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Historians seek stories, other tidbits as USF readies for big 5-0

USF employees, alumni and others who have stories to tell, photographs and other souvenirs to share about USF during its more than four decades are needed to contribute to its 50th anniversary history book.

The USF Florida Studies Center at the USF Libraries, in conjunction with the Alumni Association, has launched the commemorative book project, which will feature colorful photos bound in a coffee-table-style volume. Scheduled for release in 2006 and coinciding with the university’s 50th anniversary, the book will detail over a half-century of growth and accomplishments.

Provost S. David Stamps, Mark Greenberg, director of the Florida Studies Center, and Karen Clarke, associate vice president of University Relations, formally introduced the project in early December.

“It’s a pictorial history intended to applaud the development of the university,” said Greenberg, “to celebrate the university (and) focus on the university’s strengths and triumphs.”

Organizers will take a grassroots approach to search for oral histories, records, written histories and documents from faculty, staff, students, alumni, business leaders and others.

“We believe that your knowledge and experiences here at USF make you uniquely qualified to participate in this important endeavor,” Greenberg said. He and his staff met with many faculty and staff to solicit their help in telling the story of the university’s many colleges, departments and divisions. Those already involved work in the Provost’s office, the Health Sciences Center, the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Architecture and Community Design, the College of Engineering and other areas on all four campuses.

For two years, editors will research and document firsthand accounts and personal stories about the decisions and lives that have shaped the institution. They are gathering the names of at least 150 people to be interviewed, which will be video- or audio-taped. Yael Greenberg, oral history program assistant in the Florida Studies Center will conduct the interviews in the Library.

“This is a book that will visually demonstrate the tremendous progress that USF has made,” Clarke said. “It will be a source of pride for our alumni, donors, faculty and staff, who have all contributed to the growth and enrichment of this community and the state of Florida.”

University Relations will design the book for publication.

Andy Huse, research program assistant, has already begun the tedious process of poring through photo collections. In looking through aerial photos of the Tampa campus, he was amazed at the vast amount of trees that once stood to the north of campus.

“It’s hard to fathom that the whole community sprang up around the university in such a short time,” he said.

The research collected will have a lasting value, Huse said.

“It goes way beyond just the book. We are considering an exhibit in the Library as well as adding much of this to the USF Web site.”

“There will be an abundance of riches from which to choose,” said Mark Greenberg.

To provide information, oral histories, photos or other information, call Yael Greenberg at ext. 41198, Huse at ext. 47622, or Mark Greenberg at ext. 4411. The e-mail address is usfhistory@lib.usf.edu.

by Marsha Strickhouser
USF hires Phillips as Research vice president

The university has hired internationally recognized scientist M. Ian Phillips as vice president of Research. He started on Jan. 31. Phillips comes from the University of Florida, where he served as associate vice president of Research and Graduate Programs and professor of Physiology and Functional Genomics.

"Phillips is an accomplished scholar, researcher and administrator," said President Judy Genshaft. "His background makes him the perfect fit for our emphasis in bioengineering and the life sciences. We are pleased he is joining our team, and we will look forward to his contributions in USF's research and economic development."

Phillips takes over a research program that has grown in more than $40 million in contracts and grants and has grown from $0 million in just 10 years. He will be responsible for developing and enhancing nationally distinguished research programs consistent with USF's strategic plan. The plan calls for directing research investments in areas where USF has a competitive advantage, including bioengineering and life sciences, aging, children, urban issues, the environment and the arts. It also calls for developing a top research faculty, promoting interdisciplinary research and developing USF's technology transfer programs in ways that maximize economic development.

"USF is in the best position geographically and academically to become one of the nation's great universities," Phillips said. "High quality research is the key to achieving that goal. I am delighted to join President Genshaft and her team in building excellence in research in all aspects of USF's future."

Phillips' research has focused on novel methods of treating high blood pressure and heart disease with gene therapy. His research team developed a gene "switch" that activates protective genes when oxygen deprivation leads to a heart attack. The gene-activator waits in specific body organs and is switched on when heart conditions deteriorate.

When turned on, the activator provides protective genes that reduce the heart cell damage that results from repeated attacks. Phillips, who holds three patents, believes the technique may have applications for treating diabetes, stroke and lung disease.

Phillips has vast administrative experience. He served as chairman of USF's Department of Physiology from 1980-2001 and has directed the College of Medicine's Hypertension Center since 1994. Phillips worked with the director of the National Science Foundation's bioengineering program in Washington, D.C., and chaired the National Institutes of Health's experimental cardiovascular study section. He is director of a research programs grant from the American Heart Association for "innovative research of benefit to mankind." He is a fellow of the American Heart Association's Council on Circulation and Council on Basic Cardiovascular Science, and holds an NIH Merit Award and several teaching and lecture awards.

Phillips has been appointed to numerous leadership positions with the American Association of Medical Colleges, NIH, the heart association, the American Physiological Society and other heart disease and hypertension organizations. He also served on the White House Office of Science and Technology's Task Force on the "Decade of the Brain."

Murphy's robots take part in UN's search-and-rescue group

USF's Center for Robot-Assisted Search and Rescue conducted the first use of rescue robots in a joint international exercise, and has been added to the UN registry as the only international response team specializing in rescue robots.

Rescue robots were first used at the World Trade Center disaster on Sept. 11. Professor Robin Murphy and her research center CRASAR designed and developed the Rescue South Africa in Johannesburg on Dec. 4, during a three-day meeting of the United Nations' International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, known as INSARAG.

The UN group was formed in 1993 to improve disaster preparedness and response efforts around the globe. Rescue South Africa, which hosted the advisory group's search-and-rescue team leader meeting, participated in two recent Indian earthquake response efforts.

During the Dec. 4 exercise, Murphy's team directed a shoe-box-sized robot into a void, after rescue dogs indicated a human was trapped inside. The robot, made by Canada's Inuktun Services, Ltd., located the person trapped in a simulated rubble pile using onboard thermal and video cameras, allowed rescuers to converse with the victim via two-way audio, then helped provide structural information to workers extracting the victim.

In addition to the three-hour joint exercise, Murphy's center made a presentation on rescue robots on Dec. 5 to teams from the United States, Australia, Belarus, China, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and Taiwan.

Murphy directs the CRASAR team, which includes robotics experts, students and health care professionals who have trained to use backpack-sized robots and specially developed sensors for urban search-and-rescue operations. Many of the members are also certified technical search specialists.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, CRASAR researchers have obtained nearly $4.75 million in funding from the National Science Foundation, the Center for Disaster Mitigation and Humanitarian Assistance, the federal Office of Naval Research, the Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and Science Applications International Corporation.

The researchers have also developed a new medical-sensor package, tested the robots with the U.S. Marine Corps' Chemical Biological Incident Response Force and conducted rescue-robot awareness training for more than 200 rescue workers.

The CRASAR strike force is designed to supplement one or more standard response task forces. The team maintains a database of robots that can be self-contained in the field for 72 hours.
FAST demonstrations take place

FAST is the acronym for Fundamental Accounting Systems, a PeopleSoft system of computer applications. In January, the FAST Team conducted demonstrations of the new financial system for the university community. The objective of the two-day demonstrations was to create awareness and familiarity with FAST – providing a high-level overview of user-system touch points and business process flows. Familiarizing staff with the system begins to lay the groundwork for assessing the new financial system’s impact on the staff performing fiscal functions. This training will be required to successfully implement the system on July 1. The demonstrations received an enthusiastic response.

George Ellis, associate vice president of Information Technology, started the first day with an introduction and project overview done by the FAST project director. Ellis explained that FAST is the financial system that will replace SAMAS/FLAIR on July 1. The new accounting system will support USF’s strategic directions of self-sufficiency and research; provide the required resource management required to allow USF to manage its own payroll and cash flow; provide more effective, timely and accurate reporting; and reduce administrative costs by eliminating duplicate entries. Ellis also introduced the FAST organization change team assigned to various areas of the university. This team, comprised of staff from the Offices of Human Resources, or HR, and Organization Development and Training, or ODT, is assisting each of the campuses, colleges and departments with analyzing the impact of the new financial system on current staffing levels and developing customized training plans for the new system’s users. Training on all processes will be provided before the system’s start date, July 1. The FAST Team is completing the system design; the next steps include testing and training development. For details, contact Marcia Watson at mwatson@admin.usf.edu.

Rushdie headlines Writers’ Conference

Acclaimed writer Salman Rushdie and poets Carolyn Forché and Li-Young Lee were the featured speakers at the 31st annual Florida Suncoast Writers’ Conference on Feb. 6-8 at USF St. Petersburg. The USF conference, which brings nationally known speakers and workshop faculty to the Tampa Bay area, is considered one of the top 10 national conferences for aspiring and published writers.

International bestselling and champion of freedom of expression Salman Rushdie opened the conference with the Edger Hilsenberg Memorial Keynote Address at 1 p.m. Feb. 6. The College of Arts and Sciences also hosted Rushdie, as part of a lecture series featuring the humanities, later that evening at a hotel near the Tampa campus. The college’s series also focuses on human science, history and religion. Rushdie and his work became the center of international controversy after his novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) was condemned by Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini. His most recent release, *Step across This Line* (2002), is a nonfiction book containing speeches, essays and opinion pieces on various topics. His novel *Midnight’s Children* won the 1981 Booker Award. He is an honorary professor of the humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Friday’s highlights included a dinner with Carolyn Forché, self-styled ‘Poet of Witness,’ Forché, an internationally acclaimed poet, was awarded the Yale Series for Younger Poets Award for *Gathering the Tribes* and the Los Angeles Times Book Award for *The Angel of History*. The Editia and Ira Morris Hiroshima Foundation recognized Forché’s work on behalf of human rights and the preservation of memory and culture. Saturday’s events include lunch with award-winning poet Li-Young Lee. His book *My Nervous System* received the William Carlos Williams Award. Lee was also introduced the FAST project director. Ellis explained that FAST is the financial system that will replace SAMAS/FLAIR on July 1. The new accounting system will support USF’s strategic directions of self-sufficiency and research; provide the required resource management required to allow USF to manage its own payroll and cash flow; provide more effective, timely and accurate reporting; and reduce administrative costs by eliminating duplicate entries. Ellis also introduced the FAST organization change team assigned to various areas of the university. This team, comprised of staff from the Offices of Human Resources, or HR, and Organization Development and Training, or ODT, is assisting each of the campuses, colleges and departments with analyzing the impact of the new financial system on current staffing levels and developing customized training plans for the new system’s users. Training on all processes will be provided before the system’s start date, July 1. The FAST Team is completing the system design; the next steps include testing and training development. For details, contact Marcia Watson at mwatson@admin.usf.edu.

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ProfessorChuck Owen recently earned an Individual Artist Grant from the Florida Arts Council. Many other professors – including Sang Hee Lee, David Williams and John Richmond appeared at the National Conference of the College Music Directors Association.

Music faculty members make their mark

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