Everglades School for Girls
60 Years Later
REUNION REVELRY
and introducing our new Head of School Penny Townsend.

THURSDAY, APRIL 23
7 p.m. • Athletic Hall of Fame Dinner
(Invitation Only)
Upper School, Pagoda

7:30 p.m. • Spring Band Concert
Upper School, Lewis Family Auditorium

FRIDAY, APRIL 24
9 a.m. • Assembly Celebrating Everglades School for Girls 60th Anniversary
All Everglades alumnae are encouraged to attend.
Middle School, Gymnasium

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Everglades Anniversary Reception and Luncheon
Honoring Classes of 1965, 1970 & 1975 and local alumnae
Middle School, Murphy Activities Room

11:30 a.m. • 50-Year Reunion Luncheon
Honoring Ransom Class of 1965
Upper School, Pagoda

1:15 p.m. • Afternoon Assembly with Upper School
Students including Alumni Career Panel, Celebration of 50-Year Graduates & 2015 Head of School Honoree
Upper School, Lewis Family Auditorium

2:35-3:15 p.m. • Alumni Jam Session
with RE Guitar Ensemble
Upper School, Wakefield Rehearsal Hall

6-8 p.m. • Alumni Spring Cocktail
All Alumni (ages 21 and above)
Upper School, Quad

SATURDAY, APRIL 25
9 a.m. • Alumni Regatta

10 a.m. • Alumni Soccer (honoring Ransom 1975)

10:30 a.m. • Alumni Water Polo
Upper School, Anderson Waterfront, Walker Field & Ansin Pool

10:30 a.m. • Alumni Board Meeting
Upper School, Havenick Visual Arts Lecture Hall

11 a.m.-2 p.m. • Children’s Crafts and Free Swim
Upper School, Ansin Pool
RE Bookstore open

11:30 a.m. • Head of School Address and Luncheon
Induction of the Mangrove Society
Upper School, Dining Hall

1:30 p.m. • Poetry Class with Dan Leslie Bowden
Upper School, Dan Leslie Bowden Library

3 p.m. • Art History Class with RE Fine Arts Chairman Jose Rodriguez
Upper School, Havenick Visual Arts Lecture Hall

7 p.m. • Reunion Dinners and Parties
Upper School, Locations provided upon arrival

Reunion Classes will have additional off-campus activities
with information to follow.

For hotel information visit:
RansomEverglades.org/AreaHotels

For More Information Contact the Alumni Office:
Vicki Carbonell Williamson ‘88, vwilliamson@RansomEverglades.org | 305-460-8826
Danielle Phillips, dphillips@RansomEverglades.org | 305-460-8859

Join your reunion Facebook page:
Ransom School Class of 1965 • Ransom Everglades Class of 1975 • Ransom Everglades Class of 1980
Ransom Everglades Class of 1985 • Ransom Everglades Class of 1995
Celebrating a powerful legacy

“Private Schools are not little dens where people who can’t face a strong wind huddle together,” wrote Gertrude Peirce, the inaugural headmistress of Everglades School for Girls. “Our girls must learn to live in the world and carry their own responsibilities.”

Ms. Peirce’s words, written more than a half-century ago, are still true today. They live on as part of the philosophy of Ransom Everglades. Students at Everglades were also urged “to grow with the group, but to think as an individual,” which is another enduring principle of the school that evolved from the merger of Everglades and Ransom.

This issue of the Ransom Everglades Log proudly marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of Everglades School for Girls by Marie and Edward Swenson. You will hear from their daughter, Katherine “Kaki” Swenson Kahan ’61, and other alumnae from the first graduating classes.

Their comments share a common theme — that Everglades fundamentally shaped and inspired them in ways that have lasted their lifetime. I understand this on a personal level because my boarding school experience at Northfield Mount Hermon, where I also had my first teaching position after college, did the same for me.

I hope many Ransom Everglades alumni will be able to attend our annual Alumni Weekend April 24-25, where we will celebrate Everglades School for Girls’ anniversary. I look forward to seeing many Everglades alumnae and hearing more stories about the early years.

In other news, we are excited to debut some additions in this issue of the Ransom Everglades Log, including At Large, an alumni guest column, and Best Kind of Life. The Best Kind of Life feature will spotlight alumni who are living out Paul C. Ransom’s vision that an education at his school would prepare each student “for the best kind of life” — one that is committed to making the world a better place.

Penny Townsend

Note from the Head of School
**Everglades Creed**

Promise yourself
To make every girl feel she is a part of Everglades.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.

To praise the achievements of others and to respect their will to try.

To avoid criticizing others,
To profit from your past mistakes and aim for higher goals.

To achieve recognition — not in loud words but in worthy deeds.

To be completely honest in thought, word and deed.

To grow with the group, but to think as an individual.

To show good sportsmanship in all activities.

To live in the faith that Everglades is always on your side and that you will grow with it as long as you are true to the best that is in you.

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**Graduation day:** Everglades School for Girls Class of 1964.

**Graduation day:** Ransom Everglades Class of 2014.

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In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of Everglades School for Girls, graduates describe the school’s profound influence on their lives.

By Patty Shillington ’77

It wasn’t a word used back then, but there is no doubt that Everglades School for Girls was founded to empower, as well as educate, its students. That was a relatively radical concept and objective in 1955, the year the all-girls independent school opened on a verdant, scenic bluff in Coconut Grove.

The two-dozen students in grades seven through nine who made up Everglades’ original student body found a blank canvas on which to draw their own futures. They were supported and guided by four teachers, plus a strict but progressive headmistress who was focused on academic achievement and building confidence and independence in her students.

“We early girls were given the challenge to design the uniforms, to name the literary magazine, to name the yearbook,” said Katherine “Kaki” Swenson Kahan ’61, daughter of the school’s founders, Marie and Edward Swenson. “We created the student government and the Egret and Ibis teams. We put on Shakespeare and George Bernard Shaw plays in the Dell. Everybody had a chance to try everything.”

Although the Swensons organized and underwrote the school with their daughter in mind, Ms. Kahan said her parents’ vision was much broader than that. “They wanted to create an excellent preparatory school for girls,” said...
Ms. Kahan, who lives in New York City. “Mother and Dad gave me a choice of going to boarding school, like my brother, or the new school. Of course I wanted to stay.”

While the school was still in the planning stages, the Swensons handpicked well-known educator Gertrude Peirce to serve as headmistress, a role she held for 15 years. “She was somebody who would mold the school,” said Juni Bowes, ’60, a member of Everglades’ first graduating class, who went on to earn a B.A. in French from Cornell.

From the beginning, many Everglades graduates matriculated to the country’s best colleges — Radcliffe, Cornell, Smith, Barnard, Bryn Mawr. “The idea was that we would have a chance to get into the best schools — the Ivy League, the Seven Sisters,” said Ms. Kahan, who received a B.A. in Art History from Smith College and an M.A. in English from the Teachers College at Columbia University.

What emerged from the very first years of the school, many graduates say, was the “Everglades spirit,” a sense of closeness and purpose that defined the students’ experience. Traditions emerged, including creating class cheers that were shouted after each morning assembly. Younger students had a “big sister” to help them adjust and get involved. The entire school was divided into two teams — Egret and Ibis — that competed in sports and other activities. Toward the end of the year, seniors wrote their names in wet cement poured in different spots around the Dell.

Penny Townsend, the new head of school at Ransom Everglades, already has reached out to many Everglades alumnae to hear about their experiences and understand the roots of the school she now leads.

“Everglades seemed like a special place to me — small and intimate. It was a school that was still evolving when it was brought together with Ransom Everglades,” said Mrs. Townsend, who herself attended a boarding school that was the result of a merger between two single-sex institutions.

Many of the early graduates credit Everglades with fundamentally shaping their sense of self, inspiring their careers in education, the arts and beyond, and fostering a commitment to the greater community and important causes, such as women’s rights, animal rights and the environment. Outside of formal reunions, spread out across the country, they have kept in touch with each other and with their teachers for decades.

Maria Hernandez ’65, who immigrated to the United States from Cuba in 1960, attended Everglades her junior and senior years. “It influenced more than what I did with my life, career-wise,” said Ms. Hernandez, who became a teacher and held other educational posts. “Everglades shaped my person. It saved my future, how I viewed education, it helped me select schools for my own children. It developed my love of reading. The teachers inspired us.”

As a junior, Ms. Hernandez took Christel Marin’s French class with seniors because she already had a background in the language. “In my senior year, I had Ms. Marin by myself, one on one, in the courtyard at lunchtime,” she said. “Whatever subject they knew was your strength, they would give you individualized instruction.”

Ms. Bowes, 71, spent 50 years in education as a teacher, guidance counselor, dean and principal. Following her retirement last year she is planning to move to Palm Coast, Fla., from New Orleans. “Everglades has really been my backbone and I think that’s because of the teachers,” she said. “It completely turned my life around. It allowed us to develop tremendous leadership skills and do artistic things that we wouldn’t have been able to do at a larger school.”

Ms. Bowes still keeps in touch with the only surviving teacher from the first group of four, Marcia Knapp, 83, of Los Angeles, who taught at Everglades for one year only. “She was the coach and the PE teacher and she was instrumental in my life in that one year I knew her,” Ms. Bowes said.

Ms. Knapp, who had been teaching at Goucher College in Baltimore, heard about the new school in Miami and thought it sounded like an adventure. Ms. Peirce traveled to Baltimore to interview and hire her. “I did a lot more than teach physical

Continued on page 6
education," she recalled. "I worked in the office and was put in charge of the lunch program. I had a wonderful time. They were wonderful kids."

Everglades graduates tend to agree that the all-girls aspect had important benefits.

"I felt the security of being surrounded by classmates of the same sex," said Lili Krech Neale ’69, an artist and former nurse and nurse educator who lives in Coconut Grove. "We could just focus on our academics and our experience. It was a comfortable journey."

Ms. Neale’s Ransom Everglades roots are deep. Her father, the late M. Chapin “Hafey” Krech, was a beloved Everglades English teacher and assistant principal from 1965-69, and before that had taught math and been assistant headmaster at Ransom School. Her husband, Andy Neale, attended Ransom before going to boarding school and their son, Giles Neale ’98, is a Ransom Everglades graduate.

Ms. Neale’s class was the first to do a senior independent project, and hers “marked a turning point in my life.” She was a research assistant to a cultural anthropologist. "It was the beginning of the environmental movement," Ms. Neale said. "We were looking at thermal pollution in south Biscayne Bay near the nuclear power plant reactor."

The experience inspired a “lifelong appreciation for trying to protect the environment and to create a better, less polluted world.”

Ms. Neale remains best friends with classmates December Duke McSherry ’69, who lives near Gainesville, and Mary Beth Norton Durant ’69 of Washington, D.C. (see related article on page 8). They plan regular visits.

Similarly, Ms. Hernandez of San Francisco maintains ties to her classmates and is fortunate enough to live close to two of them — Carol Ann Norton Rogers ’65 and Stephanie Turkington Byrne ’65. “Stephanie was my first friend at Everglades,” Ms. Hernandez recalled. Today the three alumnae celebrate Christmas together with their families and attend Ransom Everglades alumni events in the San Francisco area.

Many alumnae felt a loss when Everglades and Ransom merged, and to this day, some classes prefer to organize their own reunions or attend events only at the former Everglades campus.

Send Us Your Memorabilia!

The Ransom Everglades Archives would love to expand its collection of Everglades School for Girls memorabilia, from old uniforms and saddle shoes to yearbooks, photos and senior project papers. So, please clean out your closets and send your gems to Gloria Pierce, Ransom Everglades School, 3575 Main Highway, Coconut Grove, FL 33133.
pride and success in holding out for Ransom to lead the name of the new school. “He said, ‘It’s going to be Ransom Everglades, and when we started out, that wasn’t the order,’” Mr. Fleeman said.

Indeed, to this day many people, including students and faculty, leave off the “Everglades” when referring to the school in conversation. “Everglades became a stronger school socially and academically in many ways, but for those of us who graduated from Everglades, you hate to see your identity missing,” Ms. Durant said.

Her sister, Ms. Rogers, who also attended an all-women college, Wellesley, agreed. “I am really impressed with what has happened at Ransom Everglades since the merger,” she said. “I must admit I was concerned because generally the women’s side of the equation tends to lose more than the men’s side.”

The alumnae credit Ellen Moceri, the recently retired head of school, for reaching out and pulling them back into the fold. Mrs. Townsend has made it clear that she intends to build on that goodwill and honor Everglades’ place in Ransom Everglades’ history. “The founding principles of Everglades are still alive in this school,” Mrs. Townsend said.

“Ellen made a real effort to bring Everglades back,” said Ms. Kahan, who plans to attend the 60th anniversary celebration during the Alumni Weekend in April. “And Penny is wonderful, really wonderful. I can’t imagine how great she is going to be for the school.”

Ms. Kahan looks forward to standing in the Dell once again, reconnecting with alumnae and joining others in honoring her parents’ vision and generosity in creating Everglades.

“I feel connected in the warmest way to the school,” she said. “It’s a great combination of the modern and the traditional. There is a texture there.”
All in the Family

There is at least one family of alumni that represents every stage in the evolution of Ransom Everglades School since the early 1960s. The Nortons lived on South Bayshore Drive at Emathla Street, a stone’s throw from Everglades School for Girls. Their father, the late Dr. Edward Norton, founded the renowned Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. Their mother, the late Mary Norton, served on the Everglades Board of Trustees.

There were five siblings: Carol Ann ’65 and Mary Beth ’69 graduated from Everglades School for Girls. Brian ’67 graduated from Ransom School for Boys. Kevin ’75 started at Ransom but graduated from Ransom-Everglades after the two schools merged but before the girls and boys campuses were integrated. Patti ’78 started at Everglades and graduated from Ransom-Everglades after the campuses were integrated and became coeducational.

Finally, Virginia Laird ’07 and Andrew Laird ’12 — the children of Patti Norton Laird, the only sibling who still calls Miami home — graduated from Ransom Everglades, attending both campuses now known as the Middle School and Upper School.

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of Everglades School for Girls, the three sisters reflected on that time and the impact it had on their lives.

Mary Beth Durant: I could hear the five-minute warning bell [from home]. I would get out of bed, throw on my uniform and be at school by the 8:30 bell. … The friendships I developed at Everglades have lasted. I have stayed very close friends with at least three girls from my graduating class. The benefit of a small school was really knowing many of the students and knowing all the teachers and having a very friendly relationship with them.

Carol Ann Norton Rogers: I loved Everglades. My class was the first to go all the way through [from seventh grade]. We were only 17 in our graduating class. We knew each other so well, we were almost like siblings. Of the 17, none lives in Miami [but] we’ve gotten together twice [in Miami in 2004, and in Blowing Rock, N.C., last fall]. It was really very moving for everyone. The teachers had a huge impact on my experience there. You knew they cared deeply about their profession and about you as an individual. There was an expectation that you would do your personal best. I never felt that what was going on in the classroom was geared toward passing a standardized test, or making a certain grade or getting into a certain college. It was about becoming an educated person. As a result, music and the...
arts and service were valued and were an integral part of what was expected of you... After graduation, I received a birthday card from [my Latin teacher] Mrs. Kleinschmidt every year until she died about 11 years ago. I don't think there are a lot of people who get to have that experience.

Mary Beth: I think [being girls only] made it more conducive to learning. We weren't intimidated. Middle school and high school can be a tricky time. For girls, particularly, it was a very nice way to give us a little more, to empower us to be more assertive and more academic than we might have been.

Mrs. Randolph started a current events class. She got me reading the paper; the Vietnam War was in its earlier stages. She clearly was getting us to think about things in the world that we had never thought about up to that point. .... Mrs. Penn was a great math teacher. She was very proper with her Irish accent but very sweet and she was really good at explaining math and very patient with all of us. You had to be very quiet to hear her — I think that was part of her technique.

Patti Norton Laird: Middle school was a really nice age to be at an all-girls school. I was always a very shy, quiet kid so going to Everglades meant I wasn't just one of the masses I felt like in elementary school. The smallness, the connection with the teachers, the closeness I felt with everybody there was what did it for me. There were people I could talk to, people who looked out for me, people who noticed if I was not being involved....

The best thing about the merger was that I was really interested in math and science and we were lacking that a little at the Everglades campus. I was prepared for a bigger, coed environment again. I felt good when I graduated; I felt ready to go off on my own. My first year at UVA I felt like much of it was review in the science and math area.

Patti on why she sent her kids to Ransom Everglades:

I knew they were smart kids and motivated and would get a good education anywhere. But I wanted to give them the chance to find themselves and develop interests and passions they might not be exposed to otherwise—that was key.

I think my kids could really try everything. The extracurricular things were as important to them as the academic things. My son ended up doing drama... and playing trombone. My daughter got into drama and she did a lot of theater... She really challenged herself and she felt supported.

All the sisters remember the serene setting of the Everglades campus:

Carol Ann: Oh, the natural beauty of the campus! It sat on a hill, which was very unusual for Miami. The banyan trees, the palm trees, the architecture of the school. It was really a lovely place to spend the day. I have an enhanced sense of place because of it.
Mother/daughter creative team is rooted in RE

When Laurinda Spear ’68 was tapped to design the expansion of the Middle School campus of Ransom Everglades about 10 years ago, all she needed to do was close her eyes and return to an earlier time in her life.

The lush and rocky Dell, speckled with sunlight. The monster limbs of the giant banyan tree. The curve of the front section of a classroom building aptly known as the prow. The scenic limestone bluff on the south side of the campus.

Founding principal of the world-renown architectural and design firm, Arquitectonica, Ms. Spear spent her formative years on that very spot, then Everglades School for Girls. Ms. Spear graduated from Everglades in 1968 with enough courage and confidence to follow her artistic dream, ultimately emerging as a visionary architect and designer.

“I knew the campus really well, so it was easy enough for me to figure out how to add on to it.”

Ms. Spear recalls the intimacy of small classes at Everglades and the encouragement of teachers to dabble in many forms of creative expression. “It was like an extended family,” she said. “I liked art class a lot. It gave me confidence.”

The girls school environment nurtured her emerging sense of self and expanded her belief of what was possible. “I think maybe I wouldn’t have been an architect if I had been in a coed high school,” she said. “It might have shut down my thinking that it was something I could do. It was barely something I thought I could do anyway.”

Ms. Spear and her husband, Bernardo Fort-Brescia, Arquitectonica’s other founding principal, wanted that kind of broadening experience for their own children, whom they raised in Coconut Grove and enrolled in Ransom Everglades: Marisa Fort ’98, Alexander Fort ’00, Nicholas Fort ’05, Raymond Fort ’06, Harold Fort ’08 and Gabriel Fort ’10. “I wanted them to have a great education right here and stay at home,” Ms. Spear said. “I didn’t want to send them away.”

Marisa and Ray, who became architects, and Harold, a landscape architect, have joined Grove-based Arquitectonica, which is working on key projects to restore the downtown Grove’s historic village identity. Marisa Fort said Ransom Everglades was part of her life long before she attended the school. “Growing up, I heard a lot from my mom about Everglades,” including the tradition of upper class students signing their names in concrete creatively poured around the Dell. “I loved going to school and seeing my mom’s name in the concrete,” she said. “It made me feel very rooted in the place. It’s very grounding to go to school where your mother went.”

“I loved going to school and seeing my mom’s name in the concrete. It made me feel very rooted in the place. It’s very grounding to go to school where your mother went.”

Marisa Fort ’98

At Ransom Everglades, Ms. Fort felt somewhat shy, like her mother. But also like her mom, she ended up thriving. “I made lifelong friends and I had great teachers,” Ms. Fort said.

When her son Bernardo, known as Bear, recently celebrated his first birthday, it was RE fine arts teacher Astrid Dalins who decorated his cake. And it wouldn’t surprise Ms. Fort one bit if Bear and his older sister, Emilia, become the third generation to attend Ransom Everglades.

“The connections are really strong at Ransom Everglades,” Ms. Fort said. “They don’t fade.”
For four days in January, Ransom Everglades Upper School and Booker T. Washington Senior High School embraced the spirit of Sydney Harris’ quote when 24 students from each school either hosted a student or traveled to the other campus. Although 48 students were hosts or guests, the entire student body, faculty and administration had opportunities to engage and participate in the exchange.

“It was really interesting to experience RE through someone else’s eyes for the first time and it helped me to think critically about things I do not always consider,” said Sarah Eskra ’15, who hosted a Booker T. Washington student. “These thoughts included the privilege of leaving our belongings anywhere on campus without the fear of losing them, the significance of the opportunity afforded to us and the importance of increasing diversity in our community. I also made incredible connections that helped me realize that we have many more similarities than differences in our hopes, aspirations and daily lives.”

“The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.”
— Sydney Harris, American journalist

With their rich cultural and historical ties to South Florida, it only made sense that the two schools collaborate. Booker T. Washington Senior High School is the second-oldest and first black high school in South Florida. This is the second year of the Ransom Everglades Booker T. Exchange. This year, in addition to the students, four teachers exchanged classes for a day. This component allowed more students to be involved with the exchange. Students were encouraged to ask the teachers about their school day, their students and the curriculum.

Students on both campuses have a desire to increase, sustain and deepen the relationships. We plan to have another exchange day between the two schools in the spring. Sagenne Francis ’15, an RE student who travelled to Booker T. Washington, feels passionately about the exchange. “I have gained a newfound appreciation for the opportunities my parents have given me by participating in this exchange. I have also seen that minorities and people of different socioeconomic backgrounds have experiences and perspectives that privilege cannot buy. I believe Ransom Everglades and Booker T. Washington can better each other by continuing to work together.”

Students of these two historically important schools noted that while some differences were obvious, they had overwhelming similarities. And that’s the point of this exchange: to help students at both schools see and engage in the world beyond their campus, neighborhood, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic background.
The ninth-grade Outward Bound program, spearheaded by retired faculty member Mike Stokes, grew naturally out of the ninth-grade World Civilization program. In the spirit of Paul C. Ransom, the freshmen set out into the Everglades in January, under the leadership of the staff from North Carolina Outward Bound School, to find and test themselves. The Outward Bound motto — “To serve, to strive and not to yield” — fits very nicely into the kind of education Mr. Ransom stressed. Prior to the expedition, the students read and respond to the letter that Mr. Ransom sent to all prospective students, in which he says the school seeks students who “believe that they are put in the world not so much for what they can get out of it as for what they can put into it.” Even more than in Mr. Ransom’s time, the demands of the wilderness serve as an antidote for the complexities of contemporary life, and there is no substitute for the trust that develops when a group works for a common goal.

The school’s purpose in this program is threefold: first, to increase the students’ willingness and ability to cooperatively solve group problems; second, to increase the students’ respect and sensitivity for the differences that exist in their group; and third, to increase the students’ awareness of the process of decision-making, problem-solving and leadership. The program also serves the school’s strong belief that the Ransom Everglades graduates should be “strong, self-confident and sensitive,” and that the school should strive to broaden and deepen experience and perspective.

In the five-day experience, students are taken from the comfort and familiarity of their homes and school, and brought to Everglades City in the Ten Thousand Islands area of Everglades National Park. The students are forced to deal with a challenging environment, to complete difficult tasks and to work with one another. They cook their own meals, set their own goals and...
navigate to reach those goals. Each student is forced to deal with stress in several forms. By completing the experience they learn, in the words of one of the students “...about my own feelings when dealing with some hard times. I came through... I feel stronger and more confident for the future hard situations.”

With the experience now lasting four nights and five days (expanded from the original three-day trip), there is time for the proper reflection and processing to take place, and also more time to observe the natural wonders of the area through bird-watching, star-gazing and manatee-watching. The students have become much more attuned to the environment as a result.

Two additional improvements include the on-campus student training and the increased involvement of the Ransom Everglades faculty. During the first semester each ninth grader spends approximately 20 class periods being introduced to navigation, canoeing and group initiatives at the Aquatic Center, on Biscayne Bay, and in the classroom. These activities have helped prepare the students for their involvement in the Outward Bound experience. Acquiring some basic navigational skills and being introduced to the biology of the Everglades prior to the trip allows more time during the program for other activities.

For more than 30 years, the Freshman Outward Bound Program has been an important vehicle through which the non-academic goals of the school’s philosophy can be implemented by contributing “to the development of individual self-esteem as well as a sense of community responsibility.”

2015 RE Internship Forum: Students pursuing their passion

By Paul Natland ’02
Upper School Science Faculty

One Ransom Everglades student intern spent his summer writing code for online databases. Another analyzed the genetics behind autism and cleft lips. Yet another joined a digital marketing team.

Those internships and 16 others were highlighted Jan. 28 when Ransom Everglades hosted the Second Annual RE Internship Forum in the Lewis Family Auditorium. The goal of the event was three-fold: to celebrate the great work that RE students are doing over the summer, to inform other students about what kinds of opportunities are available and to help encourage more parents and alumni to host current RE students in summer internships.

The event was a great success and well-attended by parents, alumni, students and faculty. We are working consistently on creating additional internships that we can help facilitate for our students. Our hope is that more students are inspired to continue to pursue their passions, and get real-world experience, by engaging in internships during the summer. If you are interested in participating in an internship as a student, or if you are interested in hosting a student intern for the summer, please contact Mr. Natland (pnatland@RansomEverglades.org).

Learn more about what internships are available and how to apply for them.
A limitless exploration of

By John King Jr.,
Director of Studies

More than 1,000 guests from Ransom Everglades and the South Florida community came together during the third TEDxCoconutGrove to engage the ideas of 15 speakers and performers in an exploration of the “Boundaries” of thought, race, space, body and the senses.

MacArthur Fellow Sara Seager offered a challenging Talk about how — and why — we look for life in the reaches of space. Tony Award-winning producer, writer and actor April Thompson examined how we craft stories about ourselves. Marc Buoniconti, president of the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, challenged the audience to “stand up for those who can’t.” Conductor Marian Dolan encouraged more reflective listening, Fire Chief Eric Lang taught the audience to see the “big picture,” even in times of emotional duress, and Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper columnist Leonard Pitts Jr. questioned what makes one “African American” and why that even matters at all. RE’s own math teacher and track coach, Mike Becker, questioned whether there is a limit to how fast humans can (and will) run, while serial entrepreneur Susan Amat observed that failure often leads to limitless opportunity.

Che Scott advocated for a “new guy code” governing between the sexes and Dr. Francisco Civantos explained how he and other ear, nose and throat specialists have advocated for patients by championing surgical research and practice that limits the collateral impact of a head and neck procedure.

Outstanding performers entertained the audience during each of the day’s three sessions. The exciting step routine of the University of Miami’s Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, Killian Smith’s provocative poetry recitation and Jess Nolan’s heartfelt original music enlivened the event and, like the urban painting of Ryan the Wheelbarrow outside of the auditorium, expressed the essential role that art plays in the world of ideas, emotions and the human condition.

The final session closed with the awarding of the Hope Prize to Haitian children’s advocate Boby Duval for his inspirational Talk about how to create “different windows” through which to view the world and the future.

The day of “ideas worth spreading” culminated in the Tasting Village, featuring culinary selections from 12 local restaurant and caterers and offering audience members and speakers a space to discuss all that they had heard and experienced earlier in the day.

The TEDxCoconutGrove Steering Committee is grateful for the support and contributions of the speakers, performers, volunteers, partners and chefs, and the staff of Ransom Everglades and especially for the audience members who contributed their own “ideas worth spreading” to the dialogue.

Visit TEDxCoconutGrove.org for more information, videos of all TEDxCoconutGrove Talks and applications for TEDxCoconutGrove: dream.
Boundaries

Producer-writer-actor April Thompson ’85 discussed the stories we create about ourselves.

The University of Miami’s Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity gave a thrilling, original step performance.

Ransom Everglades eighth-grader Killian Smith ’19 offered a provocative poetry recitation.

Photos: Travis Harris
ATHLETICS

The girls’ soccer team won the District 15-2A championship for the first time in 14 years with a decisive, come-from-behind 3-1 victory over Mater Lakes Academy. After tying the game 1-1 early in the second half, RE players showed their spirit and resolve when they scored two more goals.

Ransom Everglades hosted the Interscholastic Sailing Association’s South Points 5 Varsity Regatta in January with 23 varsity and 10 junior varsity sailing teams from around Florida participating. The community came together to host 175 sailors, their coaches and parents with tremendous support from RE alumni, students, parents, faculty, maintenance waterfront and administrative staff to ensure a successful and well-run event. See more at RansomEverglades.org/Sailing.

Rowing as a competitive sport for middle school students is fairly new in Florida though the sport has origins dating back to Ancient Egyptian times. The RE Middle School crew team has 32 rowers who range in experience from two years to none, but that doesn’t stop them from bringing home the medals. See more at RansomEverglades.org/Crew.

RE’s varsity baseball team took on an alumni team in early January in the Second Annual Alumni Game at the Boys & Girls Club of Miami. The celebration continued when Oakland Athletics pitcher Dan Otero ’03 was inducted in the 2015 Athletic Hall of Fame. From left: Dan Otero ’03, Josh Greenspan ’15, Chris Rossi ’15, Sam Chaneles ’16, Rick Suarez ’16, David Lanster ’15 and Thomas Willis ’04. See more at RansomEverglades.org/Baseball and RansomEverglades.org/Second-annual-alumni-vs-varsity-baseball-game.

Read and see more!
Facebook.com/RansomEvergladesAthletics

Photo: Carl Kafka

Photo: Leslie Ferraro

Photo: Carl Kafka

Photo: Julia Ferraro
RE-Gables High track project benefits entire community

Marking a unique public-private partnership, the Ransom Everglades varsity track team is practicing and hosting meets at the team’s new, state-of-the-art home track at Coral Gables Senior High School.

The brick-colored, rubberized track was funded by RE through a donation. The project was moved forward through the leadership of RE Trustee Jeffrey Miller ’79.

“This type of partnership will only make both our schools stronger,” said Ransom Everglades Head of School Penny Townsend. “By bringing the two institutions together, we model the kind of community engagement that is helping to create a better future for all.”

Coral Gables High Principal Adolfo Costa agreed. “This is about building relationships to foster the growth of student-athletes,” he said.

Both Ransom Everglades and Gables High faced some dilemmas in their athletics programs. Ransom Everglades didn’t have the space on its Coconut Grove campuses to build a track. Gables didn’t have the public funding to replace its bumpy, asphalt track, which is also used by the community at large. In addition, the Gables High campus does not have a pool on-site for its swimming and water polo teams.

So the partnership plan was hatched. Ransom Everglades would fund the new track at Gables High, and would use it for practices and home meets. Of course, Gables High students and track athletes also would benefit from the new track at their school. In addition, Gables High’s swimming and water polo teams would use Ransom Everglades Aquatic Center for practices and some meets and games. Previously, both schools’ respective teams had to travel much further and to less-appropriate facilities to practice and compete.

The RE track and field team held its inaugural home meet on the new track on Feb. 12. The preseason “quad” meet featured RE, Gables High, Pine Crest School and Ferguson High. The friendly competition marked a new era for RE track and field.

“For 50 years, Ransom and Ransom Everglades students have been wandering the streets, alleyways and parks of Miami-Dade County trying to train for track and field,” said Coach Mike Becker. “We now have been granted a beautiful gift with this state-of-the-art facility, which we will share with Coral Gables High School. Despite the previous difficulties practicing, track has always been a successful sport at Ransom Everglades and we expect this boost to enhance our performances immediately and in the future.”

“Ransom Everglades has always excelled at track and field, despite limitations on a practice facility,” agreed Coach Robert “Doc” Crabtree. “The new track at Coral Gables High really is icing on the cake and ensures that excellence will continue in this sport as the school moves forward. I am sure that Coral Gables High will experience the same benefits.”

The project is emblematic of the values of community engagement and giving back that Ransom Everglades strives to instill in its students.

“The public/private debate has long been waged,” Coach Crabtree said. “Here is an example of how the two realms can cooperate to enhance the lives of students at both schools and, hopefully, encourage friendships and better understanding to flourish.”
Ms. Betty Smith

By Jeff Lindsay ’70

Schools, we are led to believe, are intended to teach stuff. I always thought so — until I attended Ponce de Leon Junior High. The purpose of Ponce, as far as I could tell, was to teach you how to fight, how to lie to the guards — I mean, teachers — and how to survive in a violent, highly tribal society. If you actually tried to learn something, you would be beaten, poked with sharp objects and humiliated by the guards — I mean, teachers — in front of the entire class. Please don’t ask me how I know this; I would much rather have you think I am making stuff up.

After Ponce, I was supposed to go to Coral Gables High. But I didn’t think I’d survive another three years of all I’d suffered at Ponce.

I wanted to learn. I also wanted to live, preferably with all my parts intact. And I wanted to go to a prep school — I’d just read Death Be Not Proud — but that was out of reach in my family. My father was a teacher, with four children to worry about, and he could no more send me to Deerfield than he could buy my sister a new El Dorado.

Into each life, one or two small miracles will drop. We may not notice them, or we may choose to ignore them, but they are there. For me, one of those miracles came that year.

My father converted one wing of our house into an apartment and rented it to a woman named Betty Smith, the librarian at Ransom. It seems odd now, but she became my friend. I was painfully shy, but I could talk to Betty. She served me Constant Comment tea and listened to my problems. And she taught me many things — among them, how to perform for people. She did this by taking me to a church social and handing me my guitar (she’d smuggled it in her car’s trunk). Then she said loudly, “Everybody! Jeffry’s going to sing some songs he wrote.” She gave me a push, all eyes turned to me and, somehow, I sang.

I’m still singing. In fact, my time on the coffee house circuit helped pay for grad school.

When I’d forgiven her for the church social, I told Betty about my school problem. She poured more Constant Comment, listened and, finally, offered a solution. “Take Ransom’s entrance exam,” she said. “They’re giving it next week.”

I did. I don’t remember what I was thinking at the time, but I didn’t tell my parents. They first learned of it when they received a phone call from a gruff man who claimed to be Headmaster, even though he couldn’t pronounce “r” or “s.” He told them I was accepted at Wanton.

Impossible, my mother said. He didn’t apply.

Inconceivable, my father said. We can’t afford it.

Dork, my sister said. She was doing well at Gables.

Jeffry! Betty Smith said. You didn’t tell them?

So Betty told them, and urged them, while I blushed and looked at my toes. When it was over, my father agreed to talk with the Headmaster. And at the end of that meeting, somehow, I was enrolled at Ransom.

It was hard getting used to the bizarre and arcane habits that seemed to come from the dawn of time, or at least really old British movies; we went to Chapel daily, wore ties and — God help us — blazers with shorts. Our shirts were either blue or white, period, and if you wore yellow, not even a written note from the Pope could save you.

But the big thing was, I learned — at last. Without maudlin exaggeration, I can truly say Ransom was one of the most important periods of my life. It shaped me, it formed me and in-formed me. I would not be who or what I am today without the school, and the great mentors it offered, like Dan Bowden and Mike Stokes.

And none of that would have happened if it weren’t for another great mentor — Betty Smith.
Ransom Everglades senior Carter Shoer ’15 asked Jourdan Houston ’62 about her experiences as an Everglades School for Girls student.

**What was Everglades School for Girls like when you graduated in 1962?**

It was quite small. In my graduating class, there were only 12 girls. However, many girls came in and out, with some moving away or going to boarding school. With this small environment there was a very strong sense of community. I really got to know my fellow students and the faculty extremely well. Every morning we would have assemblies where people would make announcements and sometimes there would be discussions. I remember we would all walk in to the assembly while classical music was playing.

Academically, the school was very rigorous. The bar was set high, and Everglades allowed students to learn at a level of academic excellence that was much higher than what was available for most women at the time. I remember we had to take Latin, and either Spanish or French. The teachers were highly qualified and took risks with the difficult material that they presented to us. Although the teachers were serious about the academics, they all had an abundance of good humor.

Outside of the classroom, there was a strong focus on community service. While at Everglades, I helped at a school for children with cerebral palsy. There were also a lot of clubs, including the Drama Club, Science Club and Glee Club, to name a few.

**Did you associate with any of the boys from Ransom School?**

I certainly did. I have three brothers and they all went to Ransom, where they received a great education. We actually did a lot with the boys from Ransom. Whenever we would have dances, we would always invite some of the Ransom boys. We put on plays and the Ransom boys played the male parts. The Ransom boys were particularly involved in the musicals. One boy by the name of Bruce Weitz (’62) was extremely talented, and he actually did grow up to be an actor.

**Do you feel Everglades prepared you well for college and adult life?**

Everglades definitely prepared me well. As high school students, the courses we took at Everglades were at a college level. When I was a freshman at Mount Holyoke, many of the classes (and even some of the texts) were the same as I had enjoyed in high school.

My Everglades education challenged me to become a critical thinker. I learned the importance of discourse and learning new vocabulary. Additionally, Everglades instilled a level of independence that was rare for women at that time.

**Are you still in contact with any of the students or faculty members from your time at Everglades?**

While many of my teachers are no longer with us, I did stay in contact with them for many years while they were alive. I am still close with some of my friends from Everglades, and there is a group that I talk to at least once a month. We try to have small reunions every so often, and in 2010 there was a big reunion in Vermont with between 40 and 50 Everglades graduates.
Stephanie Lerner Ansin ’90

Transforming lives through theater

By Betsy Wise ’85

People pursue a career in theater for different reasons. Stephanie Ansin ’90 was driven to become a writer and director because she believes that theater has the power to transform lives. And that’s what she’s doing in her role as the founder and artistic director of the Miami Theater Center (MTC) in Miami Shores. The lovingly restored, 300-seat Art Deco theater is home to her exquisitely crafted and provocative original productions and adaptations. After years honing her craft in New York and Boston, she’s brought the magic back to Miami and is excited to share it with her hometown.

I’ve seen your work at MTC and everything — the story, the acting, the costumes — is incredible. How do you pull it all off?

It’s hard but fun work. I couldn’t do it without my creative collaborators. I’m lucky to work with Fernando Calzadilla, my creative partner. We write together, and he does all the sets, lighting, and costumes. Our incredible composer Luciano Stazzone does all the music and sound for our productions. It’s a team effort and a creative marathon.

Isn’t it a bit exhausting to fill an entire season with your own work?

It would be! Fortunately, we only produce two original works or adaptations each season on our MainStage. For the rest of the season, we have our neighboring SandBox — a black box theater where we present innovative, new works from cutting-edge local performers. And we screen great independent films almost every week through our partnership with O Cinema.

I love a night of good theater — it’s great entertainment. But really… transformational?

Yes, really. Transformation comes in degrees. For you, maybe theater is simply an escape to help you forget the cares of the day. For others, it can be a tool to change the way they see the world, other people or even themselves.

How do you do that?

One of the ways is by leading the industry in educational and accessible theater. With initiatives we support, like InSchool, which brings theater to students, and OnCall, where our teaching artists deliver the healing power of theater to seriously ill kids, we aim to share the magic of theater with the widest possible audience.

Miami Theater Center will celebrate its 10th anniversary at a Spring Gala on April 9. MTC’s edgy adaptation of The Seven Year Itch runs through March 22. For details: MTCMiami.org.

Photo: Justin Namonra-Haus
What was the most transformational moment in the theater for you?

I remember it distinctly: I was in my mid-20s studying a famous scene from Chekhov’s *Three Sisters*. We were supposed to run the scene, and I didn’t know my lines yet. I was worried, but I took a breath and tapped into the circumstances, and the lines just came out. Until that moment, I had always felt uncomfortable speaking on stage. The discomfort was gone. And from that day on, I understood that when one connects to a character’s situation and needs, the words naturally flow from them, and from the actor.

How do you think your time at Ransom Everglades informed who you are professionally?

I found my commitment to theater there. I acted in several plays and directed a couple, and I experienced my first collaboration with a composer! Amanda Green ’90 composed original music for a Christmas play that we performed for kids from St. Alban’s Day School.

Learn more about Miami Theater Center.

Shop online at RansomEverglades.org/Bookstore

Your one-stop shop for gifts and goodies

We’re open from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and located opposite the Aquatic Center on the Upper School Campus. All alumni, parents and students are welcome.

For more information, contact Katrina Patchett, Director of Bookstores, at 305-460-8885 or kpatchett@RansomEverglades.org.
Great apes sanctuary is alumna’s labor of love

By Patty Shillington ’77

In 2013, Ransom Everglades library assistant Susan Barry was researching Florida-based mom-and-pop organizations that benefit animals when she came upon the Center for Great Apes, an accredited sanctuary in Central Florida that quietly cares for 45 chimpanzees and orangutans who are unable to return to the wild.

As sponsor of a RE animal rights club (now inactive), Ms. Barry identified groups the club could support with funds they raised at bake sales, so she contacted the Center to make a donation. It was only then that she learned, to her surprise and delight, that the sanctuary’s founder and president was an alumna. “It was karma,” Ms. Barry said.

Patti Ragan ’65 attended Everglades School for Girls in its first decade. Her graduating class numbered 17, a group of women who maintain a close bond 50 years later. Ms. Barry arranged to meet Ms. Ragan at a Miami event. “She is so dedicated and so focused on her mission.”

The seeds of Ms. Ragan’s success and passion as an educator and business-savvy activist were planted at Everglades and nurtured in intimate classrooms led by committed teachers. “It was a wonderful education and it helped me a lot,” Ms. Ragan said. “I loved my class. I’m still close friends with a teacher I had.”

After graduating from Florida State University, Ms. Ragan worked as a teacher on the Miccosukee Reservation in the Everglades. Years after living far from Florida, she returned to Miami in the 1980s to help her mother run a temp agency business. On the side, Ms. Ragan became a docent and Board member at the newly opened MetroZoo (now Zoo Miami). Her first experience with great apes came in 1984, when she went to Borneo to help rehabilitate captive orangutans so they could be returned to the wild.

She learned more about the plight of great apes in 1990, when she was asked to foster a baby orangutan, Pongo, and, later, a baby chimpanzee, both of whom had been destined for tourist attractions. They were too domesticated to ever return to their natural habitat and were not the kind of non-hybrid, non-human-raised apes wanted by accredited zoos. “I started becoming aware of the situation,” Ms. Ragan said, referring to young apes sold as exotic pets, or to the entertainment industry, or research companies. “I was motivated to do something to find care for those animals that accredited zoos would not accept.”

When she found out there were no accredited U.S. sanctuaries for orangutans and only one for chimpanzees, she decided to start one herself for both primates.

She sold her successful temp agency to a national company, started a nonprofit organization in 1993 and began the search for a location to open a sanctuary. She still remembers receiving a letter of congratulations from Sophia Penn when the retired Everglades math teacher heard about her sanctuary plan. “I adored her,” Ms. Ragan said of the late Ms. Penn, who taught at Everglades from 1961 to 1975. “She told me she was very proud of what I was doing.”

After a four-year search, Ms. Ragan bought two geodesic dome houses (she lives in one of them) amid 15 acres of woodland in the tiny Central Florida town of Wauchula. “We need to be remote,” she said. “Chimps are very loud.”

Today, the sanctuary covers more than 120 acres, where chimps and orangutans raised in captivity (often suffering horrific abuse and neglect) can exercise on 1.5 miles of aerial
walkways that connect dome habitats, three stories high, and heated night houses, each with six or eight bedrooms. A $2.5 million planned project will create a secure, 35-acre open-space area where the apes will roam freely.

Pongo, the baby orangutan Ms. Ragan fostered, is now 25. Other sanctuary residents include Bubbles, the one-time pet chimpanzee of Michael Jackson, and many other apes from the entertainment industry. The sanctuary has a waiting list for pet chimps and a budget of $1 million a year (raised solely from donations and memberships) to care for its residents, who eat a couple hundred pounds of leafy greens and 70 pounds of apples and bananas each day.

Ms. Ragan now is focused on education and outreach. She has seen the terrible toll that the commercial great apes industry has taken on the extremely endangered species. “We try to educate the public: Don’t go to movies that have great apes in them. Don’t go to circuses or support advertising that uses great apes.”

Today, Ms. Ragan’s Center remains the only accredited sanctuary for orangutans in North America and one of 10 sanctuaries for chimpanzees.

The foundation she set up ensures that the sanctuary will endure beyond its founder — and hopefully one day will outlive its need. “These are amazing animals, dignified and intelligent, with the same range of emotions as humans,” Ms. Ragan said. “There is no reason to ruin the lives of these animals, who are our next of kin.”

LEARN MORE

Guided tours of the Center for Great Apes, which is not open to the public, are offered to sanctuary members, as well as school and civic groups. To learn more about the Center and its residents, including how to “adopt” an ape, visit CenterForGreatApes.org. To watch a 12-minute video about the Center’s apes, visit YouTube online and type in Center for Great Apes.
Ransom Everglades senior Chloe Suridis ’15 interviewed Kate Sullivan Lindseth ’75 about her memories as a student leader at Everglades School for Girls.

You graduated from Everglades School for Girls in 1975. What was the school like back then?

I graduated in the last all-girls class on the Everglades campus. The schools had completed the corporate merger but the girls and boys were on separate campuses. At the time, Everglades was a very close-knit group with only 28 of us in our graduating class. Many of us were in school together from seventh to 12th, which is a long time considering that college is four years. I’m not sure if I knew every person on campus, but I definitely knew most of them by name.

Everglades had wonderful traditions. The school teams, the Ibis and Egret, were aptly named for a school called Everglades. I was a proud member of the Ibis and competed hard for our team. Each class had their own class cheer that we would shout out at the end of assembly to see which class was loudest and therefore had the most school spirit. Ours was, “Let’s all shout and make it clear, Class of ’75 is here!” We clearly had the most school spirit. Our tradition was from singing in the Ensemble with Jenny Potter, Merry Cole, Jody Paskow, Helen Baden, Leslie Lipton, Jeri Waxenberg-Wolfson and Jaymie Meyer. We had so much fun together and even pulled off a First Place Award for Madrigal Singing at the Florida State Competition.

Outside of music, I was very involved in student government. As president of the school during one of the transition years, I was a member of the Student-Trustee Liaison Committee, along with Stuart Miller, who was president of Ransom. We were fortunate to have a voice in some of the decisions regarding the merger.

How did you end up at Everglades?

I always knew I wanted to go to Everglades based on all that I heard about it from family friends who were already there like Cree MacDougal Scudder and Crary Reeves Lauer. My parents also felt that it was the best option. Because it was a very small school, I got to know my teachers well and participated in sports, music, student government and the newspaper. Some of my fondest memories are from singing in the Ensemble with Jenny Potter, Merry Cole, Jody Paskow, Helen Baden, Leslie Lipton, Jeri Waxenberg-Wolfson and Jaymie Meyer. We had so much fun together and even pulled off a First Place Award for Madrigal Singing at the Florida State Competition.

Do you feel Everglades prepared you for college and for life?

Ransom Everglades is an outstanding school, and I’m not sure I would make it past Admissions these days. I had an excellent education and felt prepared for the work when I got to Connecticut College.

CS: What was the significance of Everglades being an all-girls school?

Attending an all-girls high school was fantastic for me. It helped me learn to confidently participate in the classroom and openly express opinions on many topics. I made some of my very best friends at Everglades. While we spent a fair amount of time on the Ransom campus at games, dances and some shared classes, we always had our own home base at Everglades.

Do you still have friends you made at Everglades?

I feel very connected to RE, and am serving on the New York City Regional Alumni Board. Most of the group is younger, but it is fun to hear about their experiences and see their loyalty to the school. I have been to reunions and enjoy meeting up with people from surrounding classes. I am in touch with a good number of my classmates from Everglades and cherish those friendships.
It’s Not Easy Being Green: Preserving Miami

The Kampong — National Tropical Botanical Garden in Coconut Grove

Panelists included, from left, Roland Samimy ‘86, Moderator David Goldstein ‘85, Adam Gelber ’88, Meg Thomson Daly ’78, Thad Foote ’91 and Trustee Carlos de la Cruz.

RE Alumni Connections

Mark your calendar now for the next RE Alumni Connections/Miami, an event series that brings together alum to engage and network about important Miami-related topics. Each event spotlights local alumni that are subject matter experts. The June 10 event — 6:00 p.m. at the National YoungArts Foundation, 2100 Biscayne Boulevard — will focus on Arts & Culture in Miami. It’s $25 per person for RE alumni and their guests.

More than 100 members of the RE community gathered for each of the first two events in this new series — Investing in Miami at The Light Box in Wynwood and It’s Not Easy Being Green: Preserving Miami at The Kampong in Coconut Grove.

Check the RE website, RansomEverglades.org/AlumniEvents, or email dphillips@RansomEverglades.org to be added to the series mailing list.

Investing in Miami

From left: Moderator Melissa Krinzman ’86, with panelists Joe Furst ’97, Maurice Ferre ’79, Cristina Lei Rodriguez ’92 and Trustee Jeffrey Miller ’79.

John Bussel ’87, Arden Magoon Karson ’80 and Micah Karson ‘12.

Michelle Varat ’02, James Cassel ’73 and Danielle Marks ’02.
Josh Greenwald ’87, Eliza Srebnick Weber ’87, Jorge Mora ’84 and Sheri Levine ’86 at the Yale Club for the NYC Reunion in January.

Mr. Bowden was honored at the NYC Reunion in January. Katherine “Kaki” Swenson Kahan ’61 and her husband, Richard, joined the celebration.

Mr. Bowden reads Truman Capote’s A Christmas Memory.

Holiday Gathering at Villa Woodbine. Class of 1995 had a strong presence as they gear up for their 20-Year Reunion in April.

Thank you to Class of 2004 10-Year Reunion Co-Chairs Andrew Cummings ’04, Thomas Willis ’04 and Neil Patel ’04.

Young Alums gather over the holidays at Michael Sullivan’s OTC.
Brian Shack ’06, Jordan Feldman ’06 and David Feldman ’09 led an RE effort to raise awareness and funds for financial aid through the 2015 Miami Marathon. Team RE ran the half marathon and included Head of School Penny Townsend, far left, and over 30 alums, faculty, staff, students, parents and past parents. In its first year, this effort raised $10,000. To make a contribution to the cause, visit RansomEverglades.org/MiamiMarathon. Plans for the 2016 Miami Marathon are already underway. Watch for details.

Trustee Mariela Cisneros-Mestre honored Young Benefactor Society members at the CIFO Gallery in December.

January Global Lecture Series Speaker Jennifer Urizar ’99, with Associate Head of School Mike Ferguson, left, and Director of Studies John King.

The REACH Too (Ransom Everglades Alumni Can Help Too) Toy Drive spread holiday cheer to children at Centro Mater.
Adirondack-Florida School

1940

John Light Worrilow (Excerpt from December 2014 letter to Penny Townsend) My memories are very favorable, having attended in 1939-40. On Friday, 1 September, 1939, at dawn, I was prevented at the German-Swiss border from entering Germany by the Nazi border guard as I was en route home to Lebanon, PA. At that very moment, Hitler launched his attack against Poland. As a teenager living in Lausanne, Switzerland, that summer of 1939 learning to speak French fluently, I remained in Switzerland as World War II developed.

Lincoln Ellsworth, an American explorer, had just returned from an Antarctic Expedition and lived in his Swiss castle. Looking for guidance, I visited him unannounced. After a tour of his historic castle, he advised returning home through Italy. I took the liner VULCANIA home and French Actress Simone Simon was aboard ship and one of many sleeping everywhere.

The school year was well advanced when I arrived home and entered school in Saranac Lake, N.Y. Mr. Kenneth O. Wilson was Headmaster and Mr. Patterson taught English and Mr. Lester E. May taught science. Henry (Harry) Anderson, ’38 had a brother David who wrote an article some years ago on the School schooner, WINSLOW, and its nearly disastrous collision during the Miami-Nassau sailing race. Knowing my near certainty for seasickness, I had volunteered for mess duty.

Even on a calm, moon lit sea, the master at the helm delayed changing course for our vessel under sail with a clear right of way heading toward a very large cargo vessel. The bow of the cargo ship towered above our stern, threatening our survival.

As she crossed our wake, the off duty crew stumbled on deck in response to “ALL HANDS,” unbelieving of what they saw. Rust from the cargo ship scraped the rope trailing from our stern. My first meal on mess duty was Spanish rice, which I ate twice that night and never since.

Faculty taught me to sail a Moth, a very small sailboat with centerboard permitting a young sailor to capsize, swim under the Moth, sit on the centerboard, right the craft and continue sailing. There were no Moths in the Miami-Nassau race, even as lifeboats.

1941

Frederik R.L. Osborne wrote, “I went to the Adirondack-Florida School from 1937 to 1941, when I went off to Deerfield Academy. I graduated from Deerfield in 1945 and went directly into the Army. I was discharged in 1946 and started at Harvard. After four years as an undergraduate and two years of graduate work, I came home to Auburn where I have lived ever since. I worked for the family’s daily newspaper and started a cablevision company, both of which have been sold. I was married in 1950 to May Sedgwick, who died in 1999. In 2002 I married Sheila Vorruter. We continue to live in Auburn, New York, spending our summers on nearby Owasco Lake in a house bought by my great-grandfather. I am still active in the Osborne Association, a not-for-profit corporation which helps convicts and ex-convicts.”

1945

Dave Wilson wrote, “My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed the NYC Alumni gathering. Great to see such an enthusiastic and interesting group and to meet the new Head of School. My uncle, Kenneth Wilson, former head of the Adirondack-Florida School, would be very pleased with Penny’s appointment. We hope we can get down to the April Alumni Reunion and represent AFS and the Class of 1945. Warm thoughts from the frozen North.”

Ransom School

1958

James Ryder shared anecdotes and photos from a photo safari to the Moremi Game Reserve and Okavango Delta in Botswana. He’s pictured with a three-month-old lion cub at Ukutula, a research center in South Africa.

1962

Fred Swetland and his wife, Tinka, own and operate Citisleeper (Citisleeper.com), a slide-away bed system manufacturing company in Naples, Fla. Fred has six grandchildren and teaches Sunday school at the Church of Christ Episcopal.

1968

Ned Moore is Vice President of the Council of Independent Colleges, a national higher education association headquartered in Washington, D.C. He and his wife, Tina, are the proud parents of two grown children, and are now the proud grandparents of two real delights, ages 2 and 4.

Of interest is both Adam and Ethan have the middle name Townsend, a family name we can trace back directly to the 1600s in America, including an officer in the American Revolution. And if you look in RE alumni records,
you’ll note that my brother Tom, who graduated Ransom in 1963, is formally known as Thomas Townsend Moore.

Dan Ellison writes, “In addition to a solo law practice, concentrating in arts-related legal issues, I have been an adjunct professor in the Duke University Department of Theater Studies, teaching courses on legal issues for the theater. I’m also on the boards of several arts organizations in Durham and Raleigh.”

1973

E  

everglades School for Girls

1962

Frances Mercer divides her time between studios in Santa Fe and Florida. Her watercolors of forests, skies and mountains have been shown at the Amsterdam Whitney, NYC; Studio Vogue Gallery, Toronto; Florence

Laurinda Spear hosted RE and Harvard alums for a Conversation at Arquitectonica regarding the past, present and future design potential for Miami. She was joined by children Marisa Fort ’98, Ray Fort ’06 and Harold Fort ’08.

1977

Lisa Shaw is living in Boulder, Colo., with her family: Charlotte, 10; Owen, 10; and Sophia, 14. Lisa has started a marketing consulting business called

William “Bo” Baraket shared his good fortune in finding a great rescue dog in October. “Alice — she is 5 years old and was found abandoned in the Bronx. She is the greatest little girl and I am so lucky to have found her!”

1979

Davor Sutija, CEO of Thin Film Electronics ASA (Thinfilm.com), a public company headquartered in Norway, was recently selected as a keynote speaker at Mobile World Congress on March 5 in Barcelona, together with the CEOs of Qualcomm, SAP, Visa, BBVA and Huawei, among others. Thinfilm is a pioneer in printed electronics, including NFC-based sensors and rewritable memory. They are products that, according to The Economist, are expected to help catalyze the Internet of Things. Xerox announced the licensing of Thinfilm Memory to scale manufacturing to the billions of smart consumable labels per year. In 2012, Thinfilm won the CNN/Time World Technology Award, as well as the WSJ Technology Innovation Award. Dr. Sutija completed his Ph.D.
in Chemistry at UC Berkeley, where he was a Hertz Fellow, and was previously SVP Enterprise Products at FAST, a Microsoft company. He resides in Oslo with his wife and two younger children. Their eldest daughter, Karina, is a senior at St. Andrews, reading Physics.

1980

John Tawa wrote, “I played three sports at RE, doing well, but the athletic exploits of my 15-year-old son, Timothy, are putting mine to shame. Tim was an All-State outfielder for West Linn HS in Oregon as a freshman last spring and, this past fall as a sophomore, earned the Oregon Gatorade Player of the Year award in football after tossing 38 touchdowns for a 9-3 team that wasn’t projected to win a game in the pre-season. Tim, a straight-A student, has committed to playing baseball on scholarship for Stanford University and also is being recruited by the Cardinals to play football as well.”

1981

Jodie Kurstin Ostrovsky writes, “I have been living in Portland, Oregon, since 2000 with my husband, Brian, and our two kids, Alex (19) and Dagny (15). In 2012 we opened an artisanal ice cream shop and I enjoy spending my days in the kitchen and running a small business. We still get back to Miami at least once a year and I have recently reconnected with some of my RE friends who get together over the holidays. Everyone is welcome to the holiday get-togethers, so if you are going to be in the Miami area at the end of this year, please reach out. One interesting bit of RE trivia is that Mitch Cogen ’81 lives less than a mile from me and our girls go to high school together. It’s a small world.”

1982

Dave Bricker’s IPPY award-winning sailing memoir, The Blue Monk, begins on the RE football field, explores Biscayne Bay and the Bahamas, crosses the Atlantic in a wooden sailboat and documents a unique piece of Coconut Grove’s history. More than an adventure story, The Blue Monk is an important reminder that a huge, inspiring and beautiful world lies only a few steps off the sidewalk. Read online at TheBlueMonkBook.com in a media-rich, web-based eBook format he developed especially for this book, or in classic hardcover and audiobook formats available through popular booksellers. Bricker writes a popular blog for independent publishers — TheWorldsGreatestBook.com. As a publishing coach, editor and book designer, he enjoys “helping remarkable people tell remarkable stories.” His sixth book, The Writer’s Guide to Powerful Prose, was released in February.

1984

Marcelo Fernandes has created a Grove Properties Cares program and donates a portion of the proceeds from a closing to Joshua’s Heart Foundation, the organization founded by current RE student Joshua Williams ’18.

1985

Quite by coincidence, Bev Carter ’85 (Viva) and Luke Dann ’90 (Elizabeth) are now next-door neighbors in Hanover, New Hampshire, 1,547 miles from RE. Bev and Viva write, “We feel so lucky to have our South Florida enclave in the frozen tundra of New Hampshire!” Here they are with their children at their inaugural Granite State Chapter RE Alumni Meeting.

1987

In September, Glass Elevator Media merged with Killer Films to form Killer Content, Inc. Glass Elevator was started by Adrienne Becker, who is now CEO of Killer Content. Adrienne writes, “It was good timing for the new company; the Killer-produced feature film, Still Alice, about a renowned linguistics professor who starts to forget words, won Julianne Moore a Golden Globe and the Oscar for Best Actress in a Motion Picture. In her
Golden Globe acceptance speech, Moore told how difficult it was to get the film made: “When Lisa Genova wrote this book, she told me that no one wanted to make it into a movie because no one wanted to see a movie about a middle-aged woman. Happy to see that the team at Killer and the film’s partners didn’t believe that to be the case.”

**Andy Schine** writes, “All is well here in Pacifica, California. I am currently teaching 7th grade humanities at The San Francisco School. My children Ava (12) and Dashiell (9) are super well and doing what kids do — lots of playing outside and working hard at school. My husband, John, has a dog-walking company and we have a bunch of animals around the house — dogs, cats and hens. Drop me a line at andy.schine@gmail.com. If you are ever in the Bay Area we can connect. It’s a great place to visit!”

**Rabbi Rachel Timoner** has been named the next Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Elohim in Brooklyn, N.Y. A graduate of Yale, she has worked as assistant and then associate rabbi at Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles since 2009. She and her wife, Felicia Park-Rogers, and their sons, Benji and Eitan, are thrilled by the announcement.

**1990**

**James Weaver** has been appointed Vice President of Sales & Global Markets at Visual Marking Systems. A graduate of College of Wooster and Tampa College, he has been employed with the company since 2013, and more than 16 years at 3M Company.

**1998**

**Rudy Ruiz** writes, “I was recently appointed by Governor Scott to the Circuit Court for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in and for Miami-Dade County. I am currently assigned to the Circuit Criminal Division.” Prior to his appointment to the county bench, he served as an Assistant County Attorney for Miami-Dade County from 2009-2012. Judge Ruiz practiced with White & Case, LLP, from 2006-2008. He began his legal career as a law clerk to United States District Judge Frederico Moreno. Judge Ruiz received his bachelor’s degree from Duke University and his law degree from Georgetown University.

**1999**

**Tina Chartouni de Calle ‘99, Davina Aryeh ‘99**, friend Paola Chapur and their children made a second delivery of toys to Centro Mater Child Care Center as part of the alumni initiative, REACH Too Toy Drive. Story and photos at RansomEverglades.org/ReachToo.

**2000**

**Carlos Pedroso** and his wife, **Katie ’00**, announced the birth of their daughter Philippa Lourdes Pedroso on Dec. 3, at 9:27 a.m. She weighed 8 pounds, 1 ounce and measured 20.5 inches. She joins Elle, who is a proud big sister!

**2001**

**Ryan Shear**, principal in the Florida office of Property Markets Group, a global real estate acquisition and development firm with luxury buildings in Florida, Chicago and New York, was profiled in *Ocean Drive* magazine, in which he talks about the joys of growing up and returning to Coconut Grove: OceanDrive.com/personalities/articles/how-coconut-grove-florida-returned-to-its-roots.

**2002**

**Jacky Lewis ’02 and Alex Denault ’00** were married on Dec. 13 at Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo. The wedding was attended by numerous RE alumni, including bridesmaids **Muffy Lewis Day ’89**, **Victoria Lewis ’99**, **Billie Schwartz ’02, Andie Rosen ’02** and **Michelle Varat ’02**, and groomsmen **Chris Denault ’03, Frank Maderal ’00** and **Marcus Mahfood ’00**. Alex currently practices tax law and estate planning at the law firm of Cantor & Webb, P.A., in Miami.
2003
Jessica Shore Pomeraniec and her husband, Fernando Pomeraniec, welcomed Andrew Henry on Feb. 14, 2014. Andrew joins big brother Matthew, who is 4 years old.

2004
Mariana Rego is the South Florida Expansion Coordinator for LaunchCode, a nonprofit startup that creates pathways to economic opportunity and upward mobility through apprenticeships and job placement in technology. Companies and candidates interested in participating can reach her at mariana@launchcode.org.

2005
Jonathan Freidin has joined Freidin, Dobrinsky, Brown & Rosenberg, P.A. as an associate and will concentrate his practice in the areas of plaintiffs’ personal injury, medical malpractice and product liability. He joined the firm after a two-year federal clerkship with the Hon. Donald M. Middlebrooks in the Southern District of Florida. Jonathan graduated summa cum laude from the George Washington University in 2009 and received his J.D., cum laude, from the University of Florida, Fredric G. Levin College of Law in 2012.

Kathleen Lash-Williams, née Pinto, married Oliver Lash-Williams on Nov. 15, 2014 in New Orleans, La. “We met while I was studying in London and we have since relocated to the United States.”

2012
Ashleigh Johnson was recently named the Female Water Polo Player of the Year by Swimming World magazine following her performance at the FINA World Cup.

2013
Oscar Coen, a junior at Berklee School of Music, helped the RE Combo with its performance at the Berklee Jazz Festival in Boston on Jan. 31.

2014
Nathaniel Johansson returned to Coconut Grove from Dartmouth for MLK weekend to be Principal Race Officer of the 2015 Nacra 17 Mid-Winter Championships.
Carolina Ribeiro was just cast in the lead role of Rina in the annual Harvard First Year Musical. The performance will take place April 23-26, during admitted students weekend as a showcase for Harvard theater.

Find more stories on Facebook at Ransom Everglades Alumni Group.

Alumni Career Panel: Focus on Technology

This year’s Alumni Career Panel, scheduled for 1:15 p.m. Friday, April 24 in the Lewis Family Auditorium on the Upper School Campus, will focus on technology. Among the scheduled panelists are alums Karen Gehl O’Byrne ‘85 and Mike Newman ’98, who will discuss their careers with students, alumni and guests and offer their insights.

Ms. O’Byrne is chief financial and operating officer of Modernizing Medicine, a Boca Raton-based company that developed a stand-out electronic medical records system for physicians. She was named one of South Florida’s Most Influential Business Women by the South Florida Business Journal, as well as 2014 CFO of the Year.

Mr. Newman is founder and CEO of Seattle-based Big Duck Games, LLC, creator of mobile games including Flow Free, which is described as a “simple but addictive puzzle game.” Flow Free has more than 100 million downloads on iOS and Android. Before starting Big Duck Games, Mr. Newman was a lead developer for Microsoft for 10 years.

Current drama director Sean Paul Bryan, left, and former director Stephen Bonnell recently met in Philadelphia.
At Everglades School for Girls in the early 1960s, “Madame Marin” had a tough, no-nonsense exterior — with a tender lining. She designed and sewed all the clothes in her smart, tailored wardrobe. Mais oui! And her students really learned French. Bien sûr!

“Miss Goesel” made math easier to understand and used her subtle, and occasionally sharp, sense of humor as an effective tool in her role as dean of students and college counselor. One yearbook dedication called her “the cream of the crop.”

Easygoing and reserved, “Mr. Exum” enjoyed one especially blissful year teaching math and coaching softball on the all-girls Everglades campus before the two schools that merged into Ransom Everglades went coed and separated into Middle and Upper School campuses.

Together, the three retired educators logged nearly a century of teaching at Everglades School for Girls and Ransom Everglades. They recently returned to the campus of the Middle School and sat down in the Swenson Hall auditorium to reminisce.

“There were some great assemblies on that stage,” said Ann Goesel, who started teaching at Everglades in 1966 and retired from Ransom Everglades 46 years later, in 2012. Occasionally, the morning lesson of the formidable headmistress, Gertrude Peirce, was lost on the girls: “Miss Peirce would read some article from the newspaper and the girls would say: ‘What was she talking about?’”

Christel Marin began at Everglades in 1962. The school was “very progressive,” she recalled. Miss Peirce (whom Ms. Marin still refers to by her initials) sent her to Philadelphia for professional development to stay on the cutting edge of educational techniques. “GCP supported everything about my learning how to enhance language learning with audio-visual methods,” Ms. Marin said.

Ms. Goesel agreed Everglades was very “academics-oriented.” Miss Peirce recognized the need for a proper college counselor and sent Ms. Goesel back to school for her master’s degree. “She said the school will pay for it,” Ms. Goesel remembered.
Creative projects flowed spontaneously. One time, Ms. Marin said, the students organized a fashion show. “They wore my dresses, and I wore their uniform, a blue jumper with the red piping, and saddle shoes. I wore one sock up and the other one scrunched down,” Ms. Marin said. “We had that kind of fun.”

It was also fun being in the minority as a male teacher, said Jerry Exum, who was recruited from Illinois to Everglades by the late Don Stark, mathematics chairman. “Don thought Everglades School for Girls was paradise. He said, ‘The girls are all beautiful. They are intelligent. They are well-behaved.’ ”

The deal was sealed when Mr. Exum came to visit in 1973. That’s also when he met Ms. Marin at a party thrown by Mr. Stark. “She showed up by herself,” Mr. Exum recalled, “and I thought, ‘How is that possible?’ ” Ms. Marin and Mr. Exum are longtime significant others. Since their retirement, they have traveled the world, put tens of thousands of miles on their motorcycles and perform as partners in ballroom-dancing showcases.

“I’m totally extroverted,” Ms. Marin said. “He’s totally introverted. He’s a mathematician. I’m a linguist. We complement each other.”

The merger was not something the Everglades faculty supported. “I said if you want boys, just open your doors,” Ms. Marin said.

“We tried hard to keep the campus one school,” Ms. Goesel added. “It took a long time for [the Ransom Everglades Upper School campus] to become a home for me, like Everglades.”

For Mr. Exum, who had only been one year on the all-girls campus before it went coed, the merger “was seamless. The students were fine. I was just regretting that I’d lost the paradise that Don Stark loved.”

In retirement, Ms. Goesel returns to the Upper School once a week for lunch and to socialize with her former colleagues. “It’s so nice; I love it,” she said. “I feel like it’s another family.”
the youngest at 5 months old and the oldest (Kirby) at 19.

Linda Lehman, 76, mother of Richard Lehman ’75, passed away Jan. 2.

Robert McCabe, husband of Arva Moore Parks, RE friend and co-author of Honor & Excellence: A Century of Ransom Everglades School, passed away on his 86th birthday Dec. 23. Former Miami-Dade Community College president, Mr. McCabe was the transformational force behind the creation of the multi-branched/165,000-student Miami Dade College, which began with the Kendall Campus in 1967.

Sally Nash, mother of Allison Nash Zelkowitz ’78, passed away in January.

Maureen O’Brien, mother of Cale Bulman ’18, passed away on Feb. 4.

Greg Prebish ’74 died after a sudden and unexpected illness on Jan 4. He and his family moved from Miami to Jackson, Wyo. in 2007, where he served his community as a lawyer and ski resort host. Read more at bit.ly/1z9HKlw

Jennifer Press, mother of Joey Kravetz ’19, passed away in January.

Domingo Robaina, father of staff member Myriam Robaina-Gollan, passed away on Feb. 5.

Lloyd Ruskin, 86, father of Kimberly Mendelson ’85, grandfather of Haley Mendelson ’13, David Mendelson ’15, Danny Mendelson, Mollie Lipkowitz and Bradley Lipkowitz, and father-in-law of RE Chairman of the Board of Trustees Eric Mendelson, passed away Jan. 8.

Robert “Bob” Simms, 87, passed away on Dec. 16 in his hometown of Tuskegee, Ala. Bob was part of the RE team as director of diversity. He was a longtime friend to our school and a leader in the Miami-Dade Community.

Edna Sturges, grandmother of Lauren Sturges ’95, Darren Sturges ’03 and Brad Sturges, great-grandmother of Jackie Fernandez ’17, Layla Sturges ’19 and Daniel Fernandez, mother of Bob Sturges and mother-in-law of Nancie Sturges, passed away in January in Troy, N.Y.

Cliff Suchman, father of Dan Suchman ’76, Larry Suchman ’79, and Steve Suchman ’80, passed away on Feb. 6.

Mary Rose Turner Weber, mother of Debbie Turner ’76.

Dr. Julian I. Weinkle, 90, father of Jeanne ’68, Andrew ’73, James ’74 and Thomas ’76, died Dec. 22.

Jack Weyman Nelson, a former RE faculty member who led the boys’ swim team to its first state championship in 1960, passed away Oct. 25 at the age of 82. Nelson was born in Chickamauga, Ga., in 1931. Although he played a variety of sports in high school, he did not begin to swim competitively until he was in the Air Force. Just four years later, he finished fourth in the men’s 200-meter butterfly (the first time it was featured) at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. He also swam for several colleges, including the University of Miami, where he was an All-American.

One of the highlights of his five-decade career came in 1976 while head coach of the U.S. women’s swim team at the Montreal Olympic Games. Swimming against the powerful and dominating East German swimmers in the 400-meter relay, each of his swimmers set a personal best and the team went on to smash the world record by more than three seconds and win the gold medal. All in all, he led 44 other swimmers to the Olympics and coached more than 460 All-Americans.

In 1993, he was named Man of the Year by the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce. Nelson was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1994. In 2010 he was inducted into the Ransom Everglades Athletic Hall of Fame. He is survived by his wife, three daughters, three stepchildren, and 15 grandchildren and step-grandchildren.
FOURTH ANNUAL REEF
RANSOM EVERGLADES EPIC FISHING TOURNAMENT

SAVE THE DATE
Saturday, May 9

Have some real fun at the Fourth Annual Ransom Everglades Epic Fishing Tournament. Anglers of all ages are invited to tackle the waters of Biscayne Bay in a friendly fishing competition that this year will benefit the Ransom Everglades waterfront.

Organized by the RE Alumni Association, the R.E.E.F. Tournament engages the entire RE community to support projects that fulfill the school’s mission to give back. The RE waterfront supports RE and communitywide athletic opportunities and is used year-round for classes, competitions and community service.

After the last cast, cool off and Chow down at the Family BBQ and Award Ceremony at the Upper School.

For registration, sponsorship opportunities and more information, contact Danielle Phillips at 305-460-8859 or dphillips@RansomEverglades.org or visit www.RansomEverglades.org/REEF.
Save the Date

ALUMNI WEEKEND
April 24-25, 2015

and introducing our new Head of School Penny Townsend

For more information see Reunion calendar inside front cover
Registration and information at RansomEverglades.org/Reunions