Where Are They Now?

BY ARLEEN SPENCELEY

Forty years ago this coming spring, a set of 10 students graduated from the University of South Florida with the first degrees dispensed by our program. In preparation for our 40th anniversary celebration, we tracked down several to see where life took them after graduation.

While most of us have never met Wallace Webb face to face, you will know if you ever meet him that you and he have some things in common. He is educated. He is accomplished. And while we work our way toward graduation, we are walking in his footsteps. He graduated from our program 40 years ago.

Wallace, 83, lives in Dunedin. At 62, he retired from a career at Vocational Rehabilitation. Early in his career there, it was his job that led him to our department. “By the time I got my degree, I had been an employee (of Vocational Rehabilitation) for eight years,” Wallace said. “The state decided those of us who did not have a rehabilitation degree should get one.”

Wallace had already spent the first six months of 1968 training at a mental health center in Massachusetts in a program sponsored by Harvard Medical School. “I tended to specialize with the patients who had mental problems rather than just physical problems, so we were working to be effective with clients who had emotional and mental difficulties,” he said.

But his degree was in divinity. So he sought a graduate program in rehabilitation counseling. The closest program he found to his home was at Florida State University. But halfway into that program, Wallace learned that the University of South Florida started a program in rehabilitation counseling. So, he transferred. “Any schooling that broadens your perspective on life helps,” he said. After he graduated, he applied his education to the rest of his time at Vocational Rehabilitation, where he worked for 25 years in total before he retired. Still, he continues to educate himself and he advises all of us to do the same.

“Once you quit school, keep reading books. I’m to this day keeping the book industry alive,” he said. And “the more exposure to good courses, the better a person is equipped to deal with life and make a contribution.”
The late Malcolm Rigel is another of our program’s first graduates.

“He drove from Lake Wales to Tampa for evening classes,” said Rigel’s son, William Rigel. “He was older than many of the students, and he liked their youth.”

Rigel was also a pastor, his son said, and while he studied rehabilitation counseling in our program, “he often used what he was learning in his sermons.”

In addition to Rigel’s degree from our program, he earned a master’s in theology from the University of Dubuque and a doctorate of sacred theology from Emory University. Throughout his career, he worked in counseling and ministry.

He was once an administrator for Mid-America Christian University while it worked toward starting a distance learning program. At Warner University in Lake Wales, Rigel worked as a counselor, a department chair, a facilities planner and a professor. As a professor, he taught counseling, theology, church ministry and Bible classes on both undergraduate and graduate levels.

He also worked as a pastor for more than 60 years at churches in six states, his son said, and started multiple new churches. Rigel, also a musician, wrote several church songs. One of them, called “He is All I Need,” is printed in hymnals used in churches of a few different denominations. “He retired several times,” his son said. “First in the early 90s. (He) went on to serve as a pastor for three other churches, build one church and three houses, and returned to Warner to help plan a new building before really retiring in August of 2007. He passed away in January of 2008.” Rigel was 81 years old.

Other graduates from our program’s first class include Erio Alvarez and Kyle Tallant.

According to the Hillsborough County Government website, “Erio Alvarez had a distinguished career of more than 30 years in community corrections with the State of Florida. (He worked) as regional director of community corrections responsible for adult felony offender supervisions, and halfway houses and inmate work release facilities that covered five judicial circuits over 13 west central Florida counties.” He has since retired.

According to the St. Petersburg Times, Kyle Tallant died in 2001 at 82 years old. After he served in World War II and the Korean War in the Navy, he was a vocational rehabilitation director for the state of Florida.

For forty years, the people who have been part of our program have used their education to make a positive impact on our community. Based even just on the careers and lives of the handful of people in whose footsteps we follow, the value of what we work toward is clear. And the opportunities we will have to make a positive impact are endless.
Greetings Students, Alums, Colleagues and Friends,

So many new and exciting things have happened or are underway this academic year that I don’t know where to begin! First and foremost, please join me in welcoming three new and talented faculty members to the Department. They are Drs. Christina Dillahunt-Aspillaga, William Kearns and Rick Weinberg. Their unique backgrounds will strengthen the program and bring new opportunities for teaching, research, and service. We are very fortunate to have them on board and look forward to working with them for many years. Additional information about each is available on page 8.

Also, we welcomed 66 new students during Fall Orientation in August. These students are among the most talented and diverse to join the program and have an average GPA of 3.6, GRE scores of 478 (Verbal) 539 (Quantitative) and 3.8 (Analytical/Writing). Approximately 80% are from the local Tampa Bay Area, 15% from other parts of Florida, 3% from other states and 2% international. Almost 20% of the new student are members of diverse populations (racial, ethnic and disability), which is wonderful and exciting for the program and profession. In addition, 18 students graduated at spring and summer commencements. We are very proud of them and their accomplishments and extend our best wishes for continued success. Additional information regarding Fall Orientation and our new students and graduates is available in this issue and at http://rmhc.cbcs.usf.edu/resourcesLinks/.

This is the 40th year of the founding of the Department and we are planning a huge celebration in Spring 2012. I’m sure you have fond memories of the program and we want you to join us to celebrate the founding faculty and staff of the program and the achievements of our more than 1,300 graduates. Save the date and plan to join us on June 1, 2012 in Tampa at the USF Alumni Center to celebrate this historic and wonderful event.

Thanks to the support of the College and University, we were awarded a new Instructor position. The search is underway and we expect to fill the position by January 2012. For more information, please visit our Department web at http://rmhc.cbcs.usf.edu/newsEvents/news.cfm.

I want to thank our faculty and staff for their continued dedication and support on behalf of our students and program. They do an incredible job of teaching, advising, coaching, counseling, mentoring and guiding our students every day. I could not do my job without their support and advice. Please know that everyone appreciates their generous sacrifices and commitment.

Last, but not least, I want to wish everyone all the best for Fall 2011 and the rapidly approaching holiday season!

Sincerely,

Tennyson J. Wright, Ph.D., CRC

Associate Professor & Chair
Alumni News

Ana Aluisy
passed the CRC exam.

John Arnaldi
co-edited and published his book *The Ethics and Efficacy of the Global War on Terrorism*. The book presents a variety of perspectives and disciplines that critically examine significant ethical issues involved in the War on Terrorism.

Shawn Bach

Shauna Bisson
is now working for Gulf Academy in Clearwater and was hired by G4S, the largest private contractor of juvenile justice residential facilities in Florida.

Christopher Duron (Class of 2010)
received an invitation into the Peace Corps as the Youth Development Facilitator. He has been assigned to Peru.

Rachel Jacobs
secured employment with the Division of Blind Services.

E. Ryan Hall (Class of 2006)
was admitted into the University of Denver and Iliff School of Theology joint Ph.D program.

Yshheynia Hamilla
published mind-body-spirit self-help, found on InnerLightResources.com. She also has a part time counseling private practice and provides holistic and spiritual counseling in addition to traditional psychotherapy.

David Ortega
passed the CRC exam.

Richard Rhodes (Class of 1997)

Current Student News

Janie Koike
is in Peru doing an international practicum experience. Full story can be found on:

Sherri Green
published her book, *A Family ‘Affair’: Three Generations of Agoraphobia*. “The book explores the disabling condition of agoraphobia with panic disorder across the lifespan of three individuals who are related. As their stories are told, glimpses of experienced stigma, emotional management, creation of identities, and coping mechanisms are revealed.”

Richard Chapman
published an article in the Journal of Child and Family Studies along with coauthor Claudia Dold of the FMHI Research Library. The article titled, “Hearing a Voice: Results of a Participatory Action Research Study” can be found in the May 2011 issue. A link to the article is posted on the department’s website: http://rmhc.cbs.usf.edu/.

Richard Chapman also participated in a federal peer review of state developmental disabilities councils in Washington, D.C. 9/13/11-9/15/11. Richard was invited by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities in the Department of Health and Human Services. Richard Chapman is interested in bridging mental health counseling and disability rights.

Jessica Russo
created a non-profit project called *Eating to Live, Not the Alternative*. The project promotes positive body-image and Russo hopes it will prevent eating disorders. She will be speaking at Kappa Delta's National Women's Friendship Day brunch at USF. Updates on the project can be found at: www.eatingtolivenotthealternative.blogspot.com.

Karmen Smith
secured employment with Gulf Coast Recovery and passed the CRC exam.
Ana graduated in December of 2010. Since graduation she has been hired by MHC as a Therapist and she is working part time in a local private practice. She is currently an intern for licensure as a Mental Health Counselor and Marriage and Family Therapist in the state of Florida. She has a special interest in working with clients from multicultural backgrounds, especially Spanish speaking, since she is bilingual.

Life After Graduation

Graduating is an exciting time in our life. We seek this moment after years of hard work, but after we graduate is when the real hard work begins. I remember my last semester in the Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling department. I had so many unanswered questions about my future: How I’m going to get a job that pays enough?, How much is supervision going to cost, or is the company I work for going to provide supervision for me?, Am I going to like my job? Am I ready?

I remember thinking, “at least I have three years of experience in the field under my belt.” However, in this hard economy, there are plenty of people with experience looking to gain employment. I was very fortunate to secure employment by the time I graduated. As I look back, it has only been nine months since I graduated, but this time has provided valuable lessons that have led to growth both personally and professionally.

The first lesson I have learned since graduating, is the importance of knowing what I want in my career. Being aware of my goals has allowed me to see and take advantage of opportunities that have been presented to me, as well as given me the motivation and courage to take on challenges. It has also forced me to look at areas where I need to improve in order to achieve my goals, as well as limitations that I have to learn to overcome or compensate in order to reach my goals.

The second lesson was around learning that everything we do today is contributing and helping us achieve what we are working for in the future. I have to make daily choices and consider my priorities in order to find balance between my work and my family life.

I have to be organized with my time and efforts and plan ahead as much as I possibly can, given my busy schedule and my many responsibilities.

In a way, I have gotten pretty good at saying “No” and negotiating alternatives. In addition, I have learned to take time for myself and create enjoyable positive events in my life in an effort to keep a positive attitude and help me make it through the difficult days.

Last but not least, the third lesson that I have learned is that priorities can change as time goes by, and consequently goals can change. Most times we have no control of these changes and we are forced to adapt and reconsider the route towards our goals. Some times we can plan ahead for changes and other times change is unexpected. At times we may have to sacrifice or delay our immediate plans for a loved one. It is also helpful for me to remember that plans and goals are helpful to keep me focused, but they’re not everything in my life. Especially since I would not be able to achieve all of my goals if it wasn’t for my family’s support and understanding.

These valuable lessons are helping me to concentrate and keep focus on my path of becoming a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the state of Florida. They also motivate me to work full-time at a community mental health agency and part-time at a private practice. I know that I still have a long journey in front of me and I’m looking forward to continue learning and working hard to get there.
Spring 2011 Graduates

- Joan Anderson
- Adam Capparelli
- Elizabeth Carter
- James (Wes) Coleman
- Tarryn Dorosz
- Kristina Echevarria
- Todd Engle
- Singride Frame
- Karla Fedina
- Marvin Garwood
- Jenna Hart
- Rebecca Holt
- Daniel Huk
- Rachel Jacobs
- Monica Johnson
- Marta Kuhn
- Rockne Lee
- Natalie Lewis
- Amanda Garcia
- Patrick McKee
- Kelly Morrissey
- Diane Parrish
- Karen Schwartz
- (David) Craig Stratton
- Kimberly Teller
- Yvette Triana

Students and faculty at the Fall 2011 orientation

Graduates in picture from left to right: Patrick McKee, Wes Coleman, Heather Widmer, Kimberly Teller, Rockne Lee, Elizabeth Carter

Summer 2011 Graduates

- Deborah Ackerman
- Jeila Alai
- Tiffany Ally
- Madeline Alt
- Teresa Bellinni
- Viviana Chandler
- Sarah Couture
- Lauren Cromer
- Heather Ferencz
- Victoria Fernandez
- Cristina Gonzalez
- Carolyn Hagemeyer
- Laura Hollis
- Samuel Holte
- Jermesa Lee
- Ayanna McDonald
- Lauren Moore
- Alexandra Mroz
- Susan Muth
- Ashley Musolino
- Paige Oliver
- Matthew Paulus
- Richard Prieb
- Alexandra Ricker
- Cheryl Scheidler
- Donna Smith
- Jennifer Storke
- Sandra Swan
- Jennifer Thor
- Mark Wenham
- Megan Whelan
- Trine Yarlett
- Allison Zangari

Welcome New Students! Fall 2011

Graduates in picture from left to right: Karmen Smith, Sheila-Marie DeStefano, Sara Deese and Unaiza Malik

Students and faculty at the Fall 2011 orientation
SOS Student Association

Last Spring, S.O.S. continued the “lecture series” meetings on the topics most relevant to our current students. We also participated in Take Back the Night to raise awareness about domestic violence and support the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay. We sold homemade cookies, handbags, and henna tattoos and collected nearly $300 by the end of the night.

This semester, S.O.S. is kicking it off with the arrival of our new 2012 club T-shirts and a jam packed calendar of meetings and socials for you to get involved!

Some of the topics you can look forward to this fall include: An Overview of the Certificate Programs, Community Agencies: Creative Counseling, and Private Practice Part One. Stay tuned in the spring for: Private Practice Part Two, Changing Laws and Policies with RMHC, and Counselor Wellness: Leaving Work at Work.

Join our organization, Serving Others Selflessly, on Blackboard and “Like” us on Facebook to get all the up-to-date information on what’s going on. We look forward to seeing everyone at a meeting or social this semester!

Rick Weinberg, Ph.D., Department of Rehabilitation & Mental Health Counseling, was recently honored with a Teacher of the Year Award from the Serving Others Selflessly Student Association.

Left: Dr. Weinberg (second from left) receives his award from Erin Fry, Secretary; Ashley Williams, President; and Isabel King, Membership Chair.
Welcome New Faculty

Dr. Tina Dillahunt-Aspillaga, Ph.D., CRC, CVE, CLCP graduated from the University of Florida with a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Science and a Master’s of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling. She served as Director of Family Program and Services, at the Brain Injury Association of Florida, Inc. in 2010. Before that, she worked as a program specialist and coordinated events for individuals with traumatic brain injuries at the same site. Other roles she has served in include vocational evaluator, prevention specialist, employment services specialist, and adjunct professor. She has conducted research and published about various brain injury related issues.

William D. Kearns, Ph.D. is now serving as Research Associate Professor. He received his PhD., two master’s of arts, and undergraduate degree in Psychology. He has numerous publications and grants. His professional service includes grant and manuscript reviewer, and associate editor. He has served as an instructor since 1978 teaching psychology classes and various seminars.

Dr. Richard Weinberg, Ph. D. received his degree in Psychology from University of South Florida in 1983 and has been licensed as a psychologist since 1984. His Master of Arts is also in Psychology. He performed a clinical fellowship at Harvard Medical school from 1980-1981. He currently maintains an independent practice of psychotherapy, specializing in family therapy, marital therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and stress management. He served as both an assistant professor and a clinical associate professor at the University of South Florida in the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. Dr. Weinberg serves on multiple boards and is involved in many community projects. He has multiple publications in the mental health field.
Grants Update

External Funding

- The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. has awarded grant funding of $300,000 for a three year initiative titled the Collaborative on Discovery and Innovation in Employment (CODIE). Dr. Tammy Jorgensen Smith will be the Co-Principal Investigator on the project with Dr. Lise Fox, Director of the Division of Applied Research and Educational Supports and the Employment Team of the Florida Center of Inclusive Communities. The purpose of the project is to build the capacity of school professionals in collaboration with community action partners to use the Discovering Personal Genius (DPG) process in supporting youth and adults with developmental disabilities (DD) in achieving customized employment. CODIE will train and support county-based implementation teams as they engage in systems change, provide technical assistance to teams in the implementation of the DPG process, and develop an authentic, sustainable learning community that will support teams in achieving skills to achieve mastery in implementing the DPG process with fidelity for youth in transition and adults with developmental disabilities.

- In August 2011, Southeast TACE funded start up costs of $15,000 to develop and implement an online certificate course in the Discovery process. Successful completion of the course will allow participants to become certified vendors for the provision of the Discovery process as a service to customers of Florida Vocational Rehabilitation. This customized employment process is utilized in lieu of traditional vocational evaluation for individuals with significant disabilities. It is a strength-based, qualitative process that has been shown to be extremely effective in facilitating achievement of competitive, integrated employment goals. The course will be offered 3 times per year through University College (formerly the Department of Continuing Education). Dr. Tammy Jorgensen Smith is the USF lead on the project and will co-teach the course in Summer 2012.

Internal Funding

- Reid, Joan A. & Ryan Henry (Co-Applicants). Articulate® Academy: Enabling Faculty to Create and Deliver Fully-Online Courses. University of South Florida University College (Summer 2011). Amount Awarded $4,000. Dr. Reid is using the funding to convert the Department’s Research Methods course into a fully online class for Spring 2012 semester.

- Dr. Gary Dudell has finished up the second series of “Conversations with Mind/Body Practitioners” video project which has been funded by two iTOPP grants. The full first and second series of video interviews will be available on the department website and on YouTube.
Presentations

In April 2011, Dr. Tammy Jorgensen Smith presented two posters at the annual National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) conference in Manhattan Beach, CA. The poster titles are Managing Individualized Needs for Employment (MINE) and Student Website on Employment and Transition (SWET) and contain information on two innovative projects that are in process.

In June 2011, Dr. Tammy Jorgensen Smith presented on an innovative project titled Managing Individualized Needs for Employment (MINE) at the National APSE conference in Seattle, WA.

Reid, Joan A. Walking an Ethical Tightrope: Ethical Practice for Professional Counselors Serving Clients in the Criminal Justice System (Invited). Florida Rehabilitation Association Annual Conference, Clearwater, Florida, August 2011.

Reid, Joan A. & Rachael Haskell. Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Somebody’s Daughter (Invited). Research presentation and training on identifying and providing mental health services to minor victims of sex trafficking. Children’s Social Service Providers in Hillsborough County, Tampa, Florida, May 2011.


Reid, Joan A. Identifying Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Victims (Invited). Human Trafficking Summit for Certified Rape Crisis Centers in Florida (Sponsored by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence), Orlando, Florida, February 2011.

Recent Publications


2011-2012 Calendar

November
11 - Veteran’s Day
24 - 25 - Thanksgiving Holiday

December
2 - Last day of Fall classes
3 - 8 - Final exam week
9 - Fall commencement Tampa

January
9 - First day of classes
16 - Martin Luther King, Jr.

March
12-17 - USF Spring break

April
27 - Last day of Spring classes
28-4 - Spring final exams

May
4-5 - Spring Commencement Tampa
14 - Summer A & C first day of classes
28 - Memorial Day

June
1 - SAVE THE DATE! 40th Anniversary RMHC banquet & reunion
22 - Summer A last day of classes
25 - Summer B first day of classes

July
4 - Independence Day
20 - Summer C last day of classes

http://rmhc.cbcbs.usf.edu

The department website now contains a copy of the course sequencing for the MFT and Addictions Certificate. These course sequencing lists can be found on each of the certificates description page at the bottom. The Behavioral Health Certificate will have its course sequencing list posted in the next month. The course sequencing for each certificate lists which classes will be offered each semester for the next two years. This will assist students in planning when to take certificate courses during their program.
Rehabilitation & Mental Health Counseling

Our Mission

Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling is an interdisciplinary field and, as such, draws from many related areas. For example, included in this interdisciplinary program is information drawn from psychology, education, behavioral sciences, biological sciences, philosophy, engineering, and law. As an interdisciplinary field, Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling attracts faculty members from a full range of disciplines and related programs as they enhance diversity of thought and add richness to the academic and research needs of the department.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling is to promote quality services for individuals with differences in abilities and to help the state meet its human service needs in the areas of rehabilitation and mental health through teaching, research and service.

About the Masters Program

The graduate program in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling is fully accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE). Upon completion of the 60 credit hour program, graduates are prepared for careers as both rehabilitation and mental health counselors. The training program includes experiential learning, emphasizes psychological, social, medical, and vocational aspects of disability, and also develops and refines personal adjustment and mental health counseling skills.

The Department of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling offers both a non-thesis and thesis program.

Graduate Certificate Programs

The Department offers four graduate certificate programs to provide students with the opportunity to specialize skills and knowledge according to future career goals.

Marriage & Family Therapy. Students develop skills to diagnose and treat mental, emotional, and relationship disorders from a systemic framework.

Behavioral Health Counseling. Students develop an in-depth understanding of holistic theory and practices within the counseling process, and holistic perspectives and approaches to wellness.

Substance Abuse Counseling. Students develop an understanding of the addiction cycle and its application within the counseling process.

Rehabilitation Technology. Students develop an understanding of current and emerging rehabilitation technology, medical aspects of disability and career and lifestyle assessment.