



College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Religious Studies
NEWSLETTER

ALUMNI NEWS



Think, think, think. What do I want to be when I grow up?

Religion and Theology

Jessica Bassett ('08), is continuing her studies at the Graduate School for Theology, Oxford University, England.

Law School anyone? Our recent graduates: **Ashley Garcia**

('09) George Washington Law School, in Washington, D.C. Attending UM's Law School are **Gary Robillard** and **Melissa Chamorro** ('09) who has received a full-year scholarship. **Emily Cook** ('09) University of Georgia School of Law. She worked at a corporate and commercial litigation firm this past summer and is getting ready to compete for Miss Georgia and hoping to compete for the next Miss America.

Religion and Medicine

Debbie and **Leslie Chavez** ('05), finished their medical training and graduated from St. Mathews School of Medicine. Both are doing rotations at UNC's School of Medicine in Greensboro, N.C. **Zahid Huq** ('08) continues his training at UM's Miller School of Medicine. **Karen Salazar** ('04) graduated from Ross University School of Medicine and will be doing her OBGYN Residency at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. **Jason Guercio** ('03) re-

cently graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a M.D. degree and an M.B.A. from the Wharton School in May. He will do his internship in New Rochelle, NY and his residency in Anesthesiology at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, NC.



Mark Gilchrist ('96), a pediatric physician and great friend of the department, now lives in New Hampshire. **Leonel (Leo) Diaz** ('05) continues in medical school. **William Lievens, M.D.** ('03) UM Med ('07) and Christy Lievens (UM Master's degree '04) are living in Alabama. Bill is doing his residency in Neurology, and Christy is the Study Away Coordinator for UAB. **Jennifer Zuccarelli** ('04) is doing rounds at Georgetown Medical School. Her husband, Cole, is a military physician whose unit served in Afghanistan. **Rebecca Nevels** ('07) has been missing in action. Since I last heard, she was thinking of doing a Sonography program in Orlando or in Pennsylvania. **Seetal Preet Cheema** ('00) visited family in India and taught at a local hospital before returning to Boston where she works at the Veterans Hospital in anesthesiology and pain management. **Vinita John** ('00), a dentist,

lives in Virginia Beach with husband Mike. **Hannah Park** ('99) is an anesthesiologist at Aventura Hospital, in Florida. **Jeannette Ortega** ('99) has graduated from Ross Medical School in the Caribbean. **Yadira Rafuls** ('03) is now in Cincinnati, Ohio doing her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Good Samaritan Hospital. Yadira, my good and loyal friend, has bought a beautiful little house and shared some pictures with us. **Ami Panara** ('09) will begin this fall at UM's Medical School. **Nirav Joshi** ('09) will join Ami at the Miller School of Medicine, while **Jacqueline Henkel** ('09) will work in Pediatric Cardiology research also at the Miller Med School. **Michael Inza** ('09) will begin Pharmacy School this fall. Our great work-study and major, **Soledad Galindo** ('07) is back in Orlando, after taking some courses at Harvard University. Soledad will be preparing to take the AMCAS and MCAT some time soon. **Jessica Serrano** ('04) is engaged to be married. She lives in Atlanta where she is finishing her Pediatric rotations. One more year to finish.

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Alumni News

ALUMNI OF NOTE.

Shajena Erazo ('09) will spend next year in Washington, D.C. She wants to do a masters in Public Policy and a Ph.D. in Educational policy.

Ashley Ventura ('09) will be working next year at a law firm in Fort Lauderdale. **Molly Kurnit** ('08) is doing research for her master's thesis in Kisumu, Kenya. Molly is finishing her graduate work in public health at Emory University. Way to go Molly!

Mary Puckett ('09) will attend the Graduate School at the University of Virginia.

Maryann Tatum '01, MFA '04, earned her PhD in Education '09. Maryann will also be mar-



rying Nathaniel Tobin (JD '06) on Nov. 14th at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Coral Gables. **Dawn Lovell** ('97) continues UM's doctoral program in psychology. **Regan Schutte** ('02) has now moved back home in Raleigh, N.C. **Juan Vila** ('01) Ph.D. is a counselor and department chair for the Guidance Department at Columbus

High School. **Jocelyn Buhain** ('98) Ph.D. is working at UNC-Wilmington Counseling Center as a staff psychologist.

James Milner ('07) is enrolled in a two-year M.A. program in Conflict Resolution at Georgetown University offered through the Department of Government. **Padmini Jagadish** ('00) is in DC at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services working in minority health and priority populations.

Greg Lockhart ('01) is currently in Afghanistan as a CPT in the Army working with the Afghan National Police. **Ligia Houben** ('98) is an author, consultant, and an international inspirational speaker. Ligia is a certified Grief and Addiction Counselor and a Thanatologist. Ligia's new book can be found at www.mymeaningfullife.com

Kristie (Rumler) Cromer ('05) teaches at New Smyrna Beach Middle School. **Sylvia Weir** ('03) is now

back in Miami, after living in California where she worked at Genentech. Sylvia has a son and is expecting another boy.

Brandon Ferguson ('06) currently lives in Fort Walton Beach, FL and is married to another "Cane." Brandon is stationed at Hurlburt Field. Brandon flies PC-12s with the 319th Special Operations Squadron. **Lourdes Sanchez-Barcia** ('98) has started her own law firm here in Miami. **Cristina Valdes** ('03) started her own company "Cup Cakes Nouveau" in Coral Gables www.cupcakesnouveau.com Last but not least, **Michelle Loposky** and husband, Robert, live in Phoenix, working at the University of Arizona's College of Medicine. Michelle is President of the UM Phoenix Alumni Chapter.

OUR BABIES ARE GROWING. What else did our alumni do of with a religious studies major or minor?

Christie (Lewerentz) Temple ('98), Jason and Kaia (now 5 years old) live in Atlanta, GA. **Grace Santos**, attorney,

realtor, actress, and mother of Ciara Faith (7 years old) lives in St. Petersburg, FL. **Jennifer (Roun) Sabin** ('99) husband Bruce, and little Charlotte Moon live in Frostproof, FL. The Sabins await the birth of their second child. **Cara Fleming** ('00), husband Fred, and Candence live in Tucson, Arizona. **Maria (Pili) Klein** ('99) practices civil litigation in Florida. Her son Heath is 2 years old. **Rabbi Geri Newburge** ('94) resides in Cherry Hill, NJ with husband and their son Jay. **Suprya Ray** ('95) husband and their son, Anders, will move to San Francisco where Todd



will teach at UCSF. I thought to also feature their cat, Callie



Stay in touch, we miss you!!

GO CANES

Work-Studies-Alumni News

Edward Perez is now at UM's Division of Enrollment Management, Technical Operations. **Marylin Gauthier** is also at UM as a campus police officer. **Alex Cuenca** is in his second year of Ph.D. Program in Social Studies Education at the University of Georgia. **Chris Himmel** is a special assistant to Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez. **Veronica Cordova** is on her second year of "Teach for America." After a slow start in her designated school, she persevered and triumphed. **Michele (Petronella) Walsh** ('91) is co-owner and artistic director of a very successful dance studio (That's Dancing) in Lantana, FL. Michele has two sons, Mason and Ryan. Along with her sister and other family members are part of the studio that is producing exciting performances. **Caroline Shearer** graduated this May, not before being selected "Student of the Year," a great honor for a wonderful young lady. She will continue as a part-time assistant to the department.

THANKS FOR A JOB WELL DONE

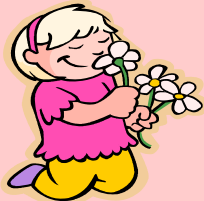
Alina Giral came back from her semester in Florence, Italy. Without Alina and Caroline's hard work and dedication, the department could not have performed in the way we like to. Our thanks to them!! To all our former work-studies, we want to tell you that you are **so** missed. To all of you, present and past, thank you for the caring way you have helped us grow and continue to thrive!!

Society for the Study of Religions and Cultures (SSRC)

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader."

John Quincy Adams

The Society thanks the officers and members who worked long and hard during this past year. Events such as "Ghost Stories" and our annual "Pumpkin Carving Competition" are just some of those annually attended. The society promotes lectures and discussions on different subjects to increase the understanding of various religions and cultures. SSRC meets at least once a month and we extend an invitation to students (alums and *anybody!*) to join us and to give us suggestions for activities and events that will enhance our knowledge and appreciation of our fascinating world. SSRC seeks practical approaches to the interaction among diverse cultures and religions. Caroline Shearer, who graduated in 2009 will cede the presidency to Alina Giral who along with the new advisor, Dr. Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado, have been already planning for new events, lectures, and other interesting gatherings for the new academic year



FACULTY NEWS

John Fitzgerald and Dexter Callender participated in the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature held in Rome, Italy this July. Fitzgerald also attended the XV World Economic History Congress in Utrecht, the Netherlands in August. He published the book "The Writings of St. Paul: Annotated Texts, Reception, and Criticism" and was appointed "Professor Extraordinary" at South African University, and has attained the rank of full professor at UM. Daniel Pals is Senior Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Michelle Gonzalez-Maldonado (U. Berkeley) was Associate Master of Pearson Residential College and is now Master of Hecht RC. Her interests include Santeria, Vodoo, Palo Monte, Christianity, and Spiritism in the Americas. Her work and accomplishments as a young scholar have been lauded by students and faculty in diverse venues. David Graf is one of the world's leading authorities on the Greco-Roman Near East. Last year, he was a Fellow at the Institute for Advance Study in Princeton and has received a Fullbright scholarship, and a 2008 Provost Scholarship Award. Graf returned this summer to Saudi Arabia to continue a Pre-Islamic archaeological project; he is the first American scholar to conduct research in that country. Karen Ruffle continued her research in India throughout this summer. Ivan Petrella has returned from his sabbatical year in Argentina, Buenos Aires. Henry Green, on leave for the Fall semester, continues to work on his HIPPY Foundation project. Irene Oh Koukios accepted an offer to teach at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. David Kling will be Interim Chair this coming Fall semester, filling in for Stephen Sapp who will be taking a well-deserved sabbatical leave, after serving for two years as Chair of the Faculty Senate of the university.

Congratulations!



Now... go for the green.

We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny. But what we put into it is ours.

~ Dag Hammarskjöld ~

2009 GRADUATES

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Melissa Chamorro | Nirav Joshi | Tarik Madni | Brent Vicino |
| Kristin Francoeur | Chelsea Jacks | Leo Meirose | Emma Waugh |
| Ashley Garcia | Nisha Kalidas | Caitlin Moloughney | Joseph Weitzer |
| Kelsey Hazzard | Krystal Kinney | Ami Panara | Tremayne Woodard |
| Jacqueline Henkel | Danielle Kramer | Samik Patel | |
| Nicole Norwath | Patricia Liever | Mary Pucket | |
| Benjamin Hughes | Robin Lucas | Shajena Erazo | |
| Michael Inza | Annette McCormick | Alejandro Vera | |

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL!!!**

Honors Options in the Department of Religious Studies

The Department of Religious Studies participates in the University of Miami's Honors Program and each semester offers two or more courses for Honors credit. Religious Studies majors and minors (m & m's) may enroll in any of these Honors courses. Our students are also encouraged to intensify and

deepen their knowledge of religious texts, traditions, and issues through the departmental honors program. The program is designed to give our students the opportunity to explore various topics and problems in religion that are of particular interest to them, to work more closely with faculty in the

department, to develop skills in research and thesis preparation, and in some cases to prepare for graduate work in religious studies. Our m & m's may earn university graduation honors (*summa cum laude* or *magna cum laude*) at the same time that they seek department honors. Our department is also

proud to house the Alpha Beta Upsilon chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa (TAK), the national honor society for religious studies and theology. Each spring the chapter inducts eligible new members. Dr. David Kling will assist any students wishing to pursue any of these options.

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

It is not just given, it is earned!

In the field of religious studies, as in others, setting goals that seem almost impossible to achieve becomes the tool that makes it happen. The power of high expectations is the mechanism that challenges us to extend ourselves and go far beyond to achieve our greatest successes.

2009 HONORS DAY DISTINGUISHED GRADUATES

The Theta Alpha Kappa Award for Outstanding Achievement

KRISTIN FRANCOEUR

The Honors Day Award for Outstanding Major

ASHLEY GARCIA

The Prize in Religious Traditions

ASHLEY GARCIA

The Prize in Religious Literature and Texts

MARY PUCKET

The Prize in Religious Issues and Problems

MELISSA CHAMORRO

THETA ALPHA KAPPA



TAK was conceived as a college/university learned society at Manhattan College, New York City, during the academic year 1976-77. Its prime purpose is to further the study of Religious Studies and Theology at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Its name embraces the three areas of primary concern to students of religion:

God (Theos), Humanity (Anthropos), and Community (Koinonia).

TAK promotes religious studies by encouraging excellence in research, teaching, publication, and exchange of learning and thought among scholars. It seeks to bring students, teachers, and writers together both intellectually and socially.

Membership is composed of students who have been elected upon the basis of academic excellence.



THETA ALPHA KAPPA
2009

HONOREE

Kristin Francoeur

INDUCTEES

Shajena Erazo

Sandra Frost

Ashley Garcia

Robin Goldberg

Carrie Hanson

Benjamin Hughes

Nirav Joshi

Michael Inza

Jacqueline Henkel

Annette McCormick

Ami Panara

Ebony Rhodes

Eva Ryder

Ashley Ventura

Daniel Thompson



THETA ALPHA KAPPA
2009

"What we are seeking so frantically elsewhere may turn out to be the horse we have been riding all along." Harvey Cox



A WORD FROM THE "I-CHAIR"

I confess I don't have an iPod or an iPhone but, as noted in the "Faculty News" section, I've agreed to serve as I-Chair (that is, Interim Chair) of the department during the fall semester. Dr. Sapp hasn't taken a sabbatical in well over ten years, so we trust that he has a restful and productive break.

One of the projects that Dr. Sapp completed just before he began his sabbatical was a report to the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS), the accrediting agency of universities and colleges in the southeastern region of the U.S. Every ten years, institutions must submit an extensive report to SACS, basically telling them what the university is doing to meet its educational goals.

I think you might be interested to know something about the report that Sapp submitted. As mandated by SACS, Dr. Sapp contacted alumni of the last three years, seeking their input. Thirteen of you responded. Among the findings from the "Religious Studies Graduated Major Survey" were the following: First, religious studies majors who continued their studies in graduate school lauded the department for equipping them with the knowledge base and critical skills necessary to succeed at the graduate level. Second, many of the department's majors affirmed that their exposure to religious studies has had a personal and professional impact on their lives. Third, graduates almost universally agreed that the department's greatest strength is its faculty. You described your professors as "charismatic," "helpful," "passionate," "immensely knowledgeable," "caring," "engaging," and "accessible." As you well know, in any given year, few if any students come to the University of Miami with the intention of majoring in Religious Studies, but along the way, many of you, because of the faculty, caught the religious studies bug.

As faculty we were both honored and humbled by your responses. It is very satisfying to know that we've played a small part in contributing to your successes in graduate school and beyond. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your lives. Be assured that you are welcomed to drop by the department anytime, or if distance and time do not allow, please do drop us a note.

David Kling

*To submit news or if you wish to be added to our email list, please contact us at aorlando@miami.edu
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"The Roots of Violence: Wealth without work,
Pleasure without conscience, Knowledge
without character, Commerce without morality,
Science without humanity, Worship without
sacrifice, Politics without principles."

Mahatma Gandhi

August 2009

