



SPRING  
SUMMER  
2013

# *Across the* **Spectrum**

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

## **Then and now**

*Rediscovering the past,  
preparing for the future*





# Letter from the dean

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*Across the Spectrum* is a news publication for alumni, friends, faculty, and staff of the Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences. Visit the college online at <http://artsandsciences.fsu.edu/>.

**G**reetings to our alumni and friends, and welcome to another issue of *Across the Spectrum*. In this issue, we celebrate both the history and the future of FSU with stories that simultaneously indulge our nostalgia for the past and speak to the promise of our university moving forward. One of the great joys of being a part of a college as large and diverse as the College of Arts and Sciences is that our particular story is woven through every aspect of the larger university's story. This *Spectrum* invites us to remember that story even as we prepare to write the next chapter.

Florida State University's history is rich in contributions by women. The women—faculty members, students, and staff—who have walked the halls of FSCW (the Florida State College for Women) and later, FSU, have left their mark in spectacular ways. In this issue you will read about a thriving campus organization called Women in Mathematics, Science, and Engineering (WIMSE). Since its origins some 20 years ago, WIMSE has helped maintain and strengthen the role of women on our campus. A timeline accompanying the story showcases that role, one of leadership and achievement, from the university's founding through the present day.

One of the many women who have made us great is Gloria Priest, whose gifts to the Department of Religion are highlighted in this issue. The scholarly interaction that takes place with the campus visits of nationally renowned scholars is a defining feature of FSU. It is hard to overestimate the inspiration and energy that our academic community draws from these events. I am very grateful to Gloria for establishing an endowment that ensures continuation of the John F. Priest Lectureship series for generations to come.

Those of you who know Jim O'Brien will understand when I describe him as a force of nature. We honor his long career, one in which he has shared his passion for his subject with so many students, with a profile in this issue. Perhaps the most startling thing about Jim is the sheer number of students he's mentored—including 44 Ph.D.s. After all he's given to FSU, it gives me great pleasure to celebrate his career here.

Robert O. Lawton Professor of English Stan Gontarski is part of an effort that has recently uncovered original writings and documents of the Beat Generation literary icon William Burroughs. The story, recounted within, involves an eccentric former FSU art professor, an abandoned artist's complex, and a tiny town 16 miles to the east of Tallahassee. The valuable documents will be a source of scholarship for years to come, and it's our privilege to have them at FSU.

Finally, the story of FSU alumnus Tom Leonard and his wife Laurrie, who have established a fund to provide scholarships for students in need, is a great example of how our rich history feeds our future. Tom's remarkable career as an entrepreneur is already full of successes and one senses that there is much more to come. His decision to pass to future generations the tools for success that he acquired at FSU is an inspiration to us all.

Thank you so much for staying in touch with the College of Arts and Sciences. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Across the Spectrum* as much as I have. Best wishes for a productive and satisfying summer.

Physical chemist Naresh Dalal was named the 2012 Robert O. Lawton Professor, the highest honor given by FSU to its faculty. Dalal is the 57th professor to earn the honor, and the 10th from the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. He is pictured here with Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Garnett Stokes.







#### On the cover

The main building of the Nautilus Foundation, an artists' commune and retreat built by former FSU professor François Bucher, has been at the center of a 30-year saga involving a cache of manuscripts from

famed novelist William Burroughs. Read about Bucher, Burroughs, and the literary detective work of FSU's English department on page 16.

# Across the Spectrum

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

## table of contents

### features

#### The science of success 2

FSU fights gender inequality in the sciences with a secret weapon

#### Femina Perfecta 2

A selected history of women at FSU

#### A legacy in the numbers 6

Meteorology professor Jim O'Brien celebrates 43 years, 44 Ph.D. students, and an impact beyond measure

#### John F. Priest lectureship turns 10 10

Gloria Priest ensures many years to come with gift to religion department

#### Then and now 12

A look at the changing face of FSU and the College of Arts and Sciences

#### A 30-year wait. A 16-mile journey. 16

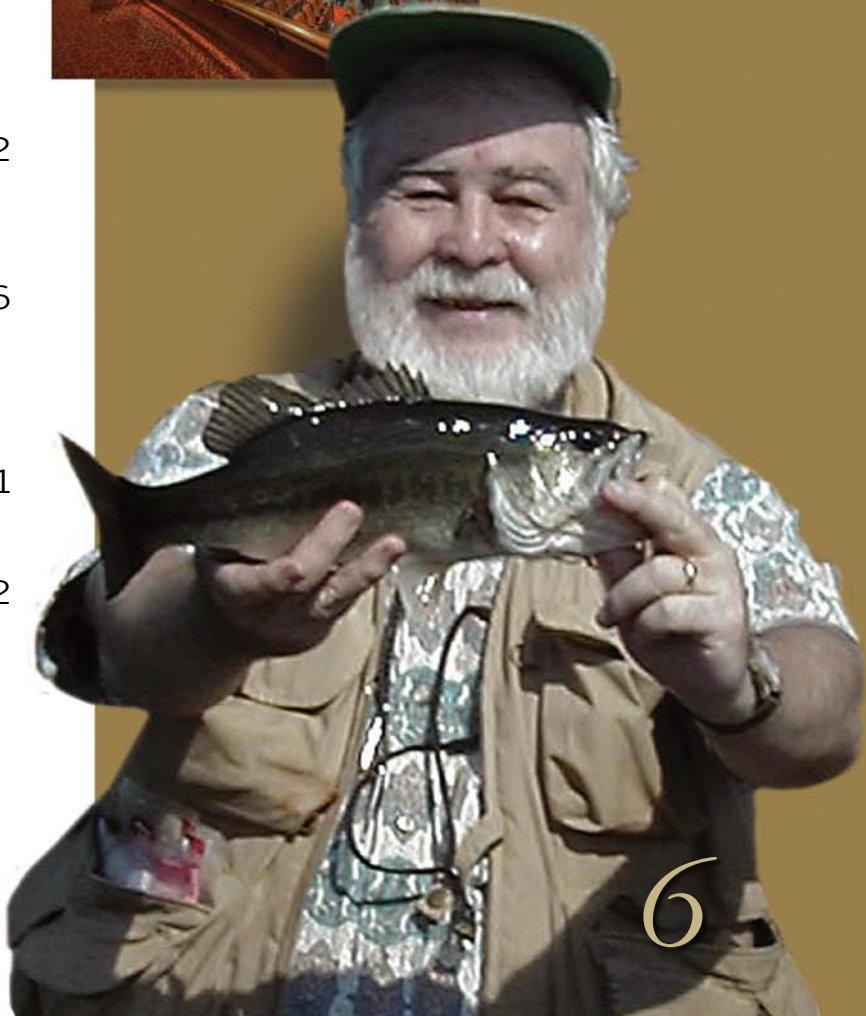
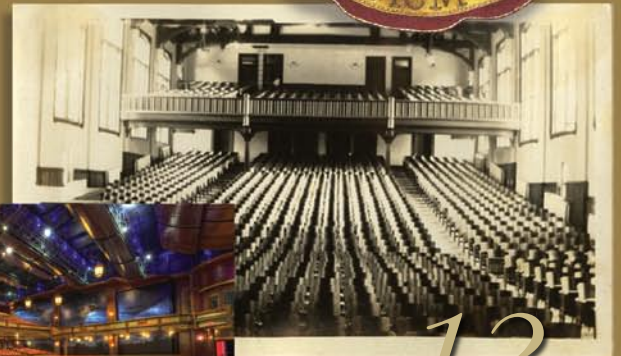
A literary treasure emerges from the Florida wilderness

#### Innovative giving 21

This year, The Great Give is going green

#### A commitment to excellence 22

FSU alum Tom Leonard and wife Laurrie establish endowment to fund undergraduate education



# The science of success

How FSU's Women in Math, Science, and Engineering (WIMSE) program addresses the struggle for gender equality in traditionally male fields

When Amanda Stefin, a junior chemistry major in her second year at Florida State, thinks back on her very earliest experiences as a college student, taking the True Colors test in her freshman residence hall comes immediately to mind.



Professor of Physics  
Susan Blessing  
serves as Director  
of FSU's Women  
in Math, Science,  
and Engineering  
(WIMSE) program.

"It's a personality test that allows you to examine yourself and be aware of your tendencies," Stefin says. "It allowed roommates to understand how to live together and work together. We became closer as we began to tell each other our colors and we understood how to adapt to each color accordingly."

It sounds like the kind of activity that happens in residence halls, Greek houses, or other campus organizations at any university in the country, but Stefin's freshman group was something entirely different from the usual arbitrary collection of new students thrust into a community.

This residence hall was Cawthon Hall, and the women she took the test with had more in common than a housing assignment. They were the latest addition to the Women in Math, Science, and Engineering (WIMSE) program, a "living-learning community" as well as a larger society that brings together young women forging their way in the traditionally male-dominated science disciplines.

WIMSE is perhaps FSU's most versatile weapon in the fight to bring some gender parity to the sciences, a struggle that has been ongoing in America's universities since the early 1970s. That versatility comes from its two-pronged approach: It provides students with a supportive and enjoyable social group of like-minded peers while at the same time pushing and helping young women to find and take academic opportunities whenever they come—especially the chance to participate in real scientific research.

The program is of vital importance to the College of Arts and Sciences since the fields in question make up roughly half of its departments.

"WIMSE is about providing the students with a support structure, giving them a group of

friends in similar fields at similar life stages," says Susan Blessing, a professor of physics and the director of WIMSE. "And it's especially for the future—we're encouraging them to go to graduate school."

## The rise of a community

In 1993, Jennie Murphree Hall (one of FSU's older dormitories, built in 1922) was rededicated after a full renovation. According to Professor Emerita of Chemistry Penny Gilmer, a member of the WIMSE board of directors from its founding until her retirement in 2010, a group of women interested in what has come to be known as the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) began living together in an informal community.

That informal grouping of women was the start of something, but, Gilmer says, it didn't become official until Professor of Oceanography Nancy Marcus became the founding director of what is now known as WIMSE in 2001.

"This was maybe a preamble to a living-learning community," says Gilmer. "It was a *living* community, and it was focused on STEM, but it wasn't a *living-learning* community. And Nancy integrated the two."

## Femina Perfecta

A selected history  
of women at FSU

The cast of a play at  
Florida State College  
for Women poses for  
a group photo.





Marcus, who is now Dean of The Graduate School, saw an opportunity to make scientific fields more attractive and more welcoming to women starting their undergraduate careers at FSU.

“Despite great gains over the decades in the representation of women in fields like biology and chemistry, there are still great disparities in the proportion of men and women pursuing careers in fields such as physics and engineering,” says Marcus. “I do not think that women should isolate themselves, but seeing others like yourself sharing similar interests promotes confidence.”

The original mission of WIMSE hasn’t changed since its inception, but the ways in which it pursues that mission have evolved over time, thanks to the leadership of Marcus and Blessing, who took over after Marcus became a dean in 2005.

### The Cawthon Hall experience

In 2007, the home for first-year WIMSE students was moved to Cawthon Hall, a sought-after spot right on Landis Green with quick access to Strozier Library and the Suwannee Room dining hall.

Most students move elsewhere after their year in Cawthon, but they continue to participate in the WIMSE community through special events, so their influence on the first-year students as well as their own growth through the program lasts for the duration of their college careers.

The effects of this supportive peer group prove a tremendous help in the building of a successful undergraduate science career. Students such as Stefin make close friends among other young female scientists and make connections with faculty and graduate students in their own disciplines and others.

“One amazing thing about the program is that you have to work really hard to find a class that doesn’t have another WIMSE in it,” Stefin says. “There isn’t one class that I have had to date that hasn’t had someone I know.”

Computer science major Megan Stanforth, a junior who spent her 2010-2011 year in Cawthon, agrees.

“My physics class last semester had nine WIMSE students,” she says. “The semester before had 11. We are everywhere. It’s a wonderful feeling to see a familiar face in a lecture hall.”

Stanforth has also been impressed by the access students get to those who are farther along in their academic careers. Chief among these are Blessing herself and WIMSE’s current graduate assistant, Samantha Nix, who makes time to help out the younger students one-on-one.

“There are too many students at FSU for that to happen in a classroom setting,” Stanforth says. “But in WIMSE this is common. It’s something that almost gets taken for granted.”

For Nix, a master’s student studying higher education and student affairs, the experience is mutually beneficial.

### Women in science: the numbers

It’s no secret that for decades universities across the country have been struggling with the fact that women are underrepresented in scientific disciplines.

Prejudices are usually cited as the reason such a pronounced imbalance has endured despite decades of effort to reverse the trend. Studies have shown, for example, that even female tenured faculty members are more likely to hire a male candidate for a job in their department than an equally qualified female.

The good news? Since the early 1970s, when academic institutions first began to combat this problem, the United States has made big strides toward including women in science, math, and engineering programs. The National Science Foundation’s most recent figures estimate that the percentage of women holding full professorships in science has more than quadrupled from its dismal low of 4.8 percent in 1979.

The bad news, of course, is that for all this improvement, the rate is still only 20.6 percent as of 2008, the most recent year for which statistics were available.

There’s still a long way to go, both nationwide and at FSU. An internal report done by FSU’s College of Arts and Sciences in 2010 found that the faculty of scientific departments within the college was made up of 19.7 percent women, comparable to the national average.

And while women made up an impressive 60.8 percent share of bachelor’s degrees awarded in science, that number was only 33.9 percent at the doctoral level.

1851 1855 1858 1893 1901 1908

The Seminary West of the Suwannee, which would eventually become FSU, is mandated by the Florida General Assembly.

The Florida Institute is built on a site known as “Gallows Hill,” named for being the place where a woman was hanged 25 years earlier. In the present day, FSU’s Westcott administration building stands on the site.

The seminary, officially proclaimed to be located in Tallahassee the year before, becomes coeducational with the inclusion of the Leon Female Academy, originally established in 1843.

Elizabeth Bangs becomes the first woman to teach science at the Seminary West of the Suwannee. She remained on the faculty until 1900.

1908 – The first woman to earn an advanced degree from Florida Female College is awarded her master’s.



A swift succession of changes by the legislature turns the Seminary West of the Suwannee into the female-only Florida Female College, only to be renamed again for reasons of “awkwardness and poor grammar” into Florida State College for Women (FSCW) in 1909. The seal of the new college, quite similar to the seal still used by FSU today, bore the Latin phrase *femina perfecta*, or, “the completed woman.”

Courtesy of FSU Heritage Protocol.



Photos by Wil Oakes.

Cawthon Hall serves as home to first year WIMSE students and has an excellent location right on Landis Green.



Photo courtesy of WIMSE.

Shannon Ingersoll shows off a model of FSU's off-grid zero emissions building. Ingersoll, a member of WIMSE's class of 2006, got her bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering at FSU.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the intellectual conversations with faculty and staff about programming efforts," she says. "Most of all, though, the students have inspired me to continue to work with underrepresented populations in STEM."

Having that kind of access to mentors is especially helpful for those feeling overwhelmed or intimidated by being one in a crowd of so many motivated and ambitious students.

"I am a very shy person, and I am so grateful that I have Dr. Blessing and Samantha Nix to encourage me," says sophomore psychology major Angela Porcellini. "They are always there to give us advice or tell us who to ask for advice. It is so reassuring to know that I have people who genuinely care about my future and how I am doing."

WIMSE also provides students with extra opportunities to take on leadership roles, such as joining the Student Activities Council—a group within WIMSE that plans social, outreach, and other events—or becoming a hall mentor and staying on in Cawthon after the first year to guide the new students.

### Making research a priority

In its early days, WIMSE was mostly focused on community-building. In its current manifestation, however, that social support system is complementary to an emphasis on providing research opportunities for students. Making research a priority was one of Blessing's biggest goals when she took over as director in 2005.

"Most students have not considered a career in research and don't have a real idea of what it is," she says. "Everyone knows a doctor, but how many people know a research biologist?"

The benefits of getting involved as an undergraduate, which Blessing understands well, make her eager to help students brush aside their misgivings. She pushes those who are resistant to the idea to give it a try.

"They think you have to be *so* smart and know *so* much to get involved, but that isn't true," she says. "Getting involved in research as an undergraduate gives relevance to coursework, allows students to see what they can do with what they're learning in the real world, and opens up even more opportunities for them. And it's fun!"

She recalls one specific conversation with a student who claimed she didn't want to do research because it was boring. After Blessing gave her an earful about what she'd be missing out on and let her go, something unexpected happened.

"After that conversation, I received a Research Experience Program application from her," says Blessing. "When I saw her and asked about it, she told me, 'I came to college for opportunities, and there was someone I respected trying to shove one down my throat! Maybe I should give it a try.' She ended up going to graduate school in biochemistry."

The Research Experience Program (REP) gives WIMSE students a chance to be paired with a professor working on a project and become paid assistants.

1912 1926 1936 1940 1947 1955

Courtesy of FSU Heritage Protocol.

Rowena Longmire, FSCW English teacher, receives the college's first honorary degree. Today, the administration building of the College of Arts and Sciences is named in her honor.



Courtesy of FSU Heritage Protocol.

Anna Forbes Liddell, longtime chair of the Department of Philosophy at both FSCW and FSU, joins the faculty. Liddell, a suffragette and lifelong advocate of equal rights for women, died in 1979.



Courtesy of FSU Photo Lab.

Kitty Hoffman, who would go on to serve as Professor of Chemistry at FSCW, become Dean of Women at FSU, and earn an honorary degree, graduates from FSCW with her bachelor's.



First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visits FSCW.



The Florida Legislature again changes the institution's name and status. FSCW becomes coeducational once again and takes a final name change: Florida State University.

Courtesy of FSU Heritage Protocol.

Sylvia Earle, who would go on to become a world-famous oceanographer and be named *Time* magazine's first "Hero for the Planet" in 1998, graduates from FSU.



"The REP is a great way to become involved in research and make connections with faculty," says Stefin. "It allows relationships to grow that may be important later for possible recommendation letters and mentorship."

Gilmer, who had watched the program grow and become multifaceted under Marcus's leadership, saw how Blessing's influence made research paramount in the WIMSE program.

"She wants the students to do it," Gilmer says, "because it so influenced her in her choices to go into a STEM field. And it did for me, too. It made me realize that science was a creative process. It was interesting and challenging."

### A better future ahead

For people like Blessing, Gilmer, and Marcus, who came up as women in earlier generations of scientists, there are memories of a difficult time fighting for acceptance and equal standing among their male peers. The landscape for current WIMSE students looks a bit different.

For many of these young women, those obstacles, while still present, have become small enough (especially compared to their boundless belief in themselves) that they don't spend much time worrying about them. And WIMSE seems to be an exceptional tool for building just that kind of overcoming confidence.

"Being a woman in a male-dominated field has never been difficult for me," says Stefin. "I don't see gender. I see students, I see competition."

That attitude is pervasive throughout the ranks of WIMSE students, even those who have had struggles with feeling outcast in the past.

"Women get told constantly they aren't good enough—I was not an exception," says Stanforth. "WIMSE encourages us to accept that we are just as good by sending us on laboratory visits, by getting guest professors to talk about their research and how they worked hard to succeed. WIMSE helps us into male-dominated fields by promising us success because we work hard and enjoy what we do."

For Stanforth and her peers, there's reason to hope that their generation, or one in the not-too-distant future, will be the last to face these struggles.

"WIMSE helps encourage women in these fields," Stanforth says, "so that one day we won't have to ask a successful scientist about the challenges she faces simply because she is a woman."

A WIMSE group poses after an event in October 2005. Nancy Marcus (far left) was director of WIMSE until she became Dean of The Graduate School in 2005. At that time, current director Susan Blessing (far right) took over.

Photo by Penny Gilmer.



Photo by Penny Gilmer.

WIMSE graduate assistant Samantha Nix (left) and director Susan Blessing (center) share a laugh with student Shreen Kamil at a WIMSE reception in November 2011.



Photo courtesy of WIMSE.

Students participate in a trust walk, a team building exercise. Activities and outings like this one are put on by WIMSE's Student Activities Council.

1960

The first coed dormitory at FSU is opened in DeGraff Hall.

1970

Curfews for women are abolished at FSU, marking uniform rules for both genders 23 years after FSU became coeducational.

1976

Caroline Alexander becomes the first woman from FSU to receive a Rhodes Scholarship.

1983

FSU alum Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (B.M. 1960, M.M. 1962) becomes the first female recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for music, awarded in recognition of her first symphony. She has been a Professor of Music at FSU since 1995.

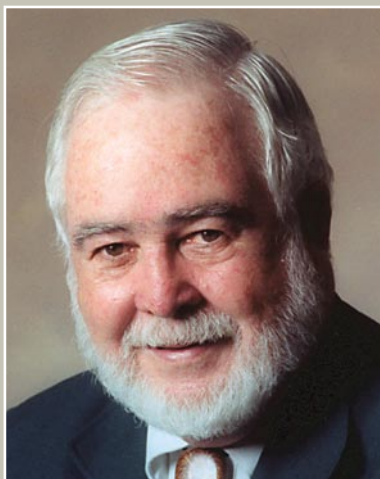


1995

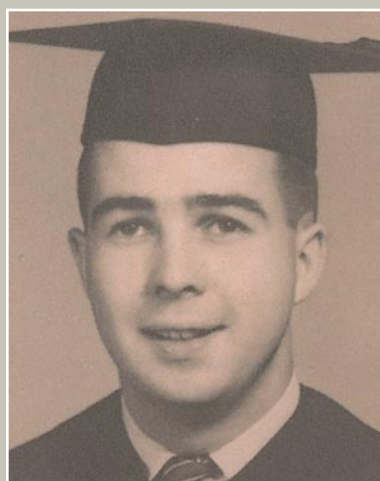
Famed civil rights leader Rosa Parks visits FSU to accept an honorary degree from then-president Sandy D'Alemberte.

Courtesy of FSU Photo Lab.





Jim O'Brien's career at FSU, in total, has spanned more than 45 years.



O'Brien graduated high school in 1953 in Summit, N.J.



O'Brien taken around 1970.

# A legacy in the numbers

## Professor Emeritus Jim O'Brien marks a career in mathematical ocean modeling and prolific mentorship

**W**hen he was a child, Jim O'Brien was a certified bookworm.

"I'm a nerd," he says. "I'm the kind that, at 12, I'd walk every Saturday to the local library, which was about a mile and a half, return five books and get five more. No television or anything like that, you know."

Most of those books were on mathematics—O'Brien's first academic passion growing up—but by the time he got to college he had fallen into the field of chemistry, which didn't grab his interest as much as he'd hoped it would. While working on his bachelor's degree, he was also in Air Force ROTC and wanted to join the military and become a pilot.

Just as O'Brien was about to graduate in 1957, however, the Air Force changed its enlistment rules so that anyone who wanted to fly had to enlist for five and a half years. He decided he didn't want it that badly, which turned out to be a serendipitous decision. A letter informed him that he would become a meteorologist, and the Air Force sent him to the University of Texas for a year to learn the basics.

"That's the way the world is," O'Brien says. "There are opportunities, and there's luck, and this was just happenstance. When I got the letter that said I was going to be a meteorologist, I had to look it up in the dictionary to find out what it was."

By the end of that year in Texas, O'Brien had found his academic home. Now, nearly 55 years later, he's enjoying a much-deserved semi-retirement from the Department of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Science (EOAS) and taking time to look back on a long and successful career, including 43 years spent at Florida State, countless students mentored (including 44 Ph.D. students), and a wide range of achievements that includes the first numerical description of the El Niño phenomenon.

His influence is such that he's well known not only in his own department but throughout the College of Arts and Sciences, and at least two generations of scientists can trace O'Brien's presence through their entire careers.

"I have known Jim for more than two decades," says Vasu Misra, one of O'Brien's colleagues in EOAS. "First as a teacher of my graduate class, then as a senior colleague in the department and as a co-researcher in a multi-institutional grant for several years. Jim brought tremendous energy, confidence, and scholarship to all of these venues. He's had a lasting impression on many aspiring young scientists."

### The long road to Rutgers

O'Brien's parents were Irish immigrants to the United States in 1926—a story that figures heavily in his own understanding of the course of his life and that, when told by O'Brien, involves an in-depth discussion of class in Irish society



and immigrant life in upstate New York and New Jersey. Suffice it to say, O'Brien's parents literally met on the boat to New York City but then lost track of each other and weren't to meet again until a chance encounter in Central Park four years later.

They were married in 1934 and O'Brien, the first of their nine children, was born in 1935.

Neither of O'Brien's parents had much of an education, but he was born with an innate desire to learn. His father was a metallurgical assistant at the famous Bell Labs, working alongside scientists and inventors.

"He was very good at working with his hands," O'Brien says, "and I guess he was a scientist, in a way."

Despite working surrounded by people with doctorates, O'Brien's father didn't want him to go to college, which O'Brien chalks up to the strict understanding of class his parents brought with them from Ireland.

"He came from a society and culture that said you were from a certain class," explains O'Brien. "I was lower class, so I was supposed to get my high school diploma, come home, live at home, get a job, and then bring home the paycheck."

O'Brien dreamed of becoming a teacher, however, and planned on going to a teachers' college despite his father's objections until a counselor at his school who recognized his promise encouraged him to go a step further and enroll in a university. He ended up getting a full scholarship to Rutgers, where, with a little help from the Air Force, he found his path.

### Choosing the classroom over the boardroom

After graduating from Rutgers in 1957, O'Brien spent a year working at DuPont chemical company before being called into duty with the Air Force. After a year in the military, during which he served by giving weather briefings to pilots, O'Brien planned to go to graduate school, but circumstances made it difficult. He married his high school sweetheart, Sheila O'Keefe, in 1958, and the couple had their first child shortly after.

O'Brien put his chemistry degree to work again and ended up back at DuPont, moving the family to Wilmington, Del. He applied and was accepted to MIT for graduate school but wasn't offered the financial package he needed to move and support his family, which O'Brien attributes to his mediocre undergraduate GPA.

"At Rutgers, I was not a 3.5 student," he says, "because I worked all the time and I could never handle German. I got Ds in German."

Ultimately, his chance to take his studies to the next level came after two years at DuPont, when a former professor from O'Brien's time at the University of Texas who was moving to Texas A&M helped him get one of 100 new fellowships that NASA was giving out to graduate students around the country. The decision would have been a tough one for most people, but O'Brien doesn't remember fretting over it too much, despite being on track to rise through the corporate ranks.

"To leave a job in which I was getting a 15 percent raise every 13 months, being trained to be an executive with DuPont?" O'Brien shrugs as he recalls this decision, then puts his reasoning simply: "I just loved the science."

So, science it was. At age 29, O'Brien and his wife had their second child just two months before he was to start school, and the whole family drove from Delaware to Texas, where they would live in an old, reconstructed barracks while he studied.

O'Brien finished his Ph.D. in a brisk three and a half years, writing a dissertation on the aftereffects of hurricanes on ocean waters and earning his doctorate in 1966. From there, he took his first academic job at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colo. While he enjoyed the work, it was a non-teaching position, which left part of O'Brien's dream unfulfilled.



O'Brien poses with recent high school graduates in the United States Navy's Office of Naval Research summer program in 1979. O'Brien mentored students in an air-sea interaction group at FSU.

He got his first chance in front of a classroom in the summer of 1967 with a visiting-lecturer job at FSU while he was on leave from NCAR.

"I said, 'If we can stand Tallahassee in the summer, I guess we can stand it in the winter too,'" O'Brien says.

Not long after, FSU extended O'Brien a more permanent offer to become an associate professor starting in 1969.

"I wasn't really ready to leave NCAR, but they offered me this opportunity to teach so I jumped at it," he says.

### **Making a statement**

O'Brien made his presence on the FSU campus known right away, in part because of his aggressive, forward-looking research and dedication to solid teaching, but also because of his personality.

"Back in the older days, you could always tell if Jim was in the building by the stink of his cigar," says EOAS professor Mark Bourassa.

Since joining the FSU faculty, O'Brien has racked up more achievements and honors than can be fully listed here. His first paper on

El Niño in 1976 broke ground and overcame controversy within the field by explaining and predicting mathematically the behavior of what had previously been a little-understood phenomenon. The work led to an explosion of research around the world, and to greater acceptance that weather around the globe is interconnected and the ocean holds the key to understanding those connections.

"I think that's what we really revolutionized, was recognizing that the ocean carries the memory," he says. "When the ocean changes itself, it does affect climate down the road."

O'Brien was the founding director of FSU's Center for Oceanic and Atmospheric Prediction Studies; received the university's highest faculty honor, being named a Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor in 1999; and served as the state climatologist of Florida.

"In his first year as state climatologist, Jim forecast the time in spring that the rains started to the day," says Bourassa. "A stunningly awesome start that got him a lot of positive attention. He applied the same approach the following year and was way off. After that year, he became a believer in probabilistic forecasts. No one can say he was wrong!"

### **'Much more than a mentor'**

Whatever setbacks may have come his way, O'Brien's CV has amassed a daunting number of impressive lines. But questions about his career inevitably bring him to talk about his passion for mentoring students, which, by his own estimation, matches or perhaps even exceeds his love of meteorology itself.

O'Brien believes in pushing students toward independence. Once they pass the master's level and start pursuing a doctorate, he abruptly changes his tactic. While before, he would simply give the answer to a student who encounters a problem in his or her research, Ph.D. candidates who bring problems to his desk simply receive the instruction to come back the next week with the answer.

"The ones that are going to become Ph.D.s—they morph into scientists, and it happens very quickly," O'Brien says. "Most of these kids are kids that are ashamed of every B they ever got in their life. They're really serious students. But they're used to figuring out what the prof wants them to do and giving it back to them."

The moment when the dynamic changes is the one O'Brien lives for.



O'Brien shares a handshake with Vice President Al Gore at a meeting of the United States National Climate Assessment for the Southeast in Nashville, Tenn. O'Brien was chair of the southeast regional climate assessment group.





O'Brien was an early advocate for the importance of computers to meteorological research and teaching. He is pictured here mentoring an undergraduate student in the early 1990s.

"Somewhere along the line, they have to take the bull by the horns and go for it," he says. "And I love that—I mean, I can spot it. I can spot the moment when, all of a sudden, the student doesn't come to me and ask, 'What do I do next, Dr. O'Brien?' but instead says, 'Let me show you what I did.'"

### A long career, a long legacy

O'Brien has been father to five children, though two of them died at tragically young ages. His first wife, Sheila, also died in 2004. There's no shortage of family, though, as he counts eight grandchildren between his own and those of his second wife, Kae Ingram, whom he married in 2009.

O'Brien has been officially retired since 2007 (allowing more time for him to indulge his fishing habit), but talking to him now, even after so many years of teaching, it's clear his excitement over the job hasn't faded much. The evidence of a teaching career well spent doesn't only come from O'Brien himself.

"I have always been impressed with the loyalty and affection his students hold for him," says Professor Bill Dewar of EOAS. "They all say he is much more than a graduate student mentor. He keeps in contact throughout their careers and provides them with valuable advice and guidance. I hope I can engender a fraction of this feeling in my graduate students."

Lisan Yu, who worked on her master's and doctoral degrees under O'Brien's guidance from 1987 to 1992, fondly recalls the lessons she learned from him.

"Professor O'Brien taught me not to give up easily," she says. "He is a tough adviser who is strict and challenging, but very fair. He pushes students to the limit of their abilities so that they can fully explore their own potentials and accomplish more."

And despite all the accolades of a long career, it's there—with his students—that O'Brien's legacy will live on more than anywhere else.

"Jim O'Brien has educated and trained several generations of students who have gone on to become leaders in their own right," says M. Yousuff Hussaini, a professor of mathematics and chemical engineering. "Simply said, as a teacher and researcher, he has had a tremendous impact on the oceanic and atmospheric sciences communities."

Having guided a staggering 44 doctoral and more than 80 master's students, O'Brien's love of science and of teaching will no doubt be passed to new generations and continue to enrich not only FSU but institutions all over the country and the world.

### A global influence

Jim O'Brien's 44 Ph.D. students hail from 18 countries across the globe:

Argentina  
Barbados  
Belgium  
Brazil  
Canada  
Chile  
China  
Cuba  
Denmark  
Finland  
France  
Ireland  
Italy  
Japan  
Mexico  
Norway  
Turkey  
United States



O'Brien shows off a just-caught largemouth bass at St. Mark's Wildlife Refuge around 1990. Despite still being a frequent sight around campus, O'Brien, an avid fisherman, has found some time for relaxation since his retirement in 2007.

# Priest lectureship turns 10 thanks to generosity of Gloria Priest



All photos by Carol Heard.

Gloria Priest attends the seventh installment of the John F. Priest Lecture Series.

**O**n Feb. 7, 2013, students and faculty gathered in the grand ballroom of FSU's alumni center for the latest John F. Priest Lecture Series.

The lecturer, Notre Dame Professor James C. VanderKam, spoke about the biblical figure Enoch, who appears in the Book of Genesis, and the relevance of the book attributed to him—a book not

included in the biblical canon by almost all of Christianity—to ancient Jews and Christians.

It was a topic that, for many students, shed new light on lessons learned in the classroom.

“It was interesting because we’ve been talking about Enoch in my Genesis seminar, so it was more information on something

that I was already studying and something I’m interested in,” said Ruth Saw, a senior majoring in classics and religion. “Also, it brought to life information from a class I had last semester about the Dead Sea Scrolls.”

Kyle Roark, a first-year doctoral student in the Department of Religion, said the benefit of listening to VanderKam was it provided a new perspective on material that is very difficult to understand.

“The opportunity to participate in the question-and-answer segment at the end of the lecture is a great resource both for the person who has never heard of Enochic literature before and for the graduate student who spends time in the classroom working with the material each week,” Roark said.

The series, established in 2003, has presented seven installments over the last decade. VanderKam’s lecture, as well as the six that preceded it and all those to come, was possible because of the generosity of longtime religion department supporter Gloria Priest.

During the last ten years, Priest’s contributions to Florida State include the establishment of four funds within the Department of Religion, where John Priest was a professor for 28 years. These funds have benefited students and professors in myriad ways since 2003—from lectures by eminent speakers to an endowed professorship.

And as Priest is honoring the memory of her late husband with her generosity, she is also ensuring those studying religion at Florida State are forever enriched by John Priest’s legacy.



John Priest, who died in 1998, served as a professor in Florida State's Department of Religion from 1968 until his retirement in 1996, when he was named professor emeritus. He was an accomplished specialist in biblical studies and deeply committed to interdisciplinary scholarship, such as Islam and Hinduism, and Buddhism in particular.

In 2009, Bryan J. Cuevas was named the John F. Priest Professor of Religion after Priest established her third gift. Cuevas said he was honored to receive the professorship, especially since he's a historian of religion who specializes in the history of Buddhism and Tibetan religions.

"The Priest Professorship is attached to an endowment, which in recent years I have used to help support summer research," Cuevas said. "My plan in the future is to extend these funds to our graduate students working in Asian religions, and especially students focusing on Tibetan Buddhism, as a means to help enhance their scholarship and access to resources through language study, library acquisition and travel."

Priest's first gift came in 2003 when she established the John F. Priest Lectureship. In most years since 2004, the Religion Department has hosted an internationally known scholar to speak on religion, morality, ethics or humanities. Priest's



Professor James C. VanderKam of the University of Notre Dame delivers his lecture, "Enoch as a Bringer of Knowledge: 1 Enoch and its Relevance for Ancient Judaism and Christianity," to attendees of the seventh Priest lecture.

latest gift in 2012 endows the highly regarded John F. Priest Lectureship so the series may continue for many more years to come.

A second gift, in 2006, was a collaborative effort among Priest, Walter and Marian Moore, and Robert and Martha Spivey, who established the Moore-Priest-Spivey Department of Religion Chair Fund, which supports scholarly activities that may include faculty research, conference travel and fees, and visiting faculty lecturers.



Gloria Priest.

## *Gifts to the John F. Priest*

### *Endowed Lectureship*

*Fund (No. F07617), the*

*John F. Priest Endowed*

*Professorship in Religion*

*(No. F07154) or the*

*Moore-Priest-Spivey*

*Department of Religion*

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*or by mail to the FSU*

*Foundation, 2010 Levy*

*Ave., P.O. Box 3062729,*

*Tallahassee, FL 32306-2739.*

*Please include the fund*

*number with your gift.*

*This story is an adapted version of a story by Carol Heard of the Florida State University Foundation. The original story may be found at the Foundation's website: [foundation.fsu.edu](http://foundation.fsu.edu).*



VanderKam greets attendees in person following his lecture.





# Then and now

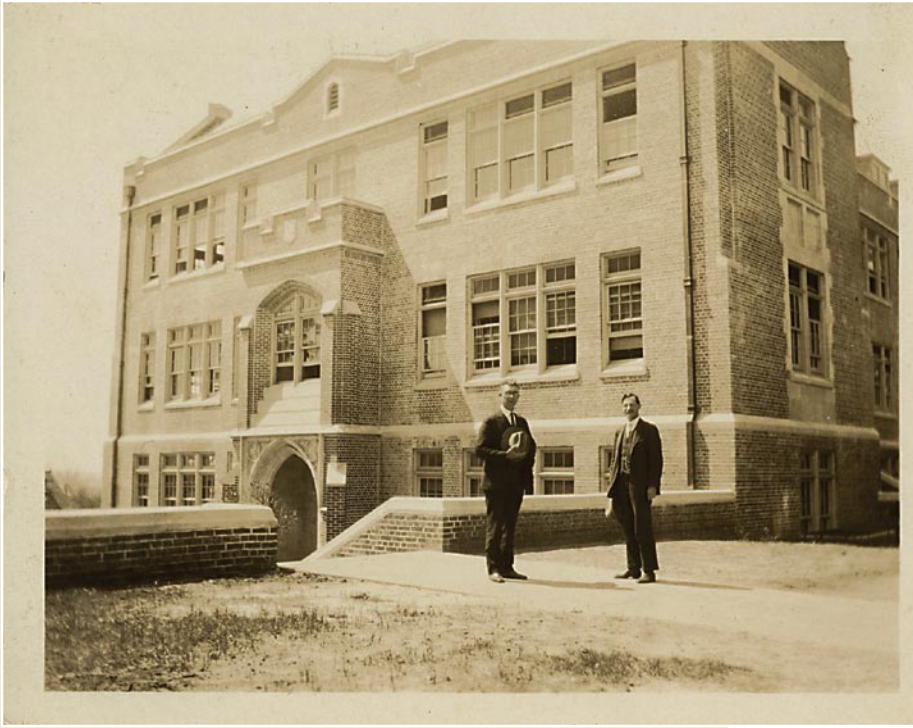
Many of FSU's oldest buildings are clustered between Copeland Street and Honors Way. Pictured here are the buildings of FSCW in the 1920s, surrounded on all sides by open farmland. These buildings are home to most of FSU's humanities departments today.

**T**he history of FSU is as rich and diverse as the students, faculty, and friends that make up its community. The long and steady march that took FSU from its humble origins as the "Seminary West of the Suwannee" to the world class university that it is today is perhaps most strikingly evident in the constant evolution of the campus that has been home to so many thousands of students over the last 162 years.

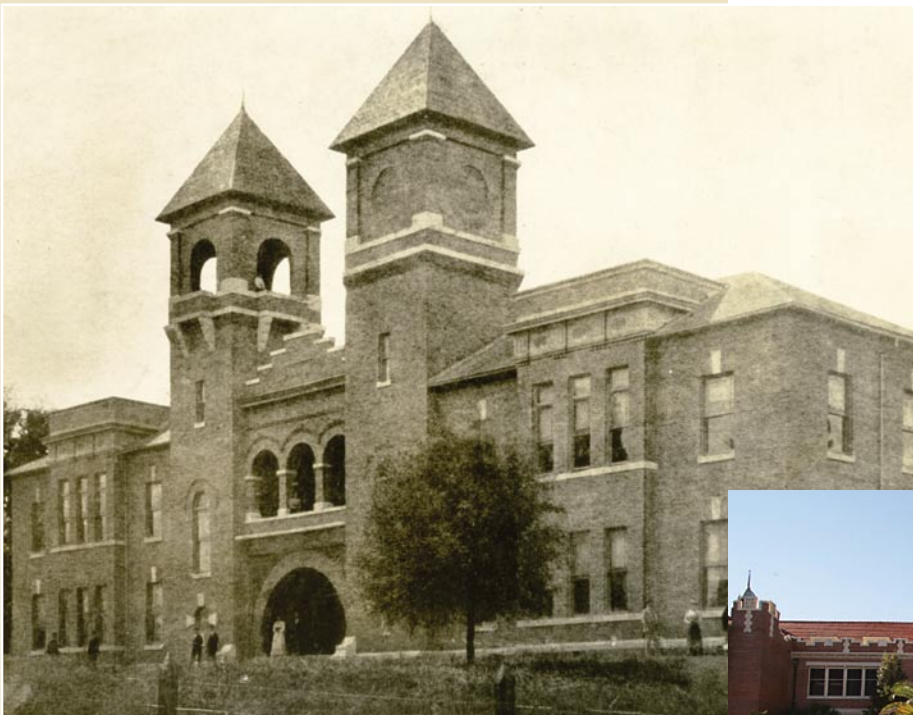
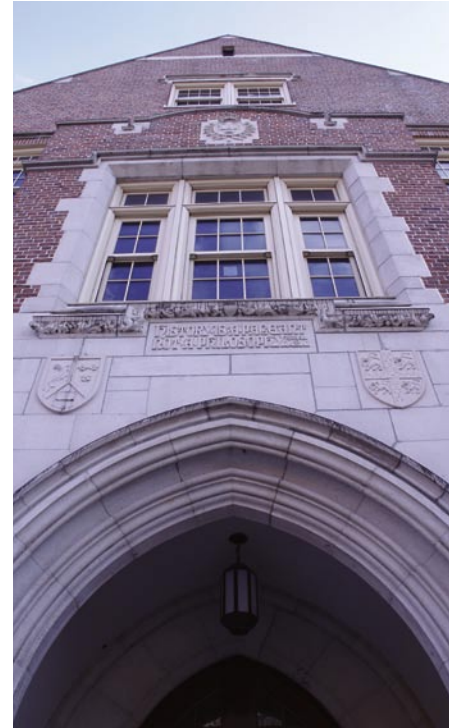
From a humble cluster of buildings on the outskirts of a young Tallahassee to the bustling center of learning and discovery it has become today, FSU's dedication to positive growth has never wavered. As the oldest and largest college at FSU, the College of Arts and Sciences can claim more examples of that growth than perhaps any other.







(Left) Herman Kurz, a botanist at FSCW and FSU from 1922 to 1956, stands with famous naturalist Roland Harper in front of the History Building in 1928. That building, now known as the Williams Building and home to the English department, bears the inscription "History is a pageant, not a philosophy" over one of its side doors.



College Hall (above), the home of the Seminary West of the Suwannee, once stood on the site known as Gallows Hill, it was later replaced by what is now known as the Westcott Building, pictured to the right during its days as the administration building for Florida State College for Women, and in its current form.

All archival photos courtesy of FSU Heritage Protocol. All others by Wil Oakes, unless otherwise noted.

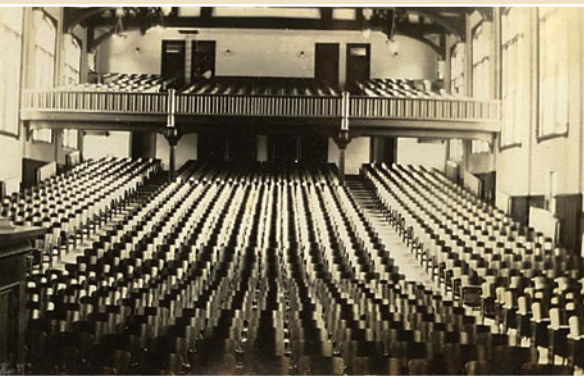


Photo courtesy of FSU Photo Lab.





Two views from the front gate down College Avenue, nearly a century apart, one in the late 1910s and one in 2013.



The original FSCW auditorium (left) was torn down in 1951 and rebuilt into what is now known as Ruby Diamond Auditorium, pictured after a renovation completed in 2010.



Dodd Hall, which was named one of Florida's Top Ten Buildings by the Florida Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 2012, has been home to many things. The original WFSU-TV studios (left) were located in Dodd. Today, it is home to the departments of religion, philosophy, and classics, and is best known for its Werkmeister Reading Room (right).

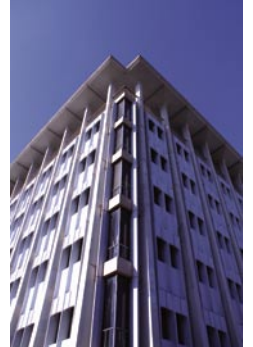
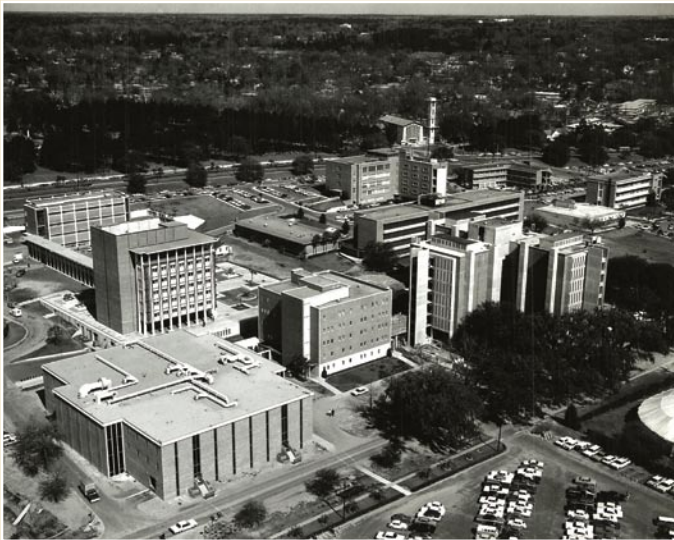


Photo courtesy of FSU Photo Lab.





The site where the Diffenbaugh building now stands was originally occupied by the "Science Building," pictured here in 1955. When that building was torn down and replaced in 1977, the original stone door was preserved and still adorns the front of Diffenbaugh today.



The Keen Building, pictured here in 1965 and 2013, is home to FSU's physics department.

Many of FSU's early buildings dedicated to scientific disciplines were built in the area west of Woodward Avenue.



Originally known simply as the Chemistry Building, ground was broken on what is now called the Dittmer Chemistry Lab in 1966.



Biologists and biophysicists at the Kasha Laboratory and Biology Unit I have been finding ways to protect birds from crashes on their glass walkway since at least 1962.



# A 30-year wait. A 16-mile journey.

The papers of famed author  
William Burroughs come to  
Florida State after three decades of  
seclusion in the Florida wilderness.



François Bucher at the Nautilus Foundation sometime around his retirement in 1996.

A fter novelist William Burroughs's most famous work, *Naked Lunch*, was released in the United States in 1962, it was banned by courts in Boston and Los Angeles. A Boston judge famously called it "predominantly prurient... and utterly without redeeming social importance." On the other hand, Norman Mailer said, "*Naked Lunch* is a book of beauty, great difficulty, and maniacally exquisite insight. I think that William Burroughs is the only American novelist living today who may conceivably be possessed by genius."

Burroughs is, in some ways, just as controversial today as he was in the 1960s. His place among the great writers of the Beat Generation and as an important figure in the history of free speech in America has been secured, however. As Mailer predicted, Burroughs has become a giant of American literature.

And for nearly 30 years, hundreds of pages of Burroughs's original manuscripts—drafts of his work, letters, and magazine articles, just to name a few—have been sitting in cardboard boxes at a secluded complex in Lloyd, Fla.

Photo courtesy of the FSU Office of University Communications.





Photo by Wil Oakes

The main house at Bucher's Nautilus Foundation, where Burroughs's papers spent 30 years in storage before FSU English department researchers began removing the bulk of them in 2012.

Professor of English Stan Gontarski has spent the last 13 years trying to bring those papers the 16 miles west from Lloyd to Tallahassee so they can find a permanent home and become available to literary scholars both at FSU and around the world.

It's been a lengthy and tiresome task, but at long last Gontarski is finally getting his chance. A team of faculty members and graduate students from FSU's English department have brought those manuscripts that short but important 16 miles down the road, and the work of properly archiving them is under way.

#### **Burroughs, Bucher, and the Nautilus Foundation**

The story of how Burroughs's papers ended up in Lloyd begins with François Bucher, a professor of art and architecture at FSU from 1978 until his retirement in 1996. According to Gontarski, Bucher was known for his wide-ranging interests and eccentric personality.

"He was quite an eclectic character," says Gontarski. "He was, by training, an architect, and interested in medieval architecture, but he was also interested in contemporary and avant-garde writers and painters. He was a collector of all sorts of things."

Bucher was also interested in supporting scholars and artists of all types—an interest that led him, in the late 1970s, to conceive of the Nautilus Foundation, a retreat and think tank. He described it as "a place to promote creative thinking of ways to build a better world." While the scope of Bucher's ambition was wide, the foundation was to have an emphasis on environmental issues, aided by its location in the untamed forests of North Florida. Bucher built his complex—consisting of a large, fortress-like house, a circular conference center, an art park, and several other small structures—over the period from 1980 to 1990.

There were signs of progress for Bucher early on—lectures and art exhibits happened for years in Lloyd—but in another aspect of his mission, he had less success.

"Bucher's dream was to have artists buy property there and come to live together and form an ideal community," says Gontarski, who adds with a laugh, "it was something between an artist community and a survivalist militia."

David Heaps, one of a handful of artists who bought some land—a few acres on which he has lived and worked at his studio for more than 15 years—remembers Bucher as a friend.

Heaps and his late wife, a graduate student of Bucher's in the 1980s, were married in the foyer of Nautilus's main building.

"He was amusing, highly intelligent, and very eccentric," says Heaps. "He had, I think, about 11,000 books. Some of them went back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Coptic Christian books, illuminated manuscripts. They were beautiful to look at, but you had to wear gloves to do it."

Bucher had a hard time convincing many other artists to join him in Lloyd, but one of the few who considered it was none other than William Burroughs.

"Burroughs purchased a plot in 1980," says Blake Stricklin, a Ph.D. student in English and a member of Gontarski's team who is helping to archive the materials. "We have the initial terms of the sale with Burroughs's \$1 bill stapled to the contract."

The arrangement didn't quite work out, however. Gontarski speculates the deal fell through in large part because of Burroughs's lifelong battle with heroin addiction and eventual financial troubles. The two friends reached an unusual and fortuitous settlement for their deal, however.

**Paul Ardoin** is a doctoral candidate in FSU's Department of English. He holds the 2012-2013 Berger Fellowship and was also a recipient of the FSU International Dissertation Semester Research Fellowship. This funding has helped him to produce forthcoming research articles in the journals *Studies in the Novel*, *Philosophy and Literature*, and *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory*.

"This project was a spur-of-the-moment diversion from the kinds of work I had expected to complete during my year on a Berger Fellowship. Up until I joined Dr. Gontarski's team in late 2012, I'd spent time researching in established, organized archives at Cornell and the University of Reading (in England). The new project meant a number of trips to a strange compound 16 miles outside of Tallahassee—in Lloyd, Florida—and hours of digging through boxes filled with bills, magazines, photos (many of great works of art and architecture; some quite colorful in, well, other ways). The materials we found on these trips position Florida State's new Burroughs archive as among the top three or four in the country.

"It took a number of years before Professor Gontarski's inquiries finally yielded any result. A few envelopes of Burroughs's famous "cut-ups" turned up on the Lloyd property. (Burroughs made famous the artist Brion Gysin's Dadaist technique of cutting up and rearranging texts in order to create new works of art, no longer driven by the desire for a coherent, linear narrative.) What FSU now has on its hands is the delayed inheritance Bucher had always intended—in this case many envelopes (most still sealed) holding typed pages of Burroughs material cut into even-sized pieces, ready to be rearranged to form any number of possible results. One result was Burroughs's 1981 novel *Cities of the Red Night*, a major work and a major find for Professor Gontarski.

"The PhD students from the English department have actually been eager to dive into the sometimes tedious tasks of archival research. Most of our time has been spent on hours of unsuccessful digging: trying to separate the tax records of Bucher's organizations from his correspondence with *Slaughterhouse-Five* novelist Kurt Vonnegut; keeping an eye out for the unexpected, such as the box of documents by South African Beat poet Sinclair Beiles we were delighted to find but had never sought. Most satisfying were the brief shouts that would punctuate long hours of silence: "I think this might be something!" What followed, as often as not, was the revelation of a real stash—old magazine clippings about Burroughs, then old correspondence between Burroughs and Bucher, then finally the mother lode."

"Burroughs offered the land back to Bucher as security for a personal loan," says Paul Ardoin, also a Ph.D. student and one of the initial members of Gontarski's team. "Later, the loan was paid back in manuscripts. Bucher saw a great opportunity for FSU to obtain some valuable pieces of literary history."

### The long wait

The ensuing 20 years saw a flourishing of Bucher's foundation leading up to his retirement in 1996. Burroughs died in Kansas the next year, and Bucher's death followed in 1999. It was at this point that Gontarski, a great admirer and scholar of Burroughs's controversial publisher Grove Press, took up the task of trying to bring the Burroughs papers to FSU.

"I knew about the cache of Burroughs manuscripts," says Gontarski. "I had done some lectures out there in the early 90s, particularly for some Burroughs art exhibits. François showed me a lot of these manuscripts and gave me Xerox copies of some of them so I knew what I was looking for. I just didn't know exactly where to look."

Bucher had envisioned the Nautilus Foundation as a writers' retreat and humanities center for FSU, but the property and all its contents ended up in the hands of the nonprofit Collins Center for Public Policy, which began managing the property beginning in 2000.

"I feared that some of the papers would simply have been thrown out because François was something of a pack rat," says Gontarski, "and a disorganized one at that. To an untrained eye much of what François had looked like trash."

For about eight years, Gontarski tried to find out what happened to the papers until, in 2008, he finally got the chance to go look for them at the Nautilus Foundation.

"Nobody had catalogued François's holdings," says Gontarski. "So I went out there with a few people from our History of Textual Technologies program, and they were amazed at the books that were out there—a lot of them medieval. A lot of them would have been perfect for us."

Still, the Burroughs papers eluded him.



Photo by Marcelo Noah.

William Burroughs (far right) pictured here with (from left) Carl Solomon, Patti Smith, and Allen Ginsberg at the Gotham Book Mart in New York City in 1977 celebrating the reissue of Burroughs's novel *Junky*.





The lecture hall at the Nautilus Foundation, which Bucher hoped would host a variety of speakers, art showings, and other events, was never fully operational and sits in disrepair.

The Collins Center was beginning to sell off some of Bucher's assets in order to renovate and keep up the maintenance on the buildings. Many items in Bucher's collection—a couch that had once belonged to Bucher's Princeton friend Albert Einstein, a painting by Josef Albers valued at nearly \$300,000—were either sold or put in storage off the premises. Through it all, Gontarski held out hope that the papers would survive.

Finally, in the fall of 2012, Gontarski and his team found the bulk of Bucher's Burroughs holdings among the hundreds of uncategorized boxes, and the Collins Center agreed to let them sort through the material and bring it to FSU.

The discovery came not a moment too soon. The Collins Center closed its doors for good in January of 2013. The fate of any papers remaining inside—and Gontarski believes that some documents remain—is uncertain. Fortunately, Gontarski and his team have already managed to recover a wealth of material.

### A long project still ahead

Perhaps the most important find for Gontarski and his team are a large collection of Burroughs's "cut-ups," textual experiments in which he took pages of his own typescripts and sliced them into even parts that could be reassembled in virtually endless ways. These cut-up pages—many of which are still sealed in envelopes—are only one of several categories of findings, however.

"At last tally, the findings are impressive," says Ardoin. "In addition to the cut-ups, we have recovered original drafts of a Burroughs essay about the tragedy at Jonestown, typescripts of dreams, the original drafts of essays that later became Burroughs's columns in a magazine called *Crawdaddy!*, and multiple early drafts of Burroughs's *Blade Runner: a movie*, his reimagining of Alan Nourse's science fiction novel and partial namesake of the later Ridley Scott film that would feature Harrison Ford."

Before anyone can delve into these artifacts—a project that may yield new insight into Burroughs's creative process—there is a massive sorting task to undertake.



Robert O. Lawton Professor of English, Stan Gontarski

Courtesy of the FSU Photo Lab.

**Blake Stricklin** is a first-year Ph.D. student in FSU's Department of English.

"If I recall correctly, we did not find any manuscripts the first week we went out to the Nautilus Foundation. There were countless boxes, all completely unorganized.

"The second week started much like the first. We went through old magazines, Bucher's family photographs, copies of tax returns. Toward the end of the second week, I was going through the last box. It was unlabeled, but I noticed an advertisement for Burroughs T-shirts inside, and I felt like this was the box we had been looking for. Finally, I pulled out the catalogue of manuscripts Burroughs sent to Bucher. It was a strange feeling—I was exhausted and excited at the same time. It was one of those moments where your head feels a little light.

"After we got all the boxes back to FSU, Dr. Gontarski asked if I would like to supervise an undergraduate named Peter Yang in ordering and cataloguing all the material we found. I was honored to be given this responsibility, and have been working on ordering the correspondence between Burroughs, James Grauerholz (a writer and editor, now literary executor of Burroughs's estate), and Bucher. Finding a chronology of their correspondence reveals an interesting history of Burroughs in Tallahassee, especially here at FSU. Though Bucher met Burroughs in the summer of 1979 at the Kerouac Center for Disembodied Poetics, Burroughs gave a reading at the Diffenbaugh building in November of the same year. This is where the correspondence between Bucher and Burroughs really began.

"I came to FSU to work with Professor Gontarski, as my main research interests center around modernism and Samuel Beckett. However, I have always been drawn to Burroughs's work, especially the cut-ups. I am interested in the origins of any work of literature, and the manuscripts we have here will definitely give graduate students a chance to contribute something new to Burroughs scholarship."

"The trouble is to separate the wheat from the chaff," says Gontarski. "And there's a lot of chaff. Hundreds of boxes of stuff."

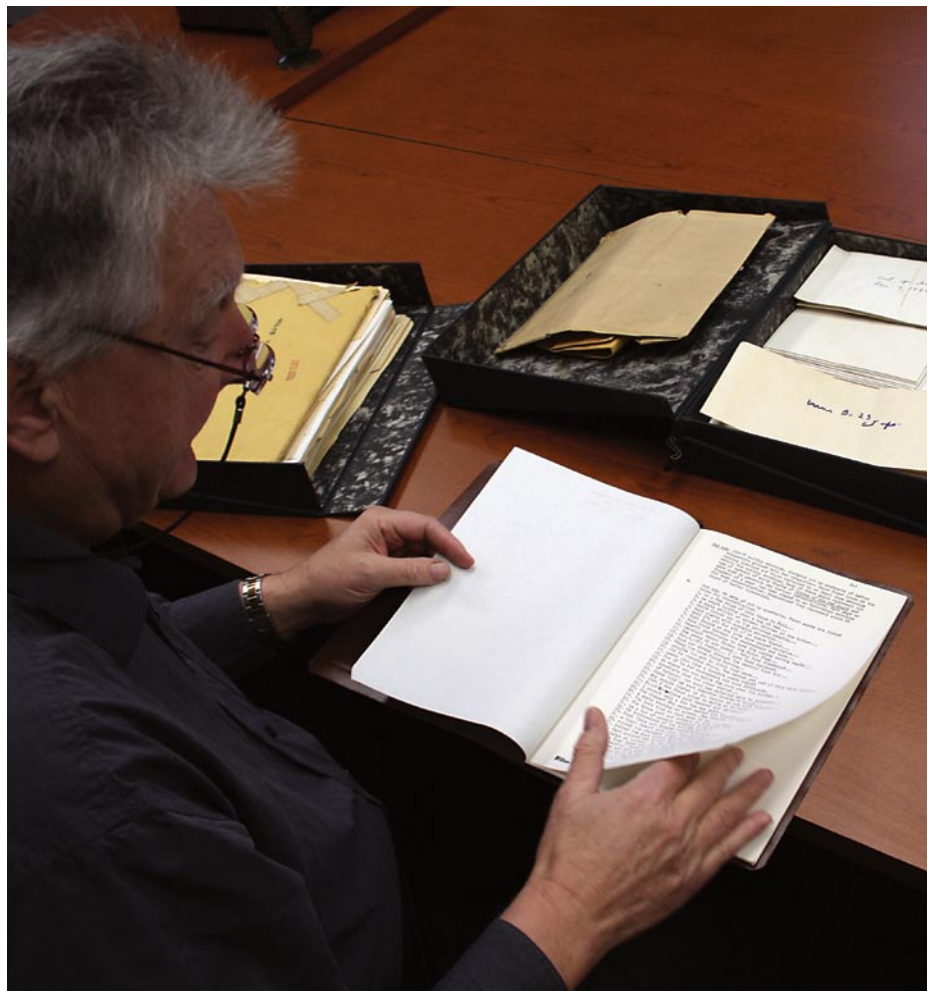
Mixed in among the Burroughs material in those boxes are significant pieces such as letters between Bucher and other famous writers such as Kurt Vonnegut and the poet Lawrence Durrell. Beyond that, there are pounds upon pounds of what can only be described as junk. Fortunately, a dedicated team of Ph.D. students including Ardoin, Stricklin, Tom Bevilacqua, Eric Bledsoe, Adam McKee, and Andrew Walker, has taken on the task. Undergraduate Peter Yang, supervised by Stricklin and Walker, has been cataloguing the findings.

Gontarski has high hopes for the collection's future as a resource for Burroughs scholars, and hopes to digitize everything so it can be accessed online.

"From the perspective of the scholarly English department," Gontarski says, "the goal should be to make it available free to all people, all the time, without their having to come to the library."

For Gontarski, who grew up loving the authors published by Grove Press, including his primary research interest Samuel Beckett, the fears over what may have been lost in the intervening years are overcome by the relief that at long last, what remains of Burroughs's papers is safe. In the future, years of fruitful scholarship and help preserving the legacy of a revolutionary figure of American literature may owe a great debt to the stubborn persistence of FSU's literary scholars.

"I just knew," Gontarski says, "they had to be there somewhere."



Gontarski looks through Burroughs papers discovered at the Nautilus Foundation. Materials in the collection include typed manuscripts marked up in pen by Burroughs himself.



# Innovative giving

**FSU's 'The Great Give' uses social media and a little friendly competition to support the university's mission while helping the environment**

**F**or two days in April, alumni of the College of Arts and Sciences will get the chance to compete with their friends from other colleges—law, social work, music—or any of Florida State's 15 other colleges by taking to Facebook and Twitter and turning out their friends to prove which college has the most loyal fan base.

In 2012, FSU introduced a fun and fast new way for alumni and friends of the university to contribute to the future. The Great Give left the slower, more traditional methods of philanthropy in the dust by raising \$186,000, beating the goal of \$161,000 (to celebrate the 161 years since FSU was chartered) by a sound margin.

For the second installment of The Great Give, each college is challenging its alumni to support a specific project. The College of Arts and Sciences has decided to shoot for a goal of \$25,000 for faculty-student collaborative research support. This type of funding promotes such wide ranging activities as sending graduate students studying religion to far away countries to observe foreign religious practices firsthand or providing valuable laboratory time to chemistry professors working on new, space-age technologies.

"Participating in The Great Give is a terrific way to support the university," says Sam Huckaba, Dean of The College of Arts and Sciences. "It makes philanthropy a community effort. It gives us a chance to challenge each other to not

only voice our support but contribute to FSU's mission in a way that improves the research we do, the education we offer, and the impact we have on the world. It's my hope that alumni and friends of the College of Arts and Sciences can be leaders this year and set the bar for the rest of the university. And, of course, it's always nice to win."

To make the summer months a time of advancement and hands-on experience for departments across the college, Arts and Sciences is hoping to raise funds from alumni who remember their experience at Florida State College for Women all the way to those that graduated in 2012. The key here is to give each alum a chance to be involved in the philanthropic process.

Part of the fun of The Great Give is that it's carried out completely online, so encouraging friends to participate via social media is easy.

What's more, that all-online model, combined with a concerted effort to use as little paper as possible, makes this a giving campaign with as little negative impact on the environment as possible. In celebration of finding new ways to go green, the giving period is during Earth Week, on April 18-19.

To find out more, alumni and friends can visit the Great Give on Facebook or Twitter. When April 18 rolls around, gifts—no matter how big or small—can be made at <http://greatgive.fsu.edu>.



## The Great Give

**April 18-19**



[www.facebook.com/fsugreatgive](http://www.facebook.com/fsugreatgive)



[www.twitter.com/fsugreatgive](http://www.twitter.com/fsugreatgive)  
#fsugreatgive



[greatgive.fsu.edu](http://greatgive.fsu.edu)

*Participating in The Great Give is a terrific way to support the university.*

—Sam Huckaba, Dean of The College of Arts and Sciences.

# A commitment to excellence



Leonard and his wife, Laurie, met while Leonard was a student at FSU and married while Leonard was still finishing graduate school.

## FSU alum Tom Leonard and wife Laurie establish endowment to fund undergraduate education

In the volatile world of business startups, where the ethos usually is “keep failing until you succeed,” stories like that of Florida State alumnus Tom Leonard are true anomalies. Since he began his entrepreneurial career in 1985, he has started four different companies.

So far, he’s four for four.

Having either sold or maintained all four of these ventures while holding down positions with other firms along the way, Leonard has made success his career. And when he needs a break, he prefers scaling Mount Kilimanjaro to kicking his feet up.

The path that led Leonard to so much success began in FSU’s mathematics and fledgling computer science departments in the early 1980s. Now, nearly 30 years after he earned his master’s degree, he is helping to open that path up to a new generation of students. He and his wife, Laurie, have established the Leonard Family Endowment for Excellence Fund, which will help undergraduates of academic merit but limited financial means attend college.

It’s a fitting contribution from a man who sees his own success as a product of both determination and being given the right opportunities.

“I think it’s hard work and focus that creates success,” he says. “And I’ve been very fortunate thus far.”

### A portrait of the programmer as a young man

Leonard came to FSU in 1979 without a clear idea of what he wanted out of his college education or where he thought it might take him. His first year was one of rapid evolution and self-discovery.

“I was in the honors program, and I can remember going to the office and changing my major every quarter,” he says. “I didn’t really have a sense of what I wanted to major in until I wound up taking a class on Fortran (a computer programming language) at the end of the first year and found it very intriguing. The next year, I started taking computer science classes and switched my major to math. Off we went.”

That first class gave Leonard academic focus. At the end of his undergraduate career (which he completed in just three years), he had an offer to attend the University of Maryland for graduate school, but was convinced by Professor Ted Baker to stay on and take a degree in FSU’s new computer science program.

“Certainly, he was one of the best students I ever had,” says Baker, who retired in 2011 after a 35-year career. “I was always impressed by how intuitive and decisive he was. There are some people who you can just tell are going to go out into the world and make their own way, do amazing things. And Tom was one of only a handful of students in whom that quality was obvious.”

Leonard stayed on and worked as Baker’s research assistant, where he learned to write compilers—programs that translate one computer programming language into another.

“We were friends as well as collaborators,” Baker recalls. “So I knew he had the personality required to do big things, and then he proved it after graduating by taking the things he learned in our work together and almost immediately doing something extraordinary with them.”

Leonard landed a job with the Harris Corporation in Melbourne, Fla., after his graduation in 1984, but he found that the job didn’t challenge him intellectually. Everything changed for him when a chance encounter in the summer of 1985 introduced him to Apple computers.

“It was just by luck that I went to a computer store in Melbourne and in the back of the room was a Macintosh that had been released in January of 1984,” Leonard says. “They had this





Former Dean of Arts and Sciences Joe Travis (left) presents Leonard with the 2009 Graduate of Distinction Award at a ceremony in April of 2010.

test-drive program where you could give them your credit card and take the Macintosh home for the weekend to experiment with it.”

Leonard took the computer home, and a new passion was sparked.

“It was very intriguing as a computer then,” he says. “Before, there was no such thing as a graphical interface and mice on computers. So I said, ‘I’d like to develop software for that. That looks intellectually challenging.’”

### From enthusiast to entrepreneur

Leonard bought a Macintosh and ordered the Apple developer kit. He targeted the project of writing a compiler for Pascal, the native programming language for the Macintosh. It was a project tailor-made for Leonard, with the education he got from professors such as Baker, who taught him compilers, and Lois Hawkes, a computer science professor and now an associate dean at FSU’s College of Arts and Sciences, who first taught Leonard the Pascal language.

At least at first, Leonard’s project was just a challenge to himself. He worked on his compiler on nights and weekends, communicating with other programmers and posting questions on bulletin board services. Then something fortuitous happened.

“Some folks at Apple Computer read my questions,” Leonard recalls, “and they called me up and said, ‘What on earth are you doing?’ So suddenly I had a lot of help from Apple to get the software going.”

Things developed quickly from there. He completed his software, called TML Pascal, and Apple invited him to present it at its booth at COMDEX (a computer dealers’ exhibition) in November 1985, as well as at the company’s own MacWorld conference in January 1986. Leonard resigned from his job at Harris, and

things took off. His company, TML Systems, through which he also developed GreatWorks, an early forerunner of all-in-one productivity programs such as Microsoft Office, was bought by Symantec in 1991.

### A commitment to excellence

Since his first success with TML Pascal in 1985, Leonard has founded Encore Development, an internet consulting firm; Red Rocket Solutions, which developed a marketing platform for automotive companies; and Clear Voice Research, a survey panel provider for consumer research. He went on to sell two of those companies to other corporations, while Red Rocket Solutions merged with DMEautomotive, where Leonard now serves as chief information officer and a member of the company’s board of directors.

But Leonard isn’t all business. He enjoys what he refers to as “extreme challenges.” He and his brothers have a penchant for mountain climbing, having tackled Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania as well as Grand Teton in Wyoming, Mount Rainier in Washington state, Half Dome in California and the Grand Canyon (where, he notes, “first you have to climb down, *then* try to climb back up”).

The things that drive his hobbies, though, are the same ones that drive his professional life.

“You’ve got to set goals,” he says. “You’ve got to challenge yourself to do things you wouldn’t otherwise do.”

You also need opportunities to learn and succeed, however. That need is what led Tom and Laurrie Leonard to create their fund for undergraduates at FSU.

“The origins of it,” Leonard says, “are that my father was able to go to college on a scholarship and I was able to go to FSU on various financial aid programs that were available and, having achieved some success, I felt like it was appropriate to help the next set of kids go to school.”

The Leonard Family Endowment for Excellence Fund is set up to help students with promising academic records but little means to pay for school attend FSU. Extra consideration will be given to students coming from The Guardian Catholic Schools in Jacksonville; Leonard cites the schools’ records on turning around low graduation rates in an underprivileged area, along with his family’s own Catholic roots, as reasons for that consideration. But the funds will be open to students from anywhere, and with any academic interest.

“The generosity of Tom and Laurrie Leonard will make a real difference for the students who are supported by their gift,” says Karen Laughlin, FSU’s dean of Undergraduate Studies. “It will help connect students to the university and encourage them to focus on their studies as well as serving the community.”

Tom Leonard’s commitment to excellence has served him well throughout his career. Now, his family’s commitment to generosity will serve others for many years to come.



Leonard, with his brothers Eddie and Bob, during their climbing expedition at Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa.

# final takes

Courtesy of FSU, Office of University Relations



Professor of Chemistry Penny Gilmer works with lab equipment. Gilmer joined the chemistry faculty in 1977 and became a Professor Emerita in 2010 after retirement.

Courtesy of FSU, Office of University Relations



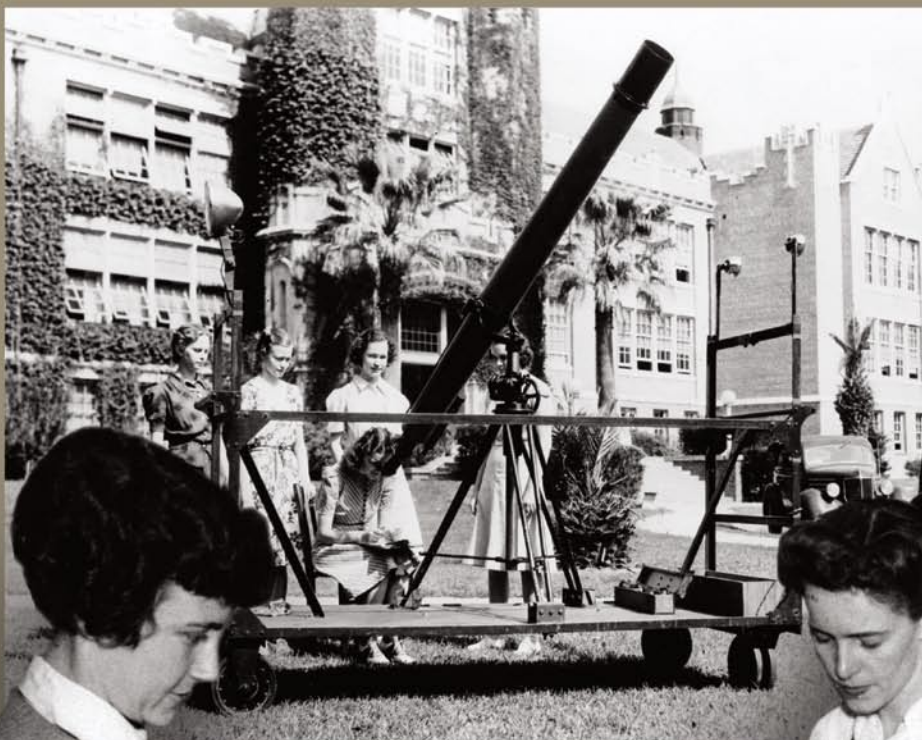
Students at the newly-christened and newly-coeducational FSU work together in a chemistry lab.

Photo courtesy of FSU Heritage Protocol.



Biology students examine samples in the mid-1950s.

Photo courtesy of State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/terms/show/25250>.



FSCW students make observations with a giant telescope on the lawn of the Westcott Building in the 1940s.



FSCW students work in a laboratory in 1910.

Photo courtesy of FSU Heritage Protocol.

Photo courtesy of State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/terms/show/25280>.



FSCW students conduct experiments in a chemistry lab in the 1940s.



## Nancy Smilowitz

### Assistant Dean

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Assistant Dean of Development Nancy Smilowitz says she loves working with people who have a thirst for knowledge and a desire to enhance higher education. May 2013 will mark 15 years that Nancy has been in the Office of Development at Florida State University's College of Arts and Sciences. She began at FSU as an associate director, became senior director in 2002 and assistant dean in 2008. In her 15 years as a liaison between the college and the FSU Foundation, Nancy has raised over \$30 million through outright and deferred gifts.

Nancy earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from Penn State University, where she also worked part-time fund raising in the phone center. Between her time at Penn State and her arrival at FSU, Nancy served as the assistant director of annual giving at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

## Jeff Ereckson

### Director of Development

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Following a 17-year career in the financial services industry in Atlanta, Jeff Ereckson joined the FSU Foundation in March 2005 as director of planned giving. As a liaison to as many as seven colleges within the university, Jeff worked with to raise more than \$8 million in just over four years. He also helped raise funds and gifts-in-kind to build the new FSU President's House. In November 2009, Jeff joined the College of Arts and Sciences as the director of development.

In addition to being a graduate of Florida State University (B.S., Finance, 1985), Jeff was on the Renegade Team while in school and was Chief Osceola in 1983 and 1984. Jeff also served on the FSU Alumni Board and the College of Arts and Sciences Leadership Council for eight years. He and his wife, Renee, live in Tallahassee with their two sons.

## John Trombetta

### Senior Development Officer

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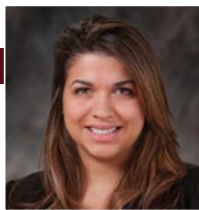
John Trombetta joined the foundation in July of 2012. John came to FSU from Valdosta State University where he served as the Director of Alumni Relations. Prior to his work in Higher Education, John worked for 10 years in financial services. A native of Tallahassee, he is happy to be back in his hometown and to have the opportunity to work at FSU. It energizes John to see the talent and passion that faculty have for their subject and the university.

John is a graduate of Valdosta State University (B.A. Political Science). While there he was Comptroller of the Student Government Association, a member of the Georgia Board of Regents Student Advisory Council where he served as Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee and received the Student Advisory Council Tom McDonald Award for Career Achievement. Currently, John is pursuing his doctoral degree in Educational Leadership also at Valdosta State.

## Leslie Deslis

### Development Officer

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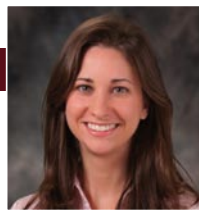


Originally from Leesburg, Fla., Leslie Deslis graduated from FSU in 2010 with dual bachelor's degrees: one in marketing and the other in merchandising and product development. While in school, Leslie served as a program ambassador for the College of Business sales program and worked as the marketing director for the News Service of Florida. These positions enabled her to develop communication skills vital to her role as development officer for the College of Arts and Sciences. In her new role, Leslie works closely with alumni and friends of the college to ensure that they can support the college in a way that fulfills their own passions and enhances the lives of current and future Florida State students.

## Torri Miller

### Development Coordinator

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Torri Miller, born and raised in Miami, graduated from FSU in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in residential science. The first time she visited Tallahassee and toured the campus, she realized that FSU was the place for her. Torri met her husband, Blake Miller, while a student, and they were married shortly after her graduation. From 2002-2008, she worked at the Tallahassee Leon County Civic Center, where she learned all about catering events and the restaurant industry, and from 2007-2010, she worked at the Tallahassee Builders Association as their marketing coordinator. In April 2010, Torri joined the College of Arts and Sciences, where she is happy to be working at the university where she experienced some of the best moments of her life.

## Barry Ray

### Media & Communications Specialist

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Born and raised in Jacksonville, Fla., Barry Ray graduated from FSU in 1988 with a bachelor's degree in English literature. He credits his college studies with helping him to hone the skills needed to become a successful writer, editor, and communications professional. He has held communications positions in state government and with a statewide association, and has worked extensively as a freelance writer and editor. In 2005, Barry returned to FSU, working with University Communications to focus national and international media attention on the groundbreaking research and accomplishments of Florida State faculty.

Barry moved to the College of Arts and Sciences early this year and is excited about this new opportunity to promote the college. He and his wife, Susan (a 1987 FSU grad), whom he met while he was working his first job at a daily newspaper in Tallahassee, have two children.

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Most everyone will recognize the man in the right of this photo—former Vice President Al Gore—but a good many will also know the man shaking his hand, especially if they happen to have taken a meteorology class at FSU sometime in the last 40 years. Read more about Professor Jim O'Brien, a fixture of FSU's Department of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Science, on page 6.