Advice from Miami-Dade’s Teacher of the Year

Alexander Lopes, MSED ’07, has some advice for new classroom teachers. “Keep yourself informed of current trends, research based practices, and best practices,” said Lopes, who recently received the Golden Apple Award as Miami-Dade County Public Schools teacher of the year. “Listen to the families of your students with your entire body and soul. Enjoy teaching – you will have the time of your life.” As an energetic and enthusiastic teacher at the Carol City Elementary Learning Experience Alternative Program (LEAP), Lopes has had a profound impact on preschool children with special needs. “It is very satisfying to see my students do independently today what yesterday they did with assistance.”

(Story continues on next page)
Lopes, 43, was honored in a February 3 ceremony at the Doral Resort & Spa, and later presented with a new car at a February 25 United Teachers of Dade (UTD) picnic at Tropical Park. He was also a finalist for the 2012 Florida Teacher of the Year.

“I hold the University of Miami School of Education dear to my heart,” said Lopes. “It was there that my journey as an educator started. I am and forever will be grateful for the rigorous academic work that I was provided, and for the degree of integrity and professionalism with which my UM professors assisted me in succeeding academically and professionally.”

A native of Brazil, Lopes graduated from the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, and entered the airline industry, traveling around the world. “About a decade ago, I realized that something was missing in my life, that it was time for me to pursue a different career,” Lopes said. He talked with a counselor at Miami Dade College to see about becoming a teacher of foreign languages.

“At the end of our conversation, she said to me, ’Why don’t you teach special education? You have the right personality for it. In addition, we need people like you in that field.’” After taking an introductory course, Lopes embarked on his new career, and earned his master’s degree at UM. Now he is working on a doctorate in special education at Florida International University. Lopes says the LEAP program focuses on building social skills in an inclusive educational setting. “The biggest challenge in my work is that my students are all very different from one another,” he said. “What works perfectly well for one student may not work at all for another. Getting to know the students in order to find out how to optimize their progress is very important and very challenging. However, I consider it to be one of the aspects of my practice that I like the most.”

To cite one example, Lopes uses music and movement to help build verbal skills in autistic students. “Besides being a phenomenal educator, he’s a professional,” said principal Patricia Bloodworth-Johnson.

As the national educational system moves toward a more inclusive environment, Lopes says that more resources are needed at the teacher preparation level. “Are we preparing general education teachers and special education teachers to work together in the same setting, to collaborate with one another toward the educational success of our students with special needs? This is an important issue that, if not properly addressed, will delay the successful implementation of inclusive programs in our schools.”

Note: The UM School of Education was awarded a five-year, $1.5 million federal grant to develop a merged teacher preparation curriculum that fosters the goal of inclusion in general and special education classrooms.
Building Momentum for the Future

Let me be the first to tell you that exciting things are in store for our school, as we build momentum for the future. Before the semester is over, we will be making a special announcement about the next step in our journey to excellence. Stay tuned!

In the past year, our school has continued to climb in the academic rankings. Our faculty and students are making significant research contributions that advance our holistic vision of improving the well-being of individuals, schools, families, neighborhoods and societies. We are also highly engaged and involved with a growing number of community and educational organizations, locally, nationally, and internationally.

One of the keys to our school’s ability to have an impact on the vital issues of today has been the generous support we receive from our donors. This issue of Perspective includes profiles of several contributors, as well as an Honor Roll of our 2011 donors.

In that regard, I would like to give special thanks to the Dunsphaugh-Dalton Foundation for enabling us to launch our Community and Educational Well-Being Research Center. The Dunsphaugh-Dalton CEW is focused on creating new knowledge and training the next generation of leaders, researchers, and change agents in the field of community and educational well-being. Thanks also to the Rosenfeld Foundation, which supports innovative programs and the professional development of Jewish educators.

And of course a very special thank-you to Barbara Mautner, who endowed the first chair in the School of Education’s history: the Erwin and Barbara Mautner Chair in Community Well-Being. I am extremely proud to be the inaugural chair holder.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to our school’s Visiting Committee for sharing their professional advice and insights about our programs. We are very grateful for their suggestions as we prepare to take the next step in our journey.

And to all our School of Education supporters, a heartfelt and sincere thank you. We encourage you to stay in touch and invite your comments and suggestions as we look to the future.

Dean Isaac Prilleltensky
Erwin and Barbara Mautner Chair in Community Well-Being

Secada Named to AERA Post

Professor and Senior Associate Dean Walter G. Secada was recently named chair-elect of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Organization of Institutional Affiliates. He joins Dean Isaac Prilleltensky on AERA’s executive committee. Prilleltensky is a 2011-12 committee member-at-large.

AERA is concerned with improving the educational process by encouraging scholarly inquiry related to education and evaluation and by promoting the dissemination and practical application of research results. Its more than 25,000 members are educators; administrators; directors of research; persons working with testing or evaluation in federal, state, and local agencies; counselors; evaluators; graduate students; and behavioral scientists.

About Our Mark

The School of Education’s symbol represents our collective focus on well-being as the core of our mission. The interlocking arcs stand for three basic components of well-being: the intellectual, emotional, and physical. These three components correspond to the three departments in our school, which are interrelated in their focus on well-being.

The University of Miami School of Education is organized into three departments:

- Teaching and Learning (TAL), which fosters intellectual and educational development
- Educational and Psychological Studies (EPS), which focuses on emotional health and psychological factors
- Kinesiology and Sport Sciences (KIN), which promotes physical wellness, fitness, and sport

Stay tuned for a major announcement about the School of Education!
Betty Castor, MSED ’68, believes her studies at the University of Miami School of Education helped prepare her well for a career in public service. In addition to being a classroom teacher, she has served as a state legislator, Florida Commissioner of Education, and president of the University of South Florida (USF). Last fall, President Barack Obama appointed Castor to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

“After graduating, I became interested in Africa and taught for several years in Kampala (the capital of Uganda),” she said. “I met my first husband on the way back to the U.S. He was a Floridian who was moving from New York to join Miami’s legal services program. I followed him to Miami, and have been in Florida ever since.”

While studying at the School of Education, Castor was also teaching at Holmes Elementary School in Liberty City. “I was one of the first white teachers there and saw firsthand the difficulties impoverished children face in our school systems,” she said.

After moving to Tampa in the 1970s, Castor became involved in civic affairs, winning a seat on the Hillsborough County Commission. She then ran for the state House of Representatives, and became just the fourth woman elected to the Florida Senate. In 1986, Castor became the first woman ever elected to the Florida Cabinet when she won her race as education commissioner.

“My strategy was to teach in every county in Florida,” she said. “I came into the classroom and taught classes on government in a non-partisan way.” As commissioner, Castor worked with the Legislature to fund the first statewide program for early childhood education and helped develop the Healthy Kids program, which provides health insurance for low-income children enrolled in public schools.

In 1994, Castor became president of USF, leading the Tampa university for five years. “That was a very fulfilling position, and one of the highlights of my career,” she said. “I still do quite a lot of work with the university and its support groups.”

In the past decade, Castor served as president of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which certifies skilled teachers across the country. Today, Florida has about 12,000 National Board teachers, with the largest numbers in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. She also led the USF Patel School of Global Sustainability (PSGS), which fosters sustainable urban communities around the world.

As for the key issues facing U.S. education, Castor says the top priority must be attracting a solid corps of teachers for the future. “Too many bright people are passing up an opportunity to go into education,” she said. “We have to pay our teachers more and treat them as professionals. Most of all, we have to do a better job of providing educational opportunities for all our students – especially those in low-income families that need all the help we can give them. We must remember that our children are our future.”

“Faces of Education: Betty Castor

“I had a wonderful experience at the UM School of Education... They encouraged me to look at the broader aspects of education as well as teaching.”

– Betty Castor

Betty Castor grew up in New Jersey and earned her undergraduate degree at Glassboro State College (now Rowan University). Her father was the city’s mayor when President Lyndon Johnson hosted Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin at the 1967 Glassboro summit; Castor was able to attend the historic event.

“I had a wonderful experience at the UM School of Education,” said Castor. “I had very good professors while I was working on my masters’ degree, including George Moully, who taught education psychology, and Gordon Foster, who was an educational expert on desegregation. They encouraged me to look at the broader aspects of education as well as teaching.”
Visiting Committee Tours Orovitz Laboratories

On December 7, members of the School of Education’s Visiting Committee met with Dean Isaac Prilleltensky to review the school’s progress in 2011 and plans for the future. The meeting was held at the Max Orovitz building, a three-story facility that is now the home of various School of Education offices, programs, and services. Following the meeting, members of the Visiting Committee toured the Department of Kinesiology and Sport Sciences’ new laboratories.

The Visiting Committee includes the following members: Judy Adler, Committee Chair Hilarie Bass, Nicholas Buoniconti, Paul Cejas, Dean Colson, Committee Vice Chair Paul DiMare, Donna Genet, Philip Genet, Barbara Havenick, Richard Kurtz, Richard Lampen, Lee Osiason, Matthew Rubel, Adalberto and Ana Vara, and Sheryl Weisinger.

Aldarondo Receives Beckman Award

University of Miami professor is one of 15 scholars from around the nation to receive a prestigious Elizabeth Hurlock Beckman Trust Award for inspiring students to help solve pressing social problems that plague communities. Etiony Aldarondo, associate dean for research and associate professor of educational and psychologi-
University Kicks off Momentum2 Campaign

University of Miami Chairman Leonard Abess and President Donna E. Shalala led a February 16 kickoff event at the BankUnited Center for Momentum2, a campaign designed to support academic resources, learning opportunities, and strategic initiatives throughout the University.

The goal of the campaign is to raise $1.6 billion, which will further establish UM as one of the nation’s most renowned centers of higher education, research, innovation and outreach.

The campaign is off to a breakneck start, with $906 million already raised. “Few top-rated universities continuously move up,” said Abess, who with his wife Jayne will serve as co-chair of Momentum2. “Some universities stall, but we keep getting better. The success of this campaign so far is due to very focused leadership and relentless work by a huge team of people who share a common vision about this institution we love.”

The campaign comes as UM continues to ride a crest of major achievements during the past year. In 2011, UM continued its ascent in U.S. News & World Report’s “Best Colleges” rankings, climbing to No. 38 (up from 47 the previous year). The new rank represented a rise of 29 slots over the last ten years, making UM the fastest-rising institution among national universities. Worth magazine recently named the University the most fiscally responsible nonprofit organization in the nation, and for the eleventh year in a row, UM received Charity Navigator’s four-star rating for sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency.

Gift announcements and updates may be found online by visiting www.miami.edu/momentum2. Throughout the campaign, social media users are urged to engage by using “#Give2theU.”

Supporting Educational Leadership

Throughout her long career in public and private education, Linda Eads, BSED ’69, has been a builder. The founding principal of Miami-Dade’s acclaimed MAST Academy is now supporting a new generation of educational leaders. “I am a strong believer in partnerships and collaborations,” said Eads. “I have a great deal of admiration for the School of Education and admire Dean Isaac Prillentensky’s vision of engaging and embracing our multicultural community.”

Eads believes that more educational leaders are necessary to make a positive change in American society. As a result, she is funding graduate-level scholarships aimed at broadening the vision of the school’s master’s and doctoral degree students.

“I believe it’s vital to expose learners to new environments and show them how they create change in the community,” she said. “It’s not enough to be well-read and collect the data. You have to go out there and apply that educational expertise in society. That’s how we will move forward.”

Back in 1990, it was Eads’ proposal to the Dade County Public Schools for MAST Academy that earned her an appointment as the school’s founding principal. Within three years, the U.S. Department of Education recognized MAST Academy as a Blue Ribbon showcase site for educational reform. Eads was also recognized for the nationally replicable programs she created: Dade Partners Program providing essential school and community linkages, the Inner City Marine Project, the antecedent program for MAST Academy, the MAST Academy Outreach Program with science and meteorological mobile classrooms, and MAST Mariners, a summer academic enrichment/water skills programs for minority students.

In addition, the State of Florida adopted the professional development model Linda designed and implemented at MAST, requiring teachers to target areas for improvement linked to school goals and student achievement. In 2001, Florida Governor Jeb Bush appointed Eads to the state’s first Board of Education, where she assisted in setting educational policy for K-12 programs, colleges, and universities. She remained with the K-12 Florida Board of Education for two terms. Eads also co-founded Global Technical, Educational Professional Services, Inc. (G-TEPS, INC.) a homeland security training company that conducts maritime port assessments and training.
Okhee Lee understands the importance of private philanthropy in furthering research into educational issues. A professor at the School of Education for 22 years, Lee has made significant contributions in the field of science education, including the development of curriculum for English language learners and students in low-income urban settings. In 2004 she received the Distinguished Career Award from the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Standing Committee for Scholars of Color in Education. Lee has also made personal financial contributions to the School of Education.

“While federal funding from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education has been the primary source of support for our research, private donations have been very important in our work,” says Lee, who is now professor of science education and childhood education at New York University. “Private donations can be very influential in many ways. In my case, Richard Kurtz, Ilene and Bruce Dresner, and Glenn Hubert supported our work at UM.”

The Dresners also facilitated a $50,000 contribution from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, which funded a 2003-04 project focusing on Haitians’ perceptions of science. With a team of researchers, Lee interviewed 12 middle-school students who had come to the United States in the past three years, as well as 12 parents with children in elementary school and 12 teachers who were born and educated in Haiti. She also interviewed Haitian professionals who were educated in Haiti and the U.S.

Lee says private funds can provide seed money for new projects, enrich publicly funded studies, or serve as “bridge” funding between federal grant awards. “They also make our major grant proposals stronger because they demonstrate an institutional commitment to support research programs.”

For Lee and other professors at the University of Miami School of Education, that support runs both ways. Walter Secada, professor of teaching and learning, Lee, and several co-authors of a science curriculum for grades 3-4-5 agreed to give all royalties from their work to the university. “That’s just one of the ways that faculty members can contribute indirectly to research programs,” she says.

Lee and her late husband Michael B. Salwen, professor of journalism in the School of Communications, contributed anonymously to the schools’ scholarship funds. “Before Michael passed in 2007, we decided to start a fund to thank the university for its support, especially those years when he was fighting cancer,” Lee says. “It’s very rewarding when I get letters now from students who tell me how those small gifts have helped their studies. There are many ways of giving and the personal rewards are truly priceless.”
A Close Connection

Robert and Monique Doidge feel a close connection with the School of Education through their professional interests and their two sons. Robert Doidge, D.O., is an orthopedic surgeon who leads the medical team at Englewood Knee & Sports Medicine Orthopedics in northern New Jersey. Monique Doidge has a clinical background and is also active in the practice.

Drew is a sophomore and Rob is a junior studying exercise physiology in the Department of Kinesiology and Sport Sciences. “Both are athletes who really like the school’s programs and classes,” said Monique Doidge. “They like being able to take electives and explore their various interests.”

We need to find better ways to prevent obesity and lower the risk of diabetes.”  – Monique Doidge

Recently, the Doidges made a donation to the School of Education, including funds to support Wesley Smith’s metabolic research. “Our son Rob had several classes with him, and my husband sat in on a class,” said Doidge. “Since we are in the health industry, we recognize the importance of the diabetes research he is doing. We need to find better ways to prevent obesity and lower the risk of diabetes.”

In addition, the Doidges invited Professor Kysha Harriell to speak at a May 2 symposium, “Sports in Action,” for high school and college athletic trainers and directors in a four-county region. Harriell will speak on sickle cell disease and provide an update on concussion research.

Studying Childhood Obesity

Supported by a private donation, Professor Wesley Smith, Department of Kinesiology and Sport Sciences, is launching a new study of boys ages 9 to 15 that may reveal new metabolic clues to help in the fight against childhood obesity.

“One in three obese children will develop diabetes, and in minorities the rate is much higher,” said Smith. “Since diabetes is a leading cause of blindness, amputations, and kidney failure, anything we can do to reduce the risk of diabetes in children will have substantial long-term benefits.”

At the School of Education’s Laboratory of Clinical and Applied Physiology, Smith is studying the role of insulin-resistance – a reason that some children have a higher risk of developing diabetes than others. “Research has shown that the muscle cells in these children don’t burn fat very well, just carbohydrates,” he said. “It seems the left-over fat turns off the insulin-signaling in the cells. That leads to conditions like high blood pressure, and the whole metabolic disease pattern.”

In the study, Smith will measure the level of fat being oxidized (exhaled in the breath) at various intensities of exercises. “There are exercise-related strategies to improve fat oxidation, so if a correlation is found, we can apply those exercise and diet interventions,” he said.

Smith will also be looking at how long it takes the heart to recover from exercise, and fat patterning in children, where the fat cells are stored. If connections can be identified, clinicians will be able to use the results to screen for children at high risk for metabolic disease.
Thanks to a University of Miami scholarship program, Dany Accilien is taking giant steps toward his goal of becoming a doctor in underserved communities.

A first-generation Haitian-American, Accilien is now a sophomore studying exercise physiology in the Department of Kinesiology and Sport Sciences. “I have always been interested in science and in becoming a doctor,” said Accilien. “I’m thinking about specializing in orthopedics and working with athletes, as well as opening up clinics for those who need care the most.”

A native of Haiti, Accilien came to the United States when he was 6, spending time in New Jersey, Tampa, and Miami. “My mother does mission work with the Haitian hospitals, and I would go in the summers to help her,” he said. “I was originally interested in biomedical engineering, and I’ve learned a great deal about the human body from School of Education professors like Wesley Smith. This is a great program and I feel fortunate to be here.”

The University of Miami established the Hammond Scholarship to honor the legacy of its first director of minority affairs. The full-tuition scholarship recognizes outstanding high school seniors from across the country who have demonstrated academic excellence, a commitment to their personal goals, and have aspirations of continuing their academic pursuits through graduate education. Ronald A. Hammond scholars participate in academic and cultural programming with the Honors Department and other prestigious scholarship recipients such as the Jenkins and Gates Millennium Scholars.

Advancing Exercise Research

When the School of Education needed financial assistance for its Teacher Support Network, Lori Karger, BSED ’79 and her husband Stewart Karger, BBA ’79, stepped up to the plate. The program for new teachers in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools was highly effective in addressing classroom challenges and increasing retention.

Now, the Kargers are continuing their support for the School of Education by helping Professor Joe Signorile, Kinesiology and Sport Sciences, in developing an assessment tool that will help physicians write appropriate “exercise prescriptions” for older Americans.

“My husband is particularly interested in that field, since we operate Belmont Nursing Home, a family business in Boston,” said Lori Karger, who met her husband when they were both UM students. Their son Josh is a student in the school’s sport administration program. Daughter Jami Karger Smith, BSED ’07, was an elementary school teacher, and middle son Craig spent a semester at the university after he was displaced from Tulane University by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. “My exercise room is painted orange and green,” said Karger. “I even have a talking Sebastian in the living room. You might say we are big fans of the University of Miami!”
**Thanking You for Your Support**

The School of Education would like to thank its many donors, friends, alumni, and their families for their generosity. During the fiscal year 2011 (June 2010 to May 2011) the School received $1,397,759 in gifts.

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Irving & Sylvia Genet Scholarship Student Studying Art Therapy

For more than five years, an endowed scholarship from Phil Genet has been helping School of Education students like Macarena Rufín achieve their dreams.

“The Irving & Sylvia Genet scholarship allowed me to continue to pursue my love for educating children,” said Rufín, BSED ’09. “It was my invaluable experience in the School of Education that inspired me to focus on the mental health of the children I was working with on a more individualized basis.”

After earning her degree, Rufín studied fine arts at Parsons New School for Design for a year and is now finishing a master’s degree program in art therapy at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. “I am looking forward to empowering my students through the creative process,” she added.

The Genet family has enjoyed a close relationship with the University of Miami through the generations. In the past 65 years, 11 members of Irving and Sylvia Genet’s family have graduated from the university, including two from the School of Education. “Our parents have a long legacy of support for education,” said Donna Genet, AB ’65, MA ’69, who received the Dade County Public Schools’ Outstanding High School Teacher Award in 1988.

Reflecting on the $100,000 Irving and Sylvia Genet Endowed Scholarship, Donna’s brother Phil Genet, AB ’71, said, “We are very proud of the school. Because my wife Cheryl and I live in the San Francisco Bay area, we can’t get to Miami as frequently as we would like. But we are very pleased with the school’s emphasis on wellness and prevention of problems. It’s a true joy to give to the university.”
McGees Help Broaden Students’ Horizons

Soon after Connie McGee began teaching English in Dade County public schools in 1984, she attended an inspirational professional development program: The Zelda Glazer Summer Writing Institute sponsored by the School of Education. She soon became a close friend of Eveleen Lorton, who guided the institute for more than two decades, until her retirement in 2010.

“Dr. Lorton was one of my mentors,” McGee said. “She encouraged us to build our professional skills by going to local, state, and national meetings.” McGee took her advice and served as president of the Dade County Council of Teachers of English for a year.

“One summer, my husband Bob and I decided to do something for Dr. Lorton,” said McGee. “We decided to set up a travel fund so students would be able to attend professional meetings and interact with their colleagues around the country.”

Now, the Eveleen Lorton Travel Awards continue to broaden the professional horizons of students and faculty. As McGee said, “Attending conferences and workshops allows you to learn and share knowledge and best practices that will lead to better-prepared teachers and students in all our classrooms.”
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Schild
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honor roll

Student Appreciates Welch/Strong Scholarship

Hannah Maurer, BSED ’11, has made good use of her 2009 scholarship from Dr. Edward W. Welch, BS ’68, and Robert L. Strong, an honorary ’Cane. The Massachusetts native is now teaching first graders at Miami’s McGlannan School for Dyslexia and Language-based Learning Difficulties. “Without the scholarship, I wouldn’t have been able to attend the University of Miami,” Maurer said. “It was an incredible help in allowing me to do what I wanted to do.”

Back in 2005, Welch and Strong set up an endowed scholarship in the School of Education with a $100,000 donation in honor of their families. “My experience as a student teacher at Miami Edison Senior High School fully prepared me for my teaching experience in the City of Boston,” said Welch at the time. “The University of Miami always treated me as an individual while attending and stayed in contact with me throughout my years as an alumnus.”

Strong became a Hurricanes fan after attending a number of Boston College – Miami football games with Welch. “One time we flew down to the University of Miami to attend a Florida State game, and I gave Robert a tour of the campus, including the classrooms,” Welch said. “He was so impressed that he decided to adopt the university as his school, too.”

Now, Welch and Strong attend the school’s annual scholarship-donor recognition program. “It’s a highlight every year,” said Welch. “I love meeting the awardees, talking to them about their aspirations, and knowing they’re on the right course.”

Learn How You Can Leave a Legacy to the School of Education

The Office of Estate and Gift Planning at the University of Miami has a new website: www.miami.edu/plannedgiving. It is filled with information about how you can help the University of Miami School of Education continue its mission well into the future and leave your legacy by making a planned gift, no matter what stage of life you are in.

You will find information about all of the planned giving vehicles, articles of interest regarding estate and financial planning in general, and even quizzes to test your know-how on a variety of topics.

The university is excited at the launch of the new site and encourages everyone to visit it and learn more about how a planned gift can help combine financial, personal, and philanthropic goals to support the School of Education. If you have any comments or questions about the new site, or about planned giving in general, please contact Cynthia Beamish, executive director of the Office of Planned Giving at the University at (305) 284-1527 (toll-free (800) 529-6935), or at cbeamish@miami.edu. We appreciate your support!
Publications


Fowers, B. J. (March, 2012). The ontology of identity: The evolved sociality of individuality and loyalty. Mid-Winter Meeting of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, Austin, TX.

Lefevor, G. T., & Fowers, B. J. (March, 2012). Character and situation: How to transcend the traditional dichotomy as an Aristotelian. Mid-Winter Meeting of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, Austin, TX.


Presentations


Harry, Beth presented the keynote address at the Annual Conference of the Kansas Division for Early Childhood In Wichita KS on February 24th. The keynote was entitled: Remembering Melanie: Reflections on dilemmas of difference in culture, language, disability and social context.
