumna Carisa R. Champion, D.O., J.D., M.P.H., discovered she was about to embark on the experience of a lifetime—a six-month stint as a *Grey's Anatomy* surgical communications fellow in Los Angeles, California.

Champion, who is passionate about medicine, law, and public health, had been looking for an opportunity to combine these interests with her love of the arts. “I had written to several medical shows over the last few years, looking for opportunities to help ensure medical accuracy, and had not gotten much traction. I inquired because, ever since I was little, I was creative and drawn to the arts,” she explained.

“When I decided to go the medical route, I felt like I shoved the creative part of me to the side to focus on the science,” she added. “Over the last few years of residency, I had been wanting a way to have a creative outlet and honor my roots in arts and performing.”

In early 2020, Champion’s dream of melding her myriad interests took shape when she learned that the long-running medical drama *Grey's Anatomy* was looking for a surgical resident to do a fellowship, which involves working on the show for a specific time frame to shed light on current events from the perspective of a surgical resident.

To her delight, Champion applied with her residency program’s blessing and soon found herself relocating to Los Angeles as the selected fellow. “Patients don’t read research journals for their medical information, they watch TV medical dramas and do Google searches,”



Champion points to the realistic prosthetics used to simulate what an actual surgery looks like.

she said. “I figured if I could work with TV shows to tell medically accurate stories, I could have a much greater impact on public health.”

SENSATIONALLY SURREAL

Champion, who completed her six-month fellowship in mid-January, said the experience was everything she expected it to be—and more. “I am still processing this whirlwind and unreal experience,” she admitted. “On my first day, I met all the writers,



Above: Champion, with production staffer and actor Payton Silver, poses with some of the prosthetic faces used in the filming process.

Top: During her six-month *Grey's Anatomy* fellowship, Champion made numerous on-camera appearances.

as well as showrunner Krista Vernoff and Ellen Pompeo, who plays Meredith Grey. “I don’t really get starstruck, but it was pretty cool to talk with them. Everyone was really welcoming and wanting to hear my stories about working in a hospital during the first COVID wave.”

In her role as the show’s surgical communications fellow, Champion was involved in a range of interesting aspects, including ensuring the medical plotlines were realistic. “I collaborated with three other physicians who work full time for *Grey’s Anatomy*, as well as a researcher. On the production side, I worked with a nurse and her assistant, as well as another doctor,” she explained.

“I also worked in the writers’ room every day, which included me and 18 others, to provide episode ideas and pitch storylines,” she added. “On the production side, I learned about the various aspects of props, coordination, special effects, and set design. Additionally, when on set, we helped show the actors how to deliver their lines and how to perform various surgeries and procedures.”

Because the 17th season of *Grey’s Anatomy* focuses on life in the fictional Grey Sloan Memorial Hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that the storylines were as authentic as possible doubled the importance of the work Champion and her cohorts were doing.

(continued on page 26)



Champion (right) in a scene with Ellen Pompeo, who plays the show's main character Meredith Grey.

TYPICAL DAY

While on set, the majority of the magic Champion helped craft took place in a single room. “I spent most of my time in the writers’ room, which starts with all of us catching up,” she explained. “We then reviewed the episode(s) we were writing that day. It generally takes a few weeks to write an episode—from pitching preliminary stories to getting it in production—and then about two weeks to shoot each episode.”

According to Champion, any medical story on *Grey’s Anatomy* is based on an actual case that is reported in medical literature and/or by medical experts. Because many of the storylines involve rare and interesting cases, Champion and the writing team met with medical experts in these areas to ensure each episode was portrayed as accurately as possible.

“There were always multiple episodes in some stage of production at any given time. Throughout each day, if a new version of a script came through, I edited the medical portions of the script, which go through many revisions,” she explained. “We also created multiple types of documentation that summarized the different medical issues we were writing about for the cast and crew to base their work on.”

Some of the most enjoyable experiences Champion had involved the days she spent participating in table reads with the actors as they reviewed scripts before they were finalized. “Something I didn’t realize when I began the fellowship is that many of the storylines

HIGHLIGHTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

BY CARISA R. CHAMPION

One important aspect for me in the timing of the fellowship was that in the previous season, *Grey’s Anatomy* introduced a human trafficking storyline. I used to work with anti-trafficking organizations, so I really wanted to capitalize on this and get accurate representations about what the statistics of trafficking show. It is vital for the medical community to be aware that almost 90 percent of traffic victims come into contact with a doctor while they are being trafficked, and the vast majority are not identified.

The storyline portrayed a resident identifying a traffic victim and not being believed, which is something that happened to me. Early in my residency, I thought a woman was being trafficked, but others didn’t think that was the case. By the time I obtained some support for her, the woman disappeared from the hospital, and all her documentation turned out to have fake addresses and phone numbers. I never saw her again.

On this season of *Grey’s Anatomy*, we showed the doctor getting to see his patient again and help rescue her. It was a beautiful way to help rewrite that ending.

are kept secret from the cast and crew until they are shot,” she said. “The writers and producers are the only ones who know, so I saw the actors react spontaneously at these table reads. There have been several surprises on the show this season, so it was fun to watch them unfold.”

“EXTRA” EXCITEMENT

Perhaps the most memorable aspect of being a *Grey’s Anatomy* fellow was the opportunity it provided Champion to serve as an extra—playing a nurse or a physician—in several scenes throughout the season. “One episode involved a surgery on a patient’s liver and the simultaneous delivery of her premature baby. It’s funny to see people who make being a doctor so believable be so grossed out by prosthetics like blood and burned tissue,” she laughed. “Another scene was with me, Linda Klein, and Ellen. I got to know Ellen a little bit in between takes and hear about her background. She was really nice, and it was fun getting to talk and act with Meredith Grey.”

Champion also enjoyed teaching the actors how to properly say challenging medical terminology, how to cut through a patient’s prosthetic burn, place intraosseous access, and get a patient ready for the operating room. “Everyone was really nice and cracking me up all day,” she recalled. “I also learned how long a 30-second scene can take to capture. The challenging part was learning how to play a nurse and the intricacies of making that look real.”

Not surprisingly, Champion relished her opportunities to be on camera, due to the fast-paced medical scenarios. “Because the set is so realistic, I felt like I was back in the trauma bay or operating room, ready to spring into action,” she said. “I loved being part of



Champion takes a selfie with Kathy C. An, a real-life scrub nurse who plays surgical nurse Bokhee in *Grey’s Anatomy*.

Grey’s Anatomy, as I was able to interact with the cast and crew as we taught each other about medicine and production.”

FULFILLING FUTURE

When her *Grey’s Anatomy* fellowship concluded in mid-January, Champion returned to her surgical residency, which she plans to complete in 2022. She is also working with a research company in Boston, Massachusetts, that helped get bamlanivimab—one of the inaugural COVID-19 treatments—approved by the Food and Drug Administration. “We are working on a lot of COVID-19 research, as well as other medications, so I have really enjoyed getting to be a part of telling stories from the frontlines of COVID-19 in my fellowship, while also working toward curing it.”

Post-residency, Champion plans to continue working in surgery and public health—combining research, policy, and academics. “I would love to stay involved in the media side as well and continue to cultivate that creative blend,” she concluded. □



SPOTLIGHTING OSTEOPATHIC PHYSICIANS

During her *Grey’s Anatomy* fellowship, Champion convinced the writers to incorporate a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) into the show, which was accomplished when Champion played herself in an episode wearing a D.O. nametag. That win for the profession grew in significance when *Grey’s Anatomy* decided to add a recurring character this season who plays a D.O. surgical intern. (See *COM Outlook* article on page 4 for additional details related to recent D.O. bias.)

“I explained to the writers and the production staff what D.O.s do, discussed our value to the medical community, and addressed how important it was to raise awareness of the osteopathic profession,” Champion said. “The new character is the first in the show’s history to portray a D.O., so I am very proud of that.”



Brotherly Bond

FRATERNAL ALUMNI REVEL IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL KINSHIP

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

Throughout the annals of history, much has been written about the often-combustible relationships that exist between competitive siblings. That's not the case, however, for Rayan A. Rouhizad, D.O. ('04) and Nason D. Rouhizad, D.O., M.P.H., M.S., M.S. ('15)—who graduated from the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine 11 years apart and now work at the same hospital in Marietta, Georgia.

How did the Rouhizads, who were born in different states but spent their formative years growing up in Coral Springs, Florida, manage to sidestep sibling rivalry and embrace true brotherhood, even though they both possessed a desire to become physicians at an early age?

"We've always been close, and even as a 16-year-old, I'd bring my 10-year-old brother along with me when I would hang out with

friends," said Rayan Rouhizad. "Nason even tagged along for my first date with my high school sweetheart Vilma, who later became my wife. We make it a point to stay close and take care of each other."

The brothers also share interests that extend far beyond medicine, such as cars, vinyl albums, and grilling. Another aspect of familial affinity Nason Rouhizad points to is a healthy "respect and a humble

degree of admiration for each other,” he explained. “I respect what he does, and I know he feels the same way. Also, we care about what we do, which shows in our respective work.”

Serving Others

Because they grew up in a household steeped in the Baha’i Faith, the Rouhizad brothers knew their lives would be devoted to helping others. “From a young age, I knew I wanted to choose a profession that had an impact on other people’s lives,” Nason Rouhizad said. “The Baha’i Faith instilled in us one of its major tenets: to serve. What better way to serve humanity and have an impact than to learn and practice the science of medicine?”

Interestingly, although they were inspired to lives of service, no one in their family had any career connection to the health care field. “I was the first in my family to become a physician, and our father was the only one to go to college of his six siblings,” Rayan Rouhizad noted. “Our father came here as an immigrant from Iran and always emphasized the importance of taking full advantage of the education this great country has to offer.”

“Because my brother was the first in our family to earn a doctorate, I witnessed everything firsthand—from his taking the MCATs to his last shift as a resident when I visited him at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami, Florida. I didn’t exactly follow in his footsteps, but I have stumbled upon them,” Nason Rouhizad joked. “Since then, at least four other family members have become physicians.”

(continued on page 30)



Top: Sibling trio (from left): Rayan, Nason, and Sara Rouhizad

Above: The Rouhizad brothers enjoy a fun afternoon in Atlanta, Georgia, with Rayan's sons.



Top: Nason and Paola Rouhizad with their daughters Leila and Ariana
Bottom: Rayan Rouhizad with sons Julian, Alexander, and Sebastian, and wife Vilma

Similar Yet Different

Although their careers eventually led them to their current positions at Wellstar Kennestone Regional Medical Center in Marietta, Georgia, the paths they took to reach their geographical and vocational destinations were eerily similar, yet also subtly different. In addition to earning their Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degrees at Nova Southeastern University, both brothers received their bachelor's degrees in zoology from the University of Florida, with Rayan Rouhizad graduating in 2000 and Nason Rouhizad in 2008.

However, their paths also diverged, with Rayan Rouhizad doing his emergency medicine residency at Mount Sinai Medical Center, where he achieved great acclaim, winning three residency awards, while Nason Rouhizad completed his internal medicine

residency in 2018 at Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah, Florida.

The divergence continued when Rayan Rouhizad began working at Wellstar Kennestone in 2008, while Nason Rouhizad obtained three master's degrees before, during, and after pursuing his D.O. degree.

Southern Charm

What convinced the Rouhizads to relocate to Georgia, albeit 10 years apart, was a confluence of events. "Atlanta was the perfect mix of weather and outdoors, while still being a hip and fun place to live. I also love the fast-paced, high-acuity, high-volume environment Kennestone has to offer," added the Wellstar Kennestone emergency medicine residency faculty member.

Nason Rouhizad's decision to join his brother in The Peach State occurred after he did a one-month elective rotation in Kennestone's emergency department. "I remember having to do about 14 shifts that month—more than my attending brother was working—so it was mostly an opportunity for us to hang out at work and at home," he explained.

"During that month, I had a great time learning, engaging with the medical staff, and providing care to the local community. Everyone was friendly and helpful—southern-charm style," added Nason Rouhizad, who joined the Kennestone team in 2018 and works as a hospitalist and internal medicine teaching faculty member. "We would often visit my brother in Georgia for the holidays, but when my parents moved up here a few years ago, that prompted me to really consider Kennestone as a career choice."

Advantageous Interactions

Because the brothers truly enjoy each other's company, working at the same hospital has been the proverbial gift that keeps on giving. "We see each other often, even during the pandemic, at work and in our 'bubble' at home," Nason Rouhizad said. "We also get to mess with the residents about who is tougher (him) and who is cooler (me)."

"We see each other all the time, and I make him get me coffee and snacks, since that role of being the bossy older brother never goes away," Rayan Rouhizad joked. "But seriously, it's great seeing him at work, as it brings a sense of normalcy—especially during these strange and crazy times." □



Women United

ALUMNA COORDINATES WILDFIRE RELIEF EFFORTS

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

When devastating wildfires ravaged a number of West Coast states last summer, compassionate individuals, such as 2009 Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine alumna Terry Moy-Brown, D.O., M.P.H., FACEP, stepped up to assist those in need.

Moy-Brown, who is a locum tenens emergency room physician in Oregon and Washington and does urgent care work at Vancouver Clinic in Vancouver, Washington, also serves as board director of the Oregon Physician Women's Group (OPWG). The organization, a networking resource for female physicians in Oregon and southwest Washington, provides support, connection, wellness, and opportunities for community service.

As the unrelenting flames began to scorch Oregon, Moy-Brown mobilized the OPWG members. "It was heartbreaking to see all the destruction. In some cases, whole towns were destroyed," said Moy-Brown, current OPWG president. "We could not stand idly by, so I put out a call for help on social media."

Working as a tight-knit unit, Moy-Brown and her OPWG cohorts assembled a list of members who were willing to open their homes to those displaced due to an evacuation order. "We also disseminated lists of items that everyone evacuating should not forget to take with them, such as prescription medications," she said.

"Doctors from our group in many different specialties made agreements to assume care of patients from displaced doctors and hospitals in the affected areas," she added. "In one particular case, an OB-GYN and maternal fetal medicine specialist assumed care of multiple patients who were not her own but needed to be monitored. We also donated money and collected clothing and hygiene products."

To collect the needed items, Moy-Brown organized donation drop sites at several spots in the downtown area of Portland, Oregon. As the drop sites filled with donated goods, Moy-Brown and her OPWG colleagues gathered the items and consolidated them in one location. "One of our members agreed to drive to just outside of Portland to pick up our donations and take them to her hospital and local shelters," Moy-Brown explained.

The relief efforts and donated supplies served as an uplifting reminder that, in times of crisis, there are many caring people who will do whatever it takes to help others. "I am proud to serve our OPWG community of women who are not only breaking glass ceilings, but also lifting each other up and finding ways to give back to the communities they serve," Moy-Brown emphasized. □



Theodore Aquino, D.O., M.B.A., M.S.P.H., FACOEM ('09), is the new chief medical officer/assistant vice president of medical and employee health at BNSF Railway, which is a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway and has 40,000 employees. In this role, Aquino oversees pandemic management, employee wellness, industrial hygiene, medical regulatory compliance, and worker fitness.



Bertha Baum, D.O., FAOCD, FAAD ('10), a board-certified dermatologist and cosmetic surgeon at Hollywood Dermatology, was featured numerous times in *People* magazine last year for

her expertise in personalized skin care regimens. Additionally, she was featured in three episodes of *The Derms of Boca Raton*, a web series that focuses on the treatment journeys of patients who underwent cosmetic procedures.



Eric Chung, D.O., M.P.H. ('14), joined Baptist Health in Fort Smith, Arkansas, as a bariatric surgeon. Chung recently completed a fellowship in minimally invasive surgery and weight-loss surgery at

Advanced Laparoscopic Surgical Associates in Fresno, California.



Elizabeth Feldman, D.O. ('15), a board-certified pediatric physician, joined Cleveland Clinic Martin Health and is seeing patients at the Pediatric Care office in Jensen Beach, Florida. She is board certified by the

American Osteopathic Board of Pediatrics and the American Board of Pediatrics.



Daniel Marc Friedman, D.O. ('08), is the new medical director of the Fanwood Rescue Squad in Fanwood, New Jersey. As medical director, he advises the rescue squad on best practices in patient care,

emergency response procedures, patient care reports, and educational opportunities. Friedman is also an attending physician and an assistant professor of clinical emergency medicine at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Department of Emergency Medicine.



Thomas Green, D.O., M.M.M., M.P.H., CPE, CPHQ, FACEP, FACOEP-D ('98), was appointed chief of staff for the VA Central Iowa Health Care System (VACIHCS) in Des Moines, Iowa. He joined the VACIHCS in April 2017

as associate chief of staff for education and medical director of the emergency department. In December 2019, Green was named acting chief of staff. He also became a Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality in October through the Healthcare Quality Certification Commission.



Jeffrey S. Grove, D.O., FACOFP ('90), was elected to a one-year term as national president of the American Osteopathic Foundation. Additionally, the Broadway production company he owns with fellow 1990 KPCOM

alumnus Michael Jackowitz, D.O., CPT—Witzend Productions—is scheduled to debut a new musical about the life of Princess Diana on June 1 called *Diana: A New Musical*, if Broadway is allowed to reopen after closing during the initial wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Lisa Gwynn, D.O., M.B.A., FAAP, CPE ('98), program director of the Pediatric Mobile Clinic and school health at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, was elected president of the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.



Marlow B. Hernandez, D.O., M.P.H., M.B.A., FACP ('11), coauthored the article "Current Understanding of COVID-19 Clinical Course and Investigational Treatments," which was published online on October 21 in *Frontiers in Medicine*.



Mandar Jagtap, D.O., FACC, FASE, FSCAI, FASNC ('09), was appointed program director of the Magnolia Regional Health Center Cardiovascular Fellowship in Corinth, Mississippi, becoming the youngest cardiovascular program director in the country.



Marc G. Kaprow, D.O., M.H.A., FACOI ('01), was installed as president of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association in February. The FOMA serves and represents approximately 10,000 osteopathic students and physicians in the state of Florida.



Robert Kawa, D.O. ('14), a board-certified family medicine physician, recently joined Cleveland Clinic Martin Health in Stuart, Florida. He completed his family medicine residency at St. Vincent's Family Medicine Center in Jacksonville, Florida, and his neuromusculoskeletal medicine residency at Florida Hospital East in Orlando.



Margaret C. Lamkin, D.O. ('14), received a new Mazda Miata MX-5 100th anniversary special edition car through the Mazda Heroes program for her admirable efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. As cases skyrocketed, she traveled from her daily work in rural Alabama to the World Congress Center at a hospital set aside solely for COVID patients. She also assisted the Porch Creek Indian Health Department to help develop best practices and protocols to care for citizens who contracted COVID-19.



Joshua D. Lenchus, D.O., R.Ph., FACP, SFHM ('00), chief medical officer at Broward Health Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, was elected vice president of the Florida Medical Association—the first D.O. to hold the position. He has also been a frequent media presence pertaining to COVID-19 in the South Florida area during the pandemic.

(continued on page 34)

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.



Brad Lipson, D.O., FASPC ('05), a double board-certified physician, and **Jana Ray, M.P.H., PA** ('03), a physician assistant, are collaborating on a clinical trial for COVID-19 prevention as principal

investigator and sub-investigator, respectively. Since August 2, a phase 3 clinical trial—a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study—has been underway. The organizations involved are Eli Lilly and Company, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and AbCellera Biologics. The study aims to evaluate a specific intervention/treatment for preventing SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 infection for some of the most vulnerable citizens in the United States.



Erick Mejia, D.O. ('17), joined Family Doctors of North Port in Florida. Mejia, who completed his residency training at St. Petersburg General Hospital in June 2020, is board certified in family medicine

and osteopathic manipulative treatment.



Jessica Okun, D.O., M.S. ('10), a skilled neurological surgeon and specialist in brain and pituitary tumors, degenerative spinal disease, and neurotrauma, was named Physician of the Quarter at Florida Medical

Center in Fort Lauderdale. Okun was nominated in a process involving hospital employees and physicians.



Vianka Perez, D.O. ('14), joined Tenet Florida Physician Services (TFPS) and opened her practice in an established TFPS cardiology office located at the Palmetto General Hospital campus in Hialeah, Florida. She

specializes in general cardiology, including preventative cardiovascular medicine, women's heart health, structural heart imaging, valvular and structural heart disease, heart failure medicine, and advanced echocardiography. Perez joined TFPS after serving as chief fellow in the cardiovascular fellowship program at Palmetto General Hospital.



Bryan Peterson, D.O. ('12), was named director of radiology and supervising physician for breast imaging at Southeastern Health's medical staff, where he practices in affiliation with Coastal Radiology/

Radiology Partners at Southeastern Radiology Associates in Lumberton, North Carolina. Prior to joining forces with Southeastern Health, Peterson practiced at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as a clinical assistant professor of radiology.



Elizabeth Phung, D.O. ('13), medical director of the Beacham Center for Geriatric Medicine at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland, received the 2020 John R. Burton, M.D., Scholarship in

Geriatric Surgery. The scholarship was created to foster innovation and collaboration between geriatricians and surgeons to expand and improve the quality of care for older patients. Phung's scholarship will allow her to assess the role of a geriatric-focused, multidisciplinary approach on surgical outcomes for older patients.



Bruce G. Rankin, D.O., CPI, FACOFP ('85), medical director of Accel Clinical Research in Deland, Florida, was featured on FOX 35 News on November 17 to discuss the progress made in the COVID-19 vaccine

development process. Accel Clinical Research is one of the sites that has been conducting COVID-19 clinical research trials in the United States for Johnson & Johnson and Novavax.



Aditya Vora, D.O. ('14), a psychiatrist at JFK Medical Center in Atlantis, Florida, opened a psychiatric practice in Davie, Florida, called Refresh Psychiatry, which focuses on student mental health needs.



Fawn Winkelman, D.O., ('10), medical director and owner of the Elite Medicine and Aesthetic Institute in Boca Raton, Florida, has been providing COVID-19 vaccines to patients since January 1.



Nazar Sharak, D.O. ('14), joined the Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital in Vero Beach, Florida. He completed his internal medicine residency training at Broward Health Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale,

Florida, and his cardiology fellowship and chief cardiology fellow programs at Coney Island Hospital in Brooklyn, New York.

CLOSING Notes

COM Outlook Wins CASE Award

On January 28, Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine's *COM Outlook* magazine received the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Bronze Award of excellence in the magazines-alumni/special interest category. The CASE District III Institutional Awards represent the very best in advancement across the southeastern United States.

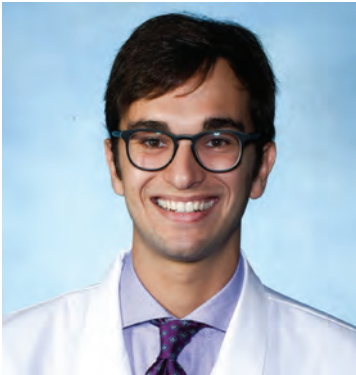
"This is the third award *COM Outlook* has won within the past year," said Scott Colton, B.A., APR, director of medical communications and

special projects for NSU's Office of Printing and Publications and executive editor of *COM Outlook*. "These awards speak to the sustained excellence of the magazine and the myriad talents of the individuals who play an essential role in creating each issue."

In 2020, *COM Outlook* received the first-place prize in the magazine and periodicals category in the Public Relations Society of America Tampa Bay Chapter PRestige Awards and the Best Magazine award from the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine. □



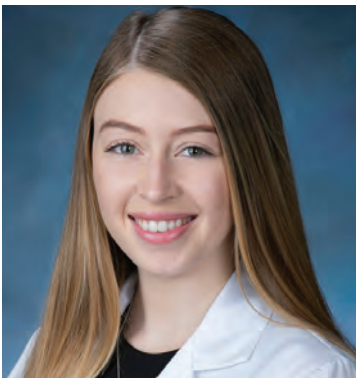
Berko and Novotny Named Students of the Year



Third-year student Joshua Berko (Fort Lauderdale/Davie) and second-year student Kristina Novotny (Tampa Bay) were selected as NSU Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) Student D.O.s of the Year by their peers at their respective campuses.

According to her award nomination, Novotny stood out because of her passion for the osteopathic profession, as well as the tremendous work ethic she displays as she strives to become a competent, compassionate, and dedicated osteopathic physician. She is also focused on dedicating herself to research, advocacy, and awareness surrounding bone health.

Novotny also exhibited her dedication to the profession by becoming founding president of the KPCOM's Tampa Bay Chapter of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association. In this role, she worked hard to build the organization and showcased what it takes to work well with a team and lead in a time of great adversity.



Berko, a current KPCOM osteopathic principles and practice fellow, previously showcased his leadership abilities in his role as president of the college's Florida Osteopathic Medical Association chapter and as national liaison to the Student Osteopathic Medical Association. He was also honored for his impressive academic achievements, numerous community outreach efforts, and dedication to sharing his knowledge about osteopathic medicine.

Because of their wins, both Berko and Novotny had their award applications submitted to the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents' (COSGP) National Student D.O. of the Year competition. The COSGP is the national leadership council of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine and is the only organization that represents all osteopathic medical students. □

INIM Receives \$4.4-Million COVID Grant



As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, health care providers are finding that more patients are experiencing lingering symptoms after recovering from the virus. These symptoms include being bone-tired and drained of energy. In most cases, they continue to negatively impact the patient's overall well-being and ability to return to normal activities.

Currently, not much is known or being done to address the residual health issues experienced by those now called COVID long haulers. That's changing, however, thanks to research scientists like Nancy Klimas, M.D., director of the NSU Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine and chair of the Department of Clinical Immunology at the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Because of her expertise and the work she is involved with at the osteopathic college, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded Klimas and her research team a federal contract of approximately \$4.4 million to study these residual symptoms in COVID-19 patients. NSU is the only institution to receive this federal contract.

"Due to our long-standing research in myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome, we've been selected to research these symptoms in COVID-19 patients," Klimas explained. "Because the symptoms are so similar—joint and muscle pain, severe fatigue, and memory and cognitive issues—to chronic fatigue syndrome, NSU is uniquely positioned to study this emerging development in the pandemic. This study will provide the chance to see patients early on in their conditions, and that's vital for developing treatments." □

NSU Florida 2020 KPCOM Gifts and Pledge Payments

The below list includes donors we believe wish to be recognized for their generous outright gifts and pledge payments to the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine from January 1 through December 31, 2020.

\$1,000,000+

Drs. Kiran (Trustee) & Pallavi Patel Family Foundation

\$500,000–\$999,999

The Schemel Family Foundation

\$50,000–\$499,999

Boston Scientific Corporation
Florida Blue
Dr. and Mrs. Richard R. Love
The Lozick Family Foundation
The 22 Project

\$25,000–\$49,999

The Asad Family Foundation

\$10,000–\$24,999

Algonot, LLC
Dr. Leonardo Cisneros, Jr.
The Quell Foundation, Inc.
Drs. Elaine Wallace-Ross and Jill Wallace-Ross
Welch Allyn, Inc.

\$5,000–\$9,999

Mr. Ronald G. (Trustee) and Mrs. Kathy Assaf
Dr. and Mrs. Ronald J. Chenail
Adolfo and Marisela Cotilla
Florida Association for the Study of Headache
and Neurological Disorders

\$1,000–\$4,999

Dr. Gilbert Beauperthuy and
Mrs. Cristina Mendia Beauperthuy
Dr. Cyril Blavo
CFS Knowledge Center
Dr. Patricia M. and Mr. Jonathan E. Cole
Cynthia Hill
Dr. James T. Howell
Dr. and Mrs. Randy S. Katz
Dr. Gary Steven Margules
Mr. and Mrs. Gregg Mongold
Dr. Guy M. Nehrenz
Stephanie Nelson Petrosky
Shauntae Roberts
Dr. Wayne A. and Mrs. Lorinda Schreier
Dr. Ioana Scripa
Dr. and Mrs. Anthony J. Silvagni

\$500–\$999

Deallus
Dr. Orlando Garcia and Dr. Mary Jo Villar
Phyllis F. Greenstein
President George and Mrs. Jana Hanbury
Drs. Kenneth and Michelle Johnson
Dr. Barry M. Karpel
Nicholas Lutfi
Dr. Gary J. Merlino
Dr. and Mrs. Glenn Moran
Mr. and Mrs. John Sadler
Dr. and Mrs. John Chase Soliday
Jill Swanson

\$150–\$499

Dr. Eric Alboucrek
Dr. Paula L. Anderson-Worts
Dr. Alison Christine Bested
Dr. Gayl Canfield
Dr. Carisa Rose Champion
Scott N. Colton
Blake A. Constantinides
Nicole Jill Cook
Dr. Alan David
Drs. Joseph and Hilda De Gaetano
Drs. Gina Foster-Moumoutjis and Arvelo Moumoutjis
Dr. Mark Gabay

Dr. Marilyn Smith Gordon
Ana Homs Gonzalez
Mirlyn Hurry
Drs. Marc and Robin Kesselman
Lubov Nathanson
Dr. Elizabeth O. Oviawe
Dr. Raymond L. Ownby
Rudy Perpich
Lisa Reardon
Dr. Mark Sandhouse
Dr. Judith P. Schaffer
Dr. and Mrs. Marc Scheer
Sheri Schour
Pat Sonnett
Dr. Steven B. Zucker

\$1–\$149

Shirley Alansky
Beth Ann Allen
Sahar S. Amini
Caitlin M. Arbos
Dr. Barbara Arcos
Dr. Nicholas J. Arcos
Julio R. Arriaza
Richard Ascher
Dr. Tonni Y. Bacoat-Jones
Dr. Rebecca A. Begtrup
Marjorie K. Bell
Drs. Anjali Bhasin and Naveen Goel
Betsy C. Blume
Lila A. Bogdanowicz
Dominic V. Bortot
Mildred Boyer
Dr. Tambi L. and Mr. Tau Jonty Braun
Thomas P. Brown
Christina Brown-Wujick
Jonathan Bruner
Patricia Ann Burke
Sharon Calabrese
Charles Lindbergh Carr
Annette L. Clarke
Dr. Darren J. Cohen
Mr. and Mrs. Herb Cohen
John Davanzo
Heike E. Dose
Lori Beth Dribin
Kelly M. Duke
Odanna Duverge
Dr. Robert T. Effren
Marie Hermine Florent-Carre
Drs. Chad and Yasmin Frank
Dr. Arlene Giczkowski
Beth Gilbert
Karlton D. Godfrey
Eric Alan Goldsmith
Irving Granoff
Tameeka A. Grant
Paul Greenman
Drs. Jason and Farzanna Haffizulla
Hope Hagler
Dr. Elizabeth Hames
Janet Hamstra
Elizabeth Handly
Dr. Faris Z. Hawatmeh
Robin L. Helm
Carmen Evelyn Hernandez
Liane Hess
Mitzi B. Hodges
Mary Holloway
Dawn Holt
Kenneth Hurewitz
Dr. Annisah Ishmael
Dr. Lailah C. Issac
Sylvia Iversen
Dr. Robin Joy Jacobs
Dr. Jennifer A. Jordan

Sandra Kaplan
Dorothy Kass
Dr. Cecylia T. Kelley
Holly Laird
Claire Lang
Hannah Lenard
Elissa Levine
Rona R. Levitt
Harriet J. Lieberman
Dr. Laura S. Ling
Guimarsha Louis
Melinda H. Luis
Amy C. Markarian
Jordan Lynn Mathis
Linda E. Maurice
Mr. and Mrs. Bob Mayer
Dr. Bindu Mayi
Dr. Rohit S. Mehra
Kristi Messer
Manoucheka Michel-Pierre
Nadine Mikati
Sara M. Moeinian
Georgie S. Montes Velez
Jane E. Newman
Glenn A. Ogden
Naushira Pandya
Phillip Parkinson
Dr. Katherine T. Peicher
Odessa A. Pemberton
Eduardo Ramon Pla Alvarez
Alessandra Posey
Charles E. Powell
Stacy R. Pyne
Shari Ramchal
Alfredo M. Rehbein
Sandra Rosen
Dr. Irving Rosenbaum
Helaine Royo
Barbara C. Sageman
Gerri S. Sant
Gemma Saperstein
Theresa M. Schilthorn
Stephen Schwartz
Dr. Sandi Scott-Holman and Mr. Brent E. Holman
Louis Shelley
Marion L. Sherman
Marla Silverman
Andrae Simpson and Melissa Chantel Chamberlain
Steven Singer
Suzette R. Siviter
Mr. and Mrs. Steven Sloane
Stuart Slutsky
Jewel Smith
Desiree Maciel Soto
Drs. William and Zoraida Stager
Dr. Matthew William Told
Kimberly P. Valenti
Iris Walden
Susanne Walder
Ellen Walliser
Lisa Walther
Ellen Robin Weinstein
Denise Weinstock
Dr. Nathan P. Widboom
Dr. Michael B. Williams
Yuri Zagvazdin
Dr. Wanda J. Zamorano
Christlene Zetrenne

KPCOM LEGACY DONORS

The following individuals have made planned gifts to the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Bernadette Bruce and David Boehme
Scott N. Colton
Loretta Neff



REDEFINE YOUR EDGE.

Looking for a breakout career move?

CONSIDER EARNING A GRADUATE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE IN

- Public Health
- Biomedical Informatics
- Disaster and Emergency Management
- Medical Education
- Nutrition
- Social Medicine
- Emergency Medicine
- Family Therapy
- Health and Wellness Coaching

Check out all of our bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional options at osteopathic.nova.edu.