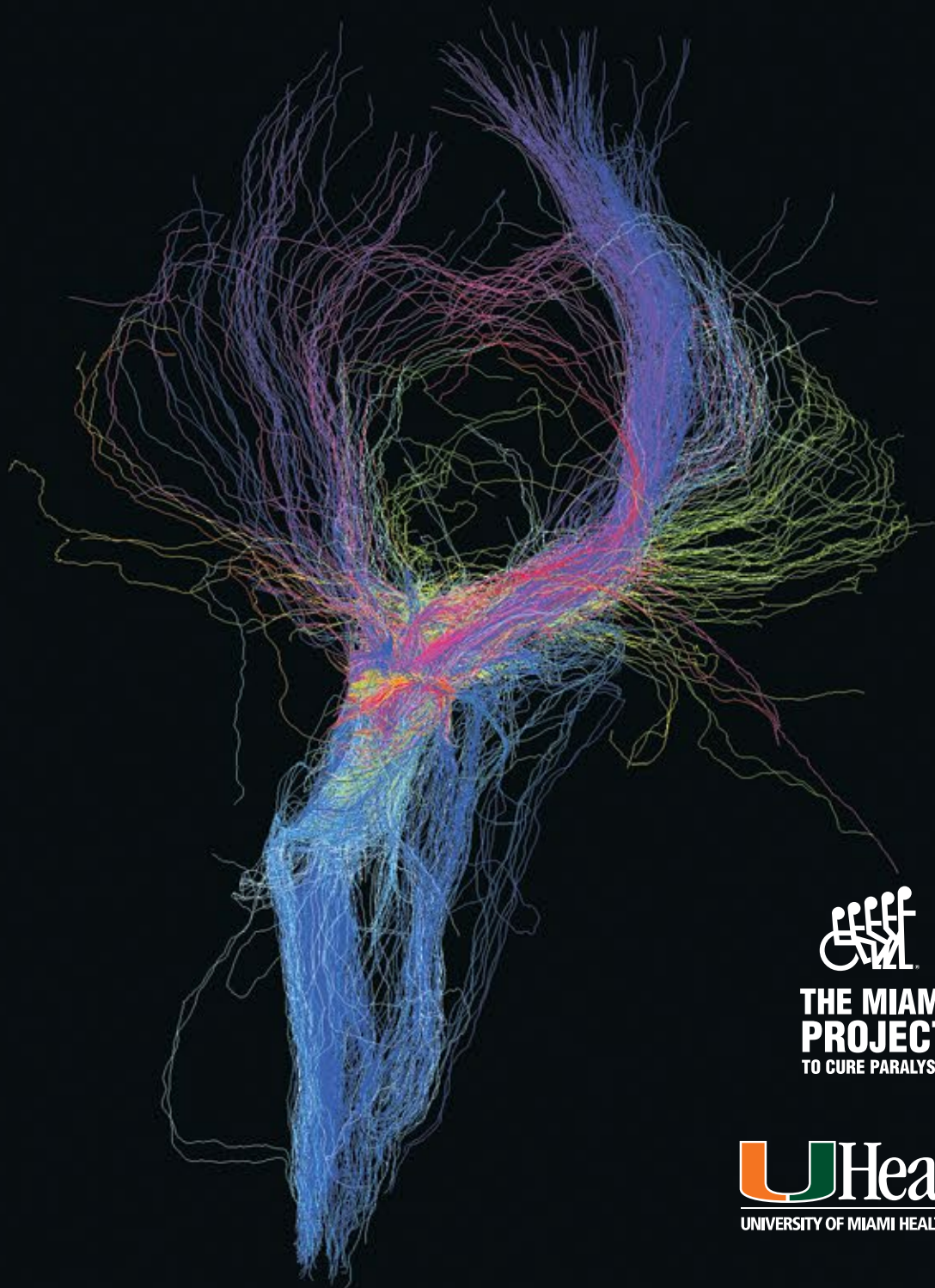


Fall 2023

# The Project

A Publication of The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis & The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis



**THE MIAMI  
PROJECT**  
TO CURE PARALYSIS

**UHealth**  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI HEALTH SYSTEM



Marc Buoniconti

Hello Friends of The Buoniconti Fund and The Miami Project,

It is with great excitement and enthusiasm that I report that the state of The Buoniconti Fund and The Miami Project is stronger than ever.

A combination of basic and clinical science at the Lois Pope LIFE Center and the Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center has propelled The Miami Project and has become one of the most comprehensive and productive research and rehabilitation centers in the world.

Under the leadership of Dr. W. Dalton Dietrich, our basic science team has exceeded our expectations and continues to develop cutting-edge results through cellular regeneration, gene therapy, drug discovery, and understanding how to repair axons and help promote their recovery. Cell biology and biomedical engineering are working together to transplant cells and apply electrical currents as therapy to regenerate the cells to promote recovery.

Dr. Matija Milosevic leads our clinical research program and has launched our brain interphase program at The Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center and will be conducting research to stimulate the brain and open new neuro pathways to promote functional recovery.

The Miami Project research team has broken all records for obtaining research grants from the National Institute of Health (NIH), Department of Defense (DOD), Health and Human Services (HHS), and National Institute of Neurological Disease and Stroke (NINDS).

I have never been more excited about the progress of The Miami Project and The Buoniconti Fund's outlook for 2024 and beyond. The Buoniconti Fund has given multiple grants to select Miami Project researchers as seed money to kick-start their studies and provide the much-needed data to apply for future grants from government and private organizations. The Buoniconti Fund also provides funding for essential equipment, supplies and research salaries. In fact, The Buoniconti Fund provided a grant to support Dr. Milosevic's work to bring him to Miami.

Every person at The Miami Project and The Buoniconti Fund dedicates their life to fulfilling my dad's promise and delivering Dr. Barth Green's vision to cure paralysis.

I am often reminded of my father's commitment and promise to never give up! I have several photos of my father throughout my office, and it serves as a motivation for all of us at The Miami Project and The Buoniconti Fund.

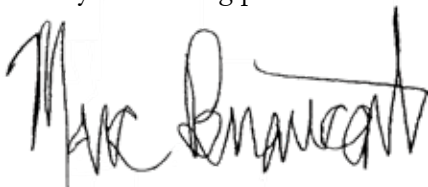
Every person at The Miami Project and The Buoniconti Fund dedicates their life to fulfilling my dad's promise and delivering Dr. Barth Green's vision to cure paralysis. We have taken a vision and have even expanded our research to include all neurological diseases and disorders including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, and traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. This new approach will help us understand the whole brain and the mechanism for injury and recovery.

It is time to repair the brain and therefore repair the spinal cord.

I want to thank everyone that has helped contribute to The Buoniconti Fund and The Miami Project. Every donor has made a difference. A special thank you to The Buoniconti Fund Board of Directors for their dedication and on-going support.

We are excited to present this year's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Sports Legends Dinner in New York City. This event continues to be the longest and most successful sports fundraising event. To date, over the past 38 years, The Great Sports Legends Dinner has generated over \$130 million to support our cause.

Thank you for being part of our success!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Buoniconti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marc" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Buoniconti".

Marc

## A Message from The Miami Project

Our therapeutic pipeline includes a large NIH funded program to identify and test novel compounds to promote successful axonal regeneration in people living with SCI. These studies support our vision to produce clinically relevant improvements in function by repairing the nervous system after brain trauma and SCI.



Drs. Barth A. Green, W. Dalton Dietrich, and Allan D. Levi

**T**his has been an exciting year for our Miami Project to Cure Paralysis research community. We have made research discoveries, continued to translate new findings to people living with paralysis while also training the next generation of scientists and clinicians in this important research field. We sincerely thank all our friends, volunteers, and the SCI community for supporting our research mission to seek fundamental knowledge about brain and SCI and use that knowledge to reduce the burden of neurotrauma and other neurological diseases.

To protect the nervous system after injury, our drug discovery and translational programs are developing new drugs and molecules to reduce the structural damage and subsequent functional consequences caused by brain and SCI. Significant progress has been made in acute care where the cellular and molecular mechanisms underlying neuroprotective interventions such as therapeutic hypothermia and pharmacotherapy are being clarified and translated to multicenter human trials. Our therapeutic pipeline includes a large NIH funded program to identify and test novel compounds to promote successful axonal regeneration in people living with SCI. These studies support our vision to produce clinically relevant improvements in function by repairing the nervous system after brain trauma and SCI.



Miami Project investigators have tested cellular transplantation therapies to replace injured cells and promote repair after neurotrauma. Our human Schwann cell program is now testing the benefits of small extracellular vesicles released from human Schwann cells to promote protective and regenerative processes in experimental and clinical studies. These small vesicles released by human cells can transport a rich cargo of proteins, lipids, and genetic materials to vulnerable cells to help protect them from dying and promote reparative processes.

Our neural engineering programs are also evaluating novel approaches for stimulating the injured nervous system to promote functional recovery. Working with Miami Project faculty, research colleagues and industry, clinical programs are directed to promoting improved hand and locomotor function in chronically injured subjects. Strategies including deep brain, vagal nerve, epidural and transcutaneous spinal cord stimulation are all offering exciting opportunities for improving function in people living with paralysis.

The Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center is providing outstanding care for individuals with many types of injuries and disabilities. Miami Project clinical researchers are evaluating rehabilitation approaches to target functional recovery and quality of life issues including neuropathic pain, spasticity, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. Our multidisciplinary scientific community is fortunate to work in two state-of-the-art facilities where new discoveries in the Lois Pope LIFE Center can be successfully translated to the Lynn Center where everyday advances are being made to improve medical care.

These are exciting times for The Miami Project as we translate neurotrauma discoveries to other neurological disorders including neurodegenerative diseases such as ALS, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's disease. We sincerely appreciate the continued support of our friends and colleagues for our programs focusing on novel strategies to improve function and quality of life in individuals living with paralysis and other neurological disorders.

Barth A. Green, M.D., F.A.C.S - Co-Founder

W. Dalton Dietrich, Ph.D. - Scientific Director

Allan D. Levi, M.D., Ph.D. F.A.C.S - Clinical Director

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A Publication of The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis & The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis

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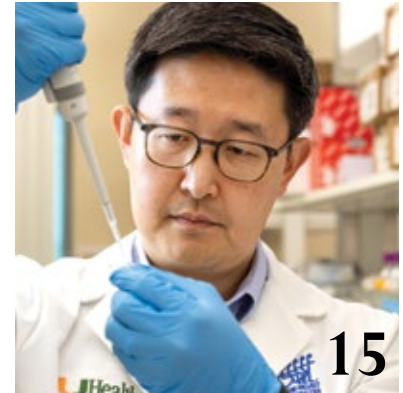
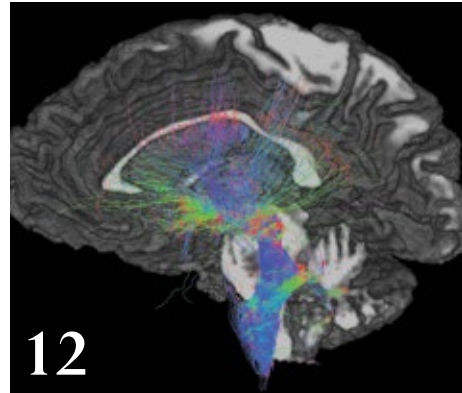
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W. Dalton Dietrich and Allan D. Levi

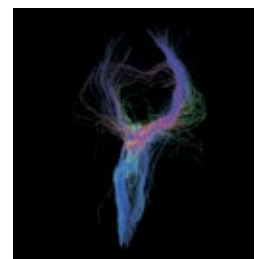
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On the cover: Neuronal  
tracts involved in walking  
visualized via diffusion  
tensor imaging







# Neuromodulation

## Exploring the Use of Electrical Stimulation

**N**euromodulation is a rapidly growing field of research that is exploring the use of electrical stimulation to modulate the activity of the nervous system. This approach has shown promise in the treatment of a variety of conditions, including spinal cord injury (SCI) and stroke.

At The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, a neuroscience center of excellence at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, several faculty members are conducting research on the use of neuromodulation to improve motor function in people with SCI and other neurological conditions.

James Guest, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Neurological Surgery, recently served in the role of principal investigator for the Up-LIFT study, which evaluated the use of transcutaneous spinal cord stimulation (tSCS) to improve upper extremity motor function in people with chronic SCI. The study concluded in 2022 and found that tSCS was safe and effective in improving upper extremity function in people with chronic SCI.



Onward, the industry sponsor for the Up-LIFT study, has famously manufactured an implanted version of the device and is moving toward a trial in SCI for orthostatic hypotension. This is a condition that causes people with SCI to have low blood pressure when they stand up, which can lead to dizziness, fainting, and other problems.

Dalton Dietrich, Ph.D., Scientific Director of The Miami Project and Professor of Neurological Surgery amongst many other titles, is the principal investigator of the BrainQ study, which is evaluating the use of frequency-tuned extremely low frequency and low intensity electromagnetic fields (ELF-EMF) to improve upper extremity motor function in people with chronic SCI and acute stroke. The BrainQ technology is a non-invasive procedure that uses magnetic fields to stimulate the brain and spinal cord.

The BrainQ chronic SCI study concluded in 2022 and found that ELF-EMF was safe and effective in improving upper extremity function in people with

chronic SCI. The BrainQ stroke acute study, afforded by access to the inpatient setting in the new Lynn Rehabilitation Center, is ongoing and is expected to conclude in 2024.

Matija Milosovic, Ph.D., Assistant Professor dual appointment with The Miami Project and College of Engineering, is a recently arrived faculty member excited to get started applying his expertise with time-coupled central and peripheral stimulation for motor function. Time-coupled central and peripheral stimulation is a technique that uses electrical stimulation to both the brain and the spinal cord in a coordinated manner. This approach has shown promise in animal models of SCI and stroke, and Dr. Milosovic is now working to translate this research to human trials.

Patrick Ganzer, Ph.D., another dual appointment Miami Project and College of Engineering faculty member is conducting research on the use of neuromodulation to improve motor function in people



James D. Guest, M.D., Ph.D. with a research participant.

with SCI and stroke. Dr. Ganzer is particularly interested in the use of vagal nerve stimulation (VNS), which involves implanting a small electrical device near the vagus nerve in the neck. VNS has been shown to improve motor function in animal models of SCI and stroke, and Dr. Ganzer is now conducting a clinical trial to assess the safety and efficacy of VNS in people with chronic SCI.

The research being conducted by Dr. Guest, Dr. Dietrich, Dr. Milosovic, and Dr. Ganzer is just a small sample of the work being done at The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis to develop new treatments for SCI and stroke. These researchers are hopeful that neuromodulation will one day be a safe and effective way to improve motor function in people with these devastating conditions.

In addition to the research being conducted by these individual faculty members, The Miami Project is also home to the Neuromodulation Center, which is a multidisciplinary team of experts who are dedicated to advancing the field of neuromodulation. The Neuromodulation Center provides clinical care, conducts research, and offers educational programs to help patients, families, and healthcare providers learn more about this promising approach to treating neurological disorders.

The work being done at The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis and the Neuromodulation Center is helping to pave the way for a future where neuromodulation can be used to improve the lives of people with SCI, stroke, and other neurological disorders.



Matija Milosevic, Ph.D.



Patrick D. Ganzer, Ph.D.

# New Biomarkers Program to Advance Research on Neurodegenerative Diseases

Currently there exists no cure for the primary insult induced by neurotrauma to the central nervous system. Given the robust quiver of treatments to improve function and quality of life, however, Juan Pablo de Rivero Vaccari, Ph.D., Associate Professor, and Nadine Kerr, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, are Miami Project neuroscientists working on pushing the horizon of how biomarkers can aid in these efforts. Biomarkers are molecules with concentrations measurable in the body that indicate the presence of a disease or injury. They are essentially chemical signatures of the condition and as such can be used to track the progression of a disease, to assess the effectiveness of a treatment, and identify patients who are at risk for further complications.

An exemplar biomarker is the naturally occurring exosomes that can be co-opted and employed in the biomarker role to interrogate the central nervous system after neurotrauma. These small vesicles released by cells are molecular spheres carrying a variety of molecules including proteins, lipids, and nucleic acids. Exosomes can be used to transport signaling molecules between cells, and they can also be used to deliver drugs to cells. As a biomarker, exosomes have been found to be elevated in the blood of patients with neurotrauma.

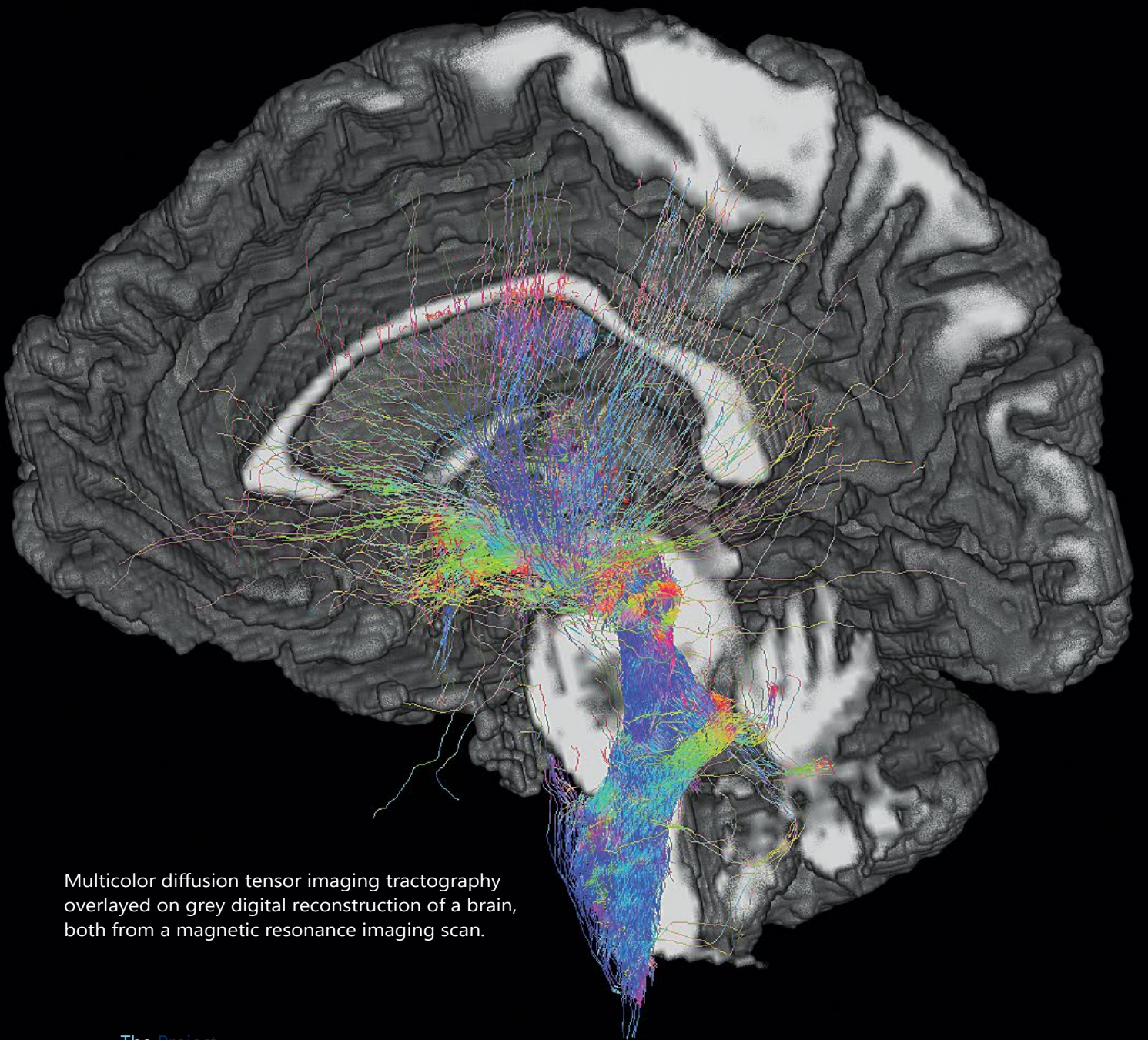
The observation of exosomes as biomarkers takes advantage of the naturally occurring phenomenon of tissue-tissue crosstalk, a topic scientifically championed by Dr. Kerr. Tissue-tissue crosstalk is the process by which cells in different tissues communicate with each other. This communication can be important for maintaining normal function, and is altered for better or for worse the context of neurotrauma. For example, inflammation in the brain can lead to inflammation in other tissues, such as the heart and lungs, hindering recover the systemic cooperation required for recovery.

Biomarkers might take advantage of viewing tissue-tissue crosstalk, allowing for an understanding of how different organs and tissues are affected by neurotrauma. The quantification of concentrations of molecules in various tissues, such as blood, might also simply allow for a view of the spillover of raw cellular material released from the physical insult itself. From this perspective, there are a virtually unlimited number of molecules that could be viewed as biomarkers if only they existed in tissues that are readily accessible and in concentrations that are measurable. Understandably, bodily fluids such as saliva, blood, and other natural experiments are ideal medium for non- and minimally-invasive biomarker measurement. Historically, molecular biomarker targets became undetectable once they entered these fluids due to the dilution of their concentration vastly constraining what could reliably be measured as a biomarker. Now, changes in technology are changing how we think about what is and is not a biomarker.

The future of biomarkers in neurotrauma is bright thanks to the development of new technologies employed by Drs. de Rivero Vaccari and Kerr that make it possible to measure biomarkers at concentrations as low as the “femto” range, equivalent to a single target per quadrillion liters of fluid. “We can now measure in the blood what used to be exclusive to the central nervous system”, explains Dr. de Rivero Vaccari. The advantage of using blood samples to understand what used to require a brain biopsy is obvious, pointing to the revolutionary potential of biomarkers. With the FDA similarly requesting biomarkers in conjunction to traditional scans, the robust in-house capacity of The Miami Project’s full-stack biomarker laboratories will allow for tapping into the power of synergizing concentrations with pixels to grasp, and by doing so manipulate, neurotrauma.

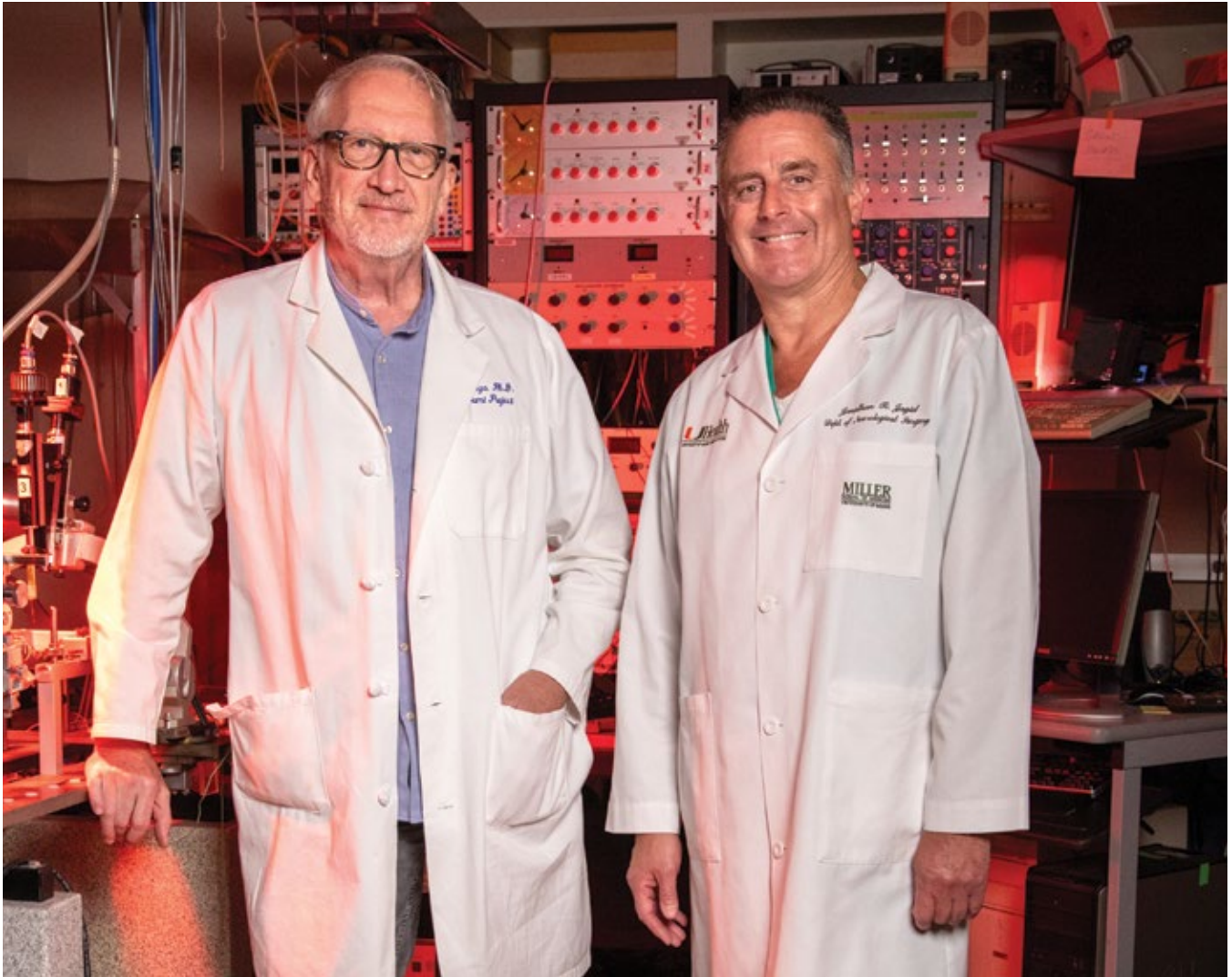


# From Parkinson's to Paralysis



Multicolor diffusion tensor imaging tractography  
overlayed on grey digital reconstruction of a brain,  
both from a magnetic resonance imaging scan.

# Exploring the Promise of Deep Brain Stimulation for Gait in Spinal Cord Injury



Drs. Brian Noga and Jonathan Jagid

**T**he Miami Project's Jonathan Jagid, M.D. and Brian Noga, Ph.D., have a proven history of working together on deep brain stimulation (DBS) for movement. Now the robust expertise they built through The Miami Project is poised to impact various neurological conditions including walking after spinal cord injury (SCI). Concurrently the DBS program, routinely used for treatment of “freezing of gait”, or “FOG”, in people with Parkinson's, is now on the verge of a remarkable translation into the realm of SCI, offering newfound hope for regaining the ability to walk.



In the realm of neurosurgery, the journey from Parkinson's to paralysis has been a remarkable one. What has been learned about DBS in Parkinson's patients grappling with FOG now seems to hold the potential to translate into walking after SCI. The story is far from over, but with each step, we are brought closer to a future where mobility is within reach for all those affected by paralysis.

Parkinson's disease, a progressive neurodegenerative disorder, can result in FOG characterized by momentary immobility despite intent to move. Traditional treatments, including medications and DBS, have offered relief to many, but some individuals remain unresponsive to these approaches. Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), a surgical technique involving the implantation of electrodes into specific brain regions, initially garnered attention for its remarkable success in alleviating FOG in Parkinson's patients. By modulating neural activity in targeted areas, DBS effectively unlocks frozen feet. However, there are important scientific questions on where to stimulate, engineering questions of how to deliver just the right amount of electricity to the area, and surgical questions

of how to safely and reliably deliver the probes to their target areas in the brain. Dr. Jagid's DBS program has optimized the implementation of DBS for FOG, and Dr. Noga's pre-clinical research has separately identified the brain and spinal circuitry responsible for the control of walking. Together, they now have the potential to translate the success of DBS in Parkinson's into a therapeutic beacon for SCI patients.

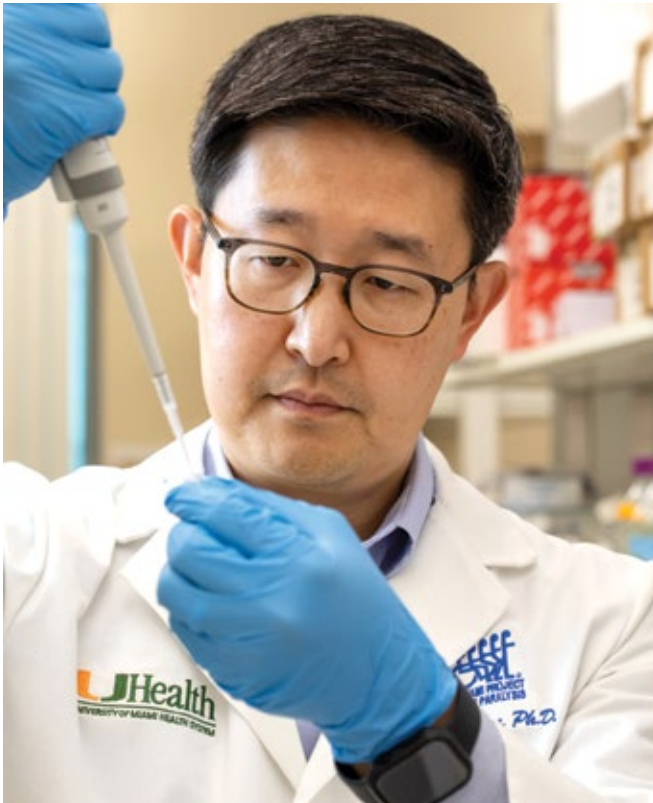
The key to their quest lay in the intricacies of the brain's mesencephalic locomotor region (MLR), a neural hub responsible for orchestrating locomotion. While the MLR's anatomical complexity presented challenges, it also held the promise of a breakthrough. As outlined in a recent scientific review published by Dr. Noga, pioneering studies have shown the MLR's importance in controlling walking in many different models of SCI. Previous DBS studies had implicated the cuneiform nucleus (CnF), a region within the MLR, as a potential target for promoting gait initiation. However, traditional DBS for FOG has targeted different brain regions. Thus Drs. Jagid and Noga and their colleagues have set out on a protocol for an ongoing prospective pilot clinical trial using directional DBS probes to target the CnF in FOG. This trial is an optimization of an existing approach, shifting the location of the DBS probe placement to the CnF and using a directional probe that has a circular lead architecture that allows for steering of the current to hit only the CnF and avoid activation of off-target brain regions. Having implanted multiple participants in this study, the study team is confident in their equipment and approach. Combined with this success in FOG and their knowledge of the role the CnF plays in walking post-SCI, the stage is set to assess the safety, feasibility, and efficacy of CnF DBS in individuals with incomplete SCI.

In the realm of neurosurgery, the journey from Parkinson's to paralysis has been a remarkable one. What has been learned about DBS in Parkinson's patients grappling with FOG now seems to hold the potential to translate into walking after SCI. The story is far from over, but with each step, we are brought closer to a future where mobility is within reach for all those affected by paralysis.



# Dr. Jae K. Lee Receives \$6M NINDS Grant

**J**ae K. Lee, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Neurological Surgery and The Miami Project received outstanding news that his RM1 Interdisciplinary Team Science Grant will be funded by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) which is a part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH). The proposal entitled “Targeting cell-type specific disease phenotypes to promote CNS repair” is a collaboration between Drs. Nagi Ayad at Georgetown (cancer biology), KiBum Lee at Rutgers (nanobiotechnology), and Jae Lee at UM (spinal cord injury). The project will develop a novel drug discovery



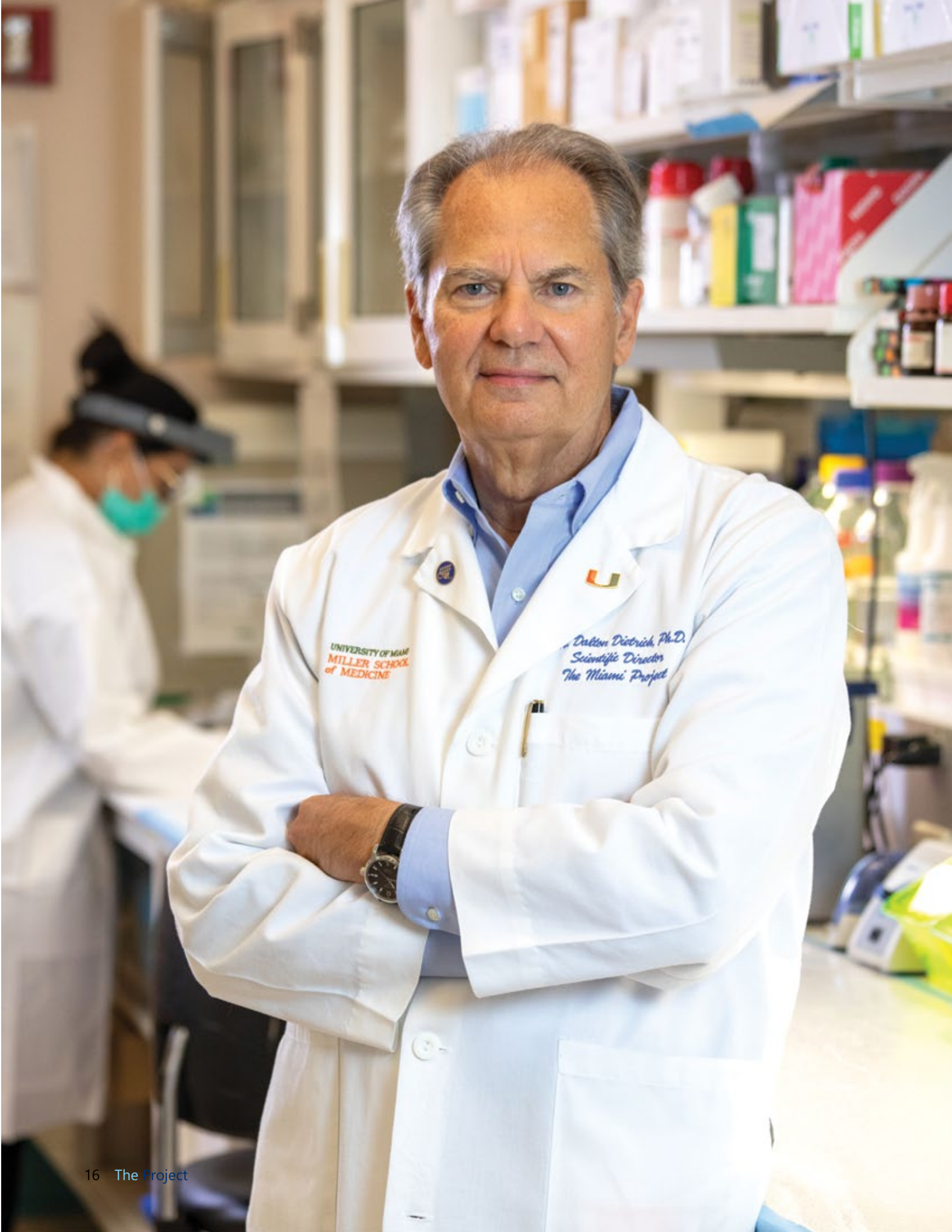
Jae K. Lee Ph.D.

platform that uses single cell RNAseq datasets to identify compounds that can potentially reverse cell-type specific disease signatures and use advanced drug delivery systems to target these specific cell types at the spinal cord injury site.

Despite decades of intensive research, there are currently no disease-modifying therapies to treat spinal cord injury. One major reason for this dire unmet need is the heterogeneity of the cells that comprise the injury site. The cell types and their cellular states vary widely depending on their location around the injury site as well as the time after injury. Therapeutic molecules that target one cell type may be contraindicated for another cell type, thereby masking any potential beneficial effects. Current treatment strategies largely ignore this problem. Dr. Lee is tackling this important issue through this recently awarded Interdisciplinary Team Science grant. This collaboration will use a novel drug discovery platform that analyzes the genetic signature of every cell type known to exist at the spinal cord injury site to identify compounds that are predicted to reverse the disease signature of specific cell types.

“Using advanced sequencing technologies, we have been able to obtain the gene expression profiles of every cell type that exists at the spinal cord injury site. Now using a novel bioinformatic platform developed by Dr. Nagi Ayad, we have the opportunity to leverage this large dataset for drug development purposes,” said Dr. Jae Lee. He continued, “Everyone recognizes that treating spinal cord injury is going to take a combinatorial approach, so we are going to combine the expertise of three laboratories that span three completely different fields to take a novel approach to developing therapeutics for spinal cord injury”.

Identifying a cell-type specific drug is only part of the solution, another challenge is delivering that drug to the intended cell target, and this is where Dr. KiBum Lee will use his decades of experience to develop an advanced drug delivery system capable of highly efficient cell-type targeted delivery with stimuli-responsive drug release at the spinal cord injury site. This RM1 Interdisciplinary Team Science Grant, awarded by the NINDS, will be for \$6 million over 5 years.



# W. Dalton Dietrich, Ph.D., Awarded the Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award

**W**. Dalton Dietrich, PhD Scientific Director of the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, and Professor of Neurological Surgery has received the National Institute of Health Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award for demonstrating scientific excellence and productivity in neurological research. The Javits Award recognizes investigators with a distinguished record of substantial contributions to neurological science. “This award is very much appreciated, and I think recognizes not only my own accomplishments over the years but also the importance of team science allowing multidisciplinary programs to make significant contributions in discovery, translational and clinical research. I believe the award is also a recognition of the Miami Project and the outstanding neuroscience research community at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine”, Dietrich said. Over the past four decades, Dietrich’s work has focused on clarifying secondary injury mechanisms after neurotrauma and cerebral ischemia in the search for clinically relevant therapeutic targets with the goal of improving function after CNS injury. Dietrich and colleagues have been successful in translating experimental findings to the clinic including the use of therapeutic hypothermia and targeted temperature management to improve outcomes in severe acute injury conditions as well as cell therapies for spinal cord and peripheral nerve injuries.

In 1997, Dietrich became Scientific Director of the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, Department of Neurological Surgery which is a Center of Excellence at the University of Miami. For over 25 years, he has led a large multidisciplinary research team focusing on innovative strategies to obtain the knowledge necessary for improving function and quality of life in people living with paralysis and other neurological disorders. During this time, Dietrich and colleagues established a therapeutic pipeline to promote the translation of important discoveries to the clinic including FDA approved clinical trials for acute and chronic neurological injuries.

His research includes investigating neurotrauma, cerebral ischemia and stroke as well as neurodegenerative disorders. Current NIH funding is supporting studies to clarify the role of head trauma as a risk factor for the development of Alzheimer’s disease. Another funded study which is the basis for the Javits Neuroscience Award is studying the potential benefits of human cell-derived exosomes on protecting and repairing the nervous system after traumatic brain injury. In addition to his research activities, Dr. Dietrich is dedicated to training the next generation of scientists and academic clinicians in the field of neuroscience and neurological disorders. He has a history of training graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and visiting scholars to become leaders in both academia and industry.

The Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award is a conditional seven-year R37 research grant awarded every year to a handful of scientists who are selected by the National Advisory Neurological Disorders and Stroke Council. The awardees must have demonstrated exceptional scientific excellence and productivity in one of the areas of research supported by the NINDS, have proposals of the highest scientific merit, and be judged highly likely to be able to continue the research on the cutting edge of their science for the next seven years. In 1983, Congress established the Jacob Javits Award in the Neurosciences, to honor the late Senator Jacob Javits (R-NY) who was diagnosed with ALS and an advocate for support of research in a wide variety of disorders of the brain and nervous system. “I’m very grateful for this recognition after many years conducting medical research and acknowledge my collaborators for helping to make our programs successful. I also thank NINDS for granting a Javits Award to a researcher who has dedicated his career to understanding the pathophysiology of CNS injury and studying new approaches to protecting and repairing the injured nervous system”.



# Henry G. Steinbrenner *Scholars Program*



2023 Henry G. Steinbrenner Scholars with David McMillan, Ph.D.

In the short time since last year's Steinbrenner Scholars Program ended, two of the program's graduates have received word of acceptance into medical school on scholarship and one is currently spending a semester at sea.

The Henry G. Steinbrenner Scholars Program is a 10 week immersive, competitive, funded, research-driven summer internship seeding the future of neuroscientifically informed care and cure efforts. This year, eight scholars entered the program and are already well on their way to producing, and then defending, their projects at the program's culminating final research day competition.

Antonella Mini, working with faculty mentor Roberta Brambilla, Ph.D., is conducting her project on the role of astrocyte TNF-R2 in tract myelination in multiple sclerosis. Dhillani Premartne, advised by Patrick Ganzer, Ph.D., is examining the impact of spinal cord injury on cardiovascular and autonomic anatomy after SCI. Iliana Uribe, under the supervision of David McMillan, Ph.D., is comparing upper extremity functional assessments in adults with tetraplegia. Karolina Euqueres, in the laboratory of Brian Noga, Ph.D., is contributing to a project on limb muscle activity during targeted deep brain



Iliana Uribe presenting her poster at the end of session

stimulation in tetraplegia. Kristiina Kinnunen, under Eva Widerstrom-Noga, Ph.D., initiated a study on self-reported effect of cannabis and cannabinoids on pain and pain pharmaceutical use in adults with SCI. Lakshmi Singh, with Coleen Atkins, Ph.D., is investigating whether inhibition of neutrophils improve behavioral outcomes after traumatic brain injury. Nitya Anne, also with Dr. Brambilla, is examining the role of astrocyte TNF-R2 in synaptic proteins multiple sclerosis. Shweta Shah, in the laboratory of Jae Lee, Ph.D., is working on fibroblasts and the fibrotic scar to characterize the type and location of fibroblasts in spinal cord tissue following injury.

Along with their immersive laboratory research experiences, the scholars also rise through programming such as the thrice weekly lectures, career development fairs, and professional mentoring. Applicants to the program go through a multi-step selection process involving multiple administrators and a panel of Miami Project faculty. This year, in a happy accident, all scholars happened to be women and the program director (Dr. McMillan) and coordinator (Maria Chagoyen) used this opportunity to convene an ad hoc panel mentoring session with the committee members of The Miami Project's Mary Bartlett Bunge Distinguished Women in Cell Biology Lecture Series, a lecture series endowed by our very own Dr. Bunge.



Dhillani Premaratne delivering her presentation

Stay tuned for news on the scholar's final research day later in the summer, after which the participants will continue their development as is proven from previous years. In the short time since last year's Steinbrenner Scholars Program ended, two of the program's graduates have received word of acceptance into medical school on scholarship and one is currently spending a semester at sea.



# 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Sports Legends Dinner

to Benefit The Buoniconti Fund

Presented by Tudor Group and the Mack family



2022 Class of Sports Legends

**LINDSEY VONN, EDGERRIN JAMES, TONY STEWART, TIM HARDAWAY,  
VLADIMIR GUERRERO, SARAH WILL, SHIRLEY MULDOWNY AND  
THE 1972 MIAMI DOLPHINS,  
HONORED AT BUONICONTI FUND TO CURE PARALYSIS'  
37<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GREAT SPORTS LEGENDS DINNER**

*Hall of Fame Football Icon and Organization Founder Nick Buoniconti  
was also Celebrated, Posthumously, as a Great Sports Legend*

*Outstanding Humanitarian Award presented to philanthropist Lois Pope and Mary Kate Callahan,  
World Champion Para-Triathlete, Received the Inspiration Award*



**T**he Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis' 37th Annual Great Sports Legends Dinner, presented by Tudor Group and the Mack family, was held in New York City on Monday, October 24th, 2022. The dinner, which was attended by nearly 1,000 guests, also honored sports icons dedicated to the cause, inducting them into the prestigious pantheon of nearly 400 previous Great Sports Legends: Lindsey Vonn, the greatest American female skier in history; NFL Hall of Famer Edgerrin James; Indy and NASCAR champion Tony Stewart; NBA Hall of Famer Tim Hardaway; MLB Hall of Famer Vladimir Guerrero; drag racing pioneer and champion Shirley Muldowney; the 1972 Miami Dolphins, the only undefeated team in NFL history; NFL Hall of Famer and organization founder, the late Nick Buoniconti; and Sarah Will, the most decorated athlete in U.S. Paralympic Alpine Skiing history. In addition, Mary Kate Callahan, a National Paratriathlon Champion, received The Buoniconti Fund's 2022 Inspiration Award, and philanthropist Lois Pope, whose multi-million dollar gift endowed the Lois Pope LIFE Center, the home of The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, was honored with the organization's Outstanding Humanitarian Award.

The Buoniconti Fund is the fundraising arm of **The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis**, the world's premier spinal cord injury research center.

As in previous years, **Marc Buoniconti** delivered an inspiring speech honoring his father, who co-founded The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis in 1985 after Marc was paralyzed in a college football game. Before his death in 2019, Nick spent more than three decades dedicated to finding a cure for people affected by spinal cord injury, including his son and millions of others around the world.

"Each year, I find myself more and more inspired by the amazing athletes and individuals who are honored at this Great Sports Legends Dinner," said **Marc Buoniconti**, Buoniconti Fund President. "The evening was filled with emotions and I know my dad's spirit was in the room with us as we paid tribute to these great individuals, all of whom were able to come together on this one night to help cure paralysis."

Since its inception in 1985, the Great Sports Legends Dinner has honored nearly **400** sports legends and humanitarians and has raised more than \$130 million for The Miami Project's spinal cord injury research programs. This year's dinner was presented by **Tudor Group** and the **Mack** family, and chaired by **Mark Dalton**. Additional benefactors include: Reed Mack, Carnival Corporation & plc, Carnival Foundation, Micky and Madeleine Arison, Pepe Badia and Badia Spices, Inc.

"Sports Legends Alumni" include Muhammad Ali, Willie Mays, Michael Jordan, Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Tony Hawk, Cal Ripken, Jr., Gloria Estefan, Jack Nicklaus, Wayne Gretzky, Alex Rodriguez, Ray Allen, George Foreman, Julio Iglesias, Helio Castroneves, Troy Aikman, Joe DiMaggio, Mario Andretti, Joe Namath, Pedro Martinez, Hakeem Olajuwon, Dan Marino, Mike Piazza, Pat Riley, Grant Hill, Bill Cowher, Kelly Slater, Joe Torre, Venus Williams, Simone Biles, Abby Wambach, and many other athletes and heroes – all of whom recognize that paralyzing injuries can and do occur in the pursuit of athletic careers and everyday lives.

## The 2022 Great Sports Legends Class:

**Edgerrin James** is a member of the NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame, a member of the NFL's All-2000s Decade Team, and the greatest running back in Indianapolis Colts history.

**Tony Stewart**, nicknamed "Smoke," is a three-time NASCAR Cup Series champion, an IndyCar Series champion, and an International Race of Champions title-holder.

**Lindsey Vonn** is a four-time World Cup skiing champion, an Olympic Gold Medalist, and the women's record-holder for the most World Cup skiing victories.

**Tim Hardaway** is a newly inducted Hall of Famer, a five-time All-NBA Team member and an Olympic Gold Medalist.

**Vladimir Guerrero**, nicknamed "Vlad the Impaler," is a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame, a nine-time All-Star, and a former Most Valuable Player.

**Shirley "Cha Cha" Muldowney** is the "First Lady of Drag Racing," having been the first female to receive a license from the U.S. Hot Rod Association to drive a Top Fuel dragster, and the first person, male or female, to win three Top Fuel titles.

**Sarah Will** is the most decorated athlete in U.S. Paralympic Alpine Skiing history, with 13 Winter Paralympics medals, and a member of the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame.

The **1972 Miami Dolphins** are simply the only football team in history to have a perfect season, going undefeated in the regular season, then sweeping the playoffs before going on to win the Super Bowl.

**Nick Buoniconti** was a NFL Pro Hall of Famer who was the middle linebacker and captain of that legendary undefeated team, a two-time Super Bowl champion, and the founder of The Buoniconti Fund and its parent organization, The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis.

**Mary Kate Callahan**, a National Paratriathlon Champion, four-time Paratriathlon American Championship medalist, and two-time World Paratriathlon medalist, received **The Buoniconti Fund's 2022 Inspiration Award**.

Philanthropist **Lois Pope**, the nation's foremost supporter of disabled veterans who made a \$10 million gift more than 20 years ago to endow the Lois Pope LIFE Center as the home for The Miami Project, received **The Buoniconti Fund Humanitarian Award**.



Gina Buoniconti and Nick Buoniconti, III



Dr. Barth Green, Lois Pope and Marc Buoniconti



Mark Dalton, Marc Buoniconti, Lindsey Vonn and Victoria Ranger Nunez



Marc Buoniconti flanked by The Buoniconti Fund Board of Directors



Terry and Marc Buoniconti



Dr. Henri Ford, John and Elaine Krupnick, Leonard Miller, Suzie Sayfie, Victoria Ranger Nunez, Dr. Dalton Dietrich, Dr. Helen Bramlett, Josh Friedman and Ron Book



Nick Arison and Jenna Green



Romero Britto



Tim Hardaway, Lesley Visser and Edgerrin James



Lauren, Reed, Lynn and John Mack



Blake and Samantha Doleman with Tim Hardaway



Sarah Will, Lindsey Vonn, Edgerrin James, Mary Kate Callahan



Dr. Julio Frenk and Lesley Visser



Marc Buoniconti and Mary Kate Callahan





# Equestrian Legends Celebrity Polo Match & Gala

Presented by Valentino

Dawn Jones at The Equestrian Legends Polo Match & Gala

**T**he Equestrian Legends Celebrity Polo Match & Gala, presented by Valentino, to benefit The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis was held on April 29th at the National Polo Club in Wellington, Florida. The event featured a gourmet dinner, cocktail reception, and a fabulous silent and live auction as guests witnessed an equestrian demonstration from Olympic and World Champions in the disciplines of Show Jumping, Dressage and Polo.

The equestrian demonstration was followed by the exquisite sit-down dinner with wine and champagne pairings from Penfolds, an Australian exceptional winery, as several influential and inspirational people from the equestrian world were honored. Among those honored were Event Chairman and Co-Founder of Outback Steakhouse Tim



Dr. Barth Green, Marc Buoniconti, and Tim Gannon

Gannon who received The Buoniconti Fund Award. Philanthropist and two-time US Open Champion and game MVP Dawn Jones received the Philanthropy Award, and Irish Olympic Show Jumping Legend Kevin Babington received the Inspiration Award, which was accepted by his wife Dianna Babington.

The three Equestrian Legend awardees included: Robert Jeffrey Dover who is the most honored dressage rider in the United States. Jeff Hall has won every high-goal trophy in U.S. Polo, including the most prestigious U.S. Open. Kris Kampsen, a three-time U.S. Arena Open Champion, has played polo for more than 25 years and is still playing competitive polo at the highest level, maintaining his handicap of six goals for over 20 years.

Marc Buoniconti, President, The Buoniconti Fund and The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis was on hand to share his remarkable and inspirational story and discuss the importance of supporting the research efforts at The Miami Project. Dr. Barth Green, Co-Founder of The Miami Project and Buoniconti Fund, thanked all the supporters and discussed incredible advances being made to help those living with paralysis and other neurological injuries, diseases, and disorders. Stephanie Sayfie Aagaard served as Mistress of Ceremonies for the evening and helped auction off several one-of-a-kind items in support of the cause. A few of the items included a 14 KT white gold Riviera Diamond necklace donated by Tibor Stern Diamonds valued at \$37,000, a Penfolds Napa Valley Experience with a 3 day / 2 nights stay at the private Penfolds residence



Lois Pope, Tim Gannon and Christine Lynn

in Rutherford, California valued as priceless since it is an invitation only experience, and a Concierge Class a 10-night Cruise for two persons onboard Celebrity Cruise Lines donated by Tareq Salahi valued at \$10,000.

The evening's Presenting Sponsor was Valentino. Penfolds and Charlotte Rawa sponsored fabulous wine and champagne for the evening. Our Polo Team Sponsors included The Armour Group at J.P. Morgan Wealth Management and Verde CO2. Music at the event featured the remarkable ensemble band Groove Republik.

In addition to the honorees, additional celebrity attendees included: Polo Player Michael Armour, Olympic Long jump Champion Bob Beamon, NFL Hall of Fame Linebacker Harry Carson, Polo announcer and President of the USPA Tony Coppola, Indy 500 winner and CART Champion Gil deFerran, Former Miami Dolphins star lineman Jeff Dellenbach, Actor Colin Egglesfield, World Series Champion Pitcher Scott Erickson, Polo Player Charles Fridge, Polo Player Chris Gannon, NHRA and Motorsports Hall of Fame of America member Darrell Gwynn, Polo Player Todd Minikus, World Renown Australian Showjumper Ben Meredith, Polo Player Stephen Orthwein, Olympic and World Cup jumping course designer Leopoldo Palacios, Emmy Nominated Actor Aiden Turner, Polo Player Martin Valent, Hall of Fame Sports Broadcaster Lesley Visser and Former Dolphins and Patriots lineman Jed Weaver.





Dressage demonstration



Aiden Turner, Marc Buoniconti and Collin Egglesfield



Mark Dalton and Dr. Barth Green



Kris Kampsen, Tim Gannon and Jeff Hall



Stephanie Sayfie Aagaard and Dawn Jones



Diana Morrison and Victoria Ranger Nunez



Bill Porter, Christine Lynn, Suzanne Sayfie, Diana Morrison and Itchko Ezratti



Show Jumping demonstration



Red and Louise Armour



Tim Gannon, Lois Pope, Christine Lynn

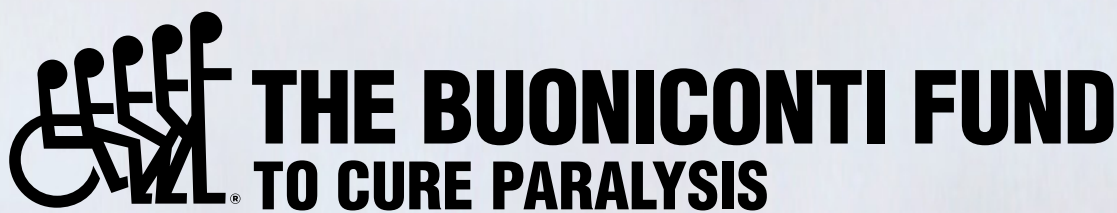


Polo demonstration



# Second Annual Celebrity Polo Match & Gala

to benefit



Saturday, January 27, 2024

International Polo Club Palm Beach  
Wellington, Florida

## Tables and Sponsorships

Suzie Sayfie  
(305) 243-7146  
ssayfie@miami.edu

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# THE BUONICONTI FUND

## BENEFITING THE MIAMI PROJECT TO CURE PARALYSIS

### National Volunteer Chapters

Chapters of The Buoniconti Fund were established in 1992 in an effort to enhance the research efforts of the scientists at The Miami Project. Led by volunteer regional director(s), each Chapter is made up of its own volunteer committee members who donate their time and energy into garnering support for their local events. Committee members provide the grass roots efforts in their respective communities by spreading the message of The Miami Project, its ongoing research and its message of hope.

Teammates are more than friends; they are family and this shows with Marc Buoniconti and his incredible teammates from The Citadel. The **Charleston Chapter** held its **15th Annual Tailgate** on September 10<sup>th</sup> attracting guests from across the country, all to support Marc and The Buoniconti Fund. The Citadel vs ETSU game was the perfect backdrop to bringing Herman Jacobs and members of the 1985 ETSU team together with 1985 The Citadel team. A wonderful reunion all capped off by The Citadel President General Glenn M. Walters, USMC (Ret.) surprise visit. *Mark your calendars for November 4<sup>th</sup>!*



Citadel friends and teammates with Marc Buoniconti at the Annual Tailgate Party



Indianapolis Chapter 5th Annual Trivia Night

Are you a fan of trivia? Members of our **Indianapolis Chapter** held its **5th Annual Trivia Night** on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at Speedway Indoor Karting. This event brought folks together for a fun night led by Volunteer Regional Director Doug Woodwell and members of the volunteer committee. *Mark your calendars for November 18<sup>th</sup> at Speedway.*

Cinco de Mayo with our **Orlando Chapter!** The Hammered Lamb once again opened its doors to the Orlando Chapter on May 4<sup>th</sup> for its annual Cinco de Mayo Happy Hour to kick off our annual **Golf Tournament presented by the AIM High Foundation** on May 5<sup>th</sup>. This year marked our **25th Annual** event keeping to its traditional Cinco de Mayo festivities. This year's event, led by Volunteer Regional Director Nick Buoniconti and his incredible friends continue to ensure all have a fantastic time, all while raising the much needed funds to support the research at The Miami



Golfers celebrating at the 25th Annual Orlando Chapter Golf Tournament



Project. Prior to teeing off, our players and guests were treated to a free stretching session donated by Stretch Zone of Winter Park. Special thanks to our amazing sponsors for supporting this event and our cause for many years. ***Mark your calendars for May 2-3, 2024!***

FORE! Our **Pittsburgh Chapter** once again sold out its **19<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament** on September 9<sup>th</sup> at the Carmichaels Golf Club. Each year, Volunteer Regional Director Jimmy Hoy and friends host one of the most anticipated golf tournaments in the Pittsburgh area having a wait list well before the tournament is even publicized. Special thanks to all of our sponsors including Jeremie Snyder Electric, T-Tygart Industries, Mission for Miracles, Michael's Auto Sales and Brew House. ***Mark your calendars for September 2024!***



Pittsburgh Chapter golfers with Jimmy Hoy

The **Southern California Chapter** is the newest member of our Chapter family. Led by Volunteer Regional Director Bill McMillan, we will be hosting our first cultivation event in the Santa Ana community on **November 18<sup>th</sup>** at the Orange County Mining Co. Come watch the USC vs UCLA game, learn about the ongoing research at The Miami Project from our Director of Education and Community Outreach, Dr. David McMillan, and become involved! This complimentary event will be the perfect introduction to our local Chapter. Will you join us and Stand Up for Those Who Can't! ***See you on November 18<sup>th</sup>!***

Throughout the past year, **The Naples Chapter of The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis**, under the guidance of Volunteer Regional Director Nick Stefanis, orchestrated two events that underscore their commitment to the cause. The inaugural event took place on August 22, 2022—a Harley Davidson Celebration, generously sponsored by Rockstar Harley-Davidson in Ft. Myers. Attendees were treated to live musical performances, complimentary beverages, and delectable light bites. A highlight of the occasion was the impressive array of Harley motorcycles on display.

On May 25, 2023, the 2nd Annual Naples Golf Invitational, presented by Gulf Western at Bear's Paw Country Club, took center stage. This event garnered substantial support and succeeded in raising an impressive \$100,000. Beyond the financial feat, the invitational has proven instrumental in expanding The Buoniconti Fund's influence along Florida's west coast. Steering the event's success was a dedicated committee comprised of Nick Stefanis, Joe Lamb, Keith Reece, Valiere Gonzalez, Paula Mesa, and Alicia Gonzalez. The accomplishments achieved were made possible by the exceptional efforts of the Gulf Western staff, to whom the organization extends its heartfelt appreciation.



Nick Stefanis, Joe Lamb, Marc Buoniconti and Keith Reece



# Golf Events to Benefit The Buoniconti Fund

## 2023 Woody Foundation Golf Classic



James "Woody" Beckham, Peter Winder with Marc Buoniconti

The Woody Foundation hosted its Annual Golf Classic on April 21st at Top Golf Doral in Doral, Florida. Both The Woody Foundation and The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis are dedicated to making a difference in the lives of those living with paralysis. Over the last nine years, The Golf Classic has successfully raised over \$450,000 thanks to the generous support of individuals and organizations that rally behind this annual event.

The Woody Foundation is an organization committed to improving the lives of those living with paralysis by providing hope and a future to those affected by paralysis. The organization is also known for offering free adaptive equipment through its Woody Packs. TWF stands for equality and accessibility in all aspects of life. The organization was named after James "Woody" Beckham, who sustained his spinal cord injury during a rugby tackle in January 2011. This year, they have added a scholarship program to assist paralyzed individuals seeking higher education, along with a para-athlete sponsorship program. For more info visit [woodyfoundation.org](http://woodyfoundation.org)

## 9th Annual Red Door Classic Golf Tournament



Rebecca and Tom Jelke with Marc Buoniconti

The Red Door Classic proudly boasts that it is one of "South Florida's funnest and most memorable charity golf tournaments," but it also may be one of the most successful ones in the area. This year's Golf tournament raised \$66,300.00. Since its inception in 2015, The Red Door Classic has raised over \$375,000 for charity. The tournament was held at beautiful Miami Shores Country Club and hosted by the Thomas B Jelke Foundation in conjunction with FIU SigEp Alumni, and presenting sponsor, Mark Marandino and Associates. The tournament raises funds and awareness for three great causes: The Buoniconti Fund's efforts to cure paralysis through spinal cord injury research, as well as scholarships for FIU First Generation students, and FIU SigEp First Generation Students.

Reserve your spot for the 2024 Red Door Classic Golf Tournament scheduled for March 8, 2024. If you are interested in participating, please email [tjelke@gmail.com](mailto:tjelke@gmail.com)

## The Ricky Palermo Foundation Spinal Injury Golf Tournament

The Ricky Palermo Foundation hosts one of the largest golf tournaments in Western New York. Their contributions have exceeded \$1.9 million, benefiting both the local community and The Miami Project's groundbreaking research endeavors.

This year's golf tournament took place on August 5th at Batavia, New York's Terry Hills Golf Course, attracting 200 golf enthusiasts who reveled in the day's activities, including an engaging helicopter golf ball drop. The Batavia community rallied wholeheartedly behind Ricky, evidenced by the sale of over 365 dinners. The momentum continues, as a dinner and comedy night fundraiser featuring Nick Marra and Moody McCarthy is scheduled for September 22nd. The Miami Project



Ricky Palermo at this year's tournament.

extends its heartfelt gratitude to Ricky, the Palermo family, and the Batavia community for their unwavering allegiance and dedication to the pursuit of a paralysis cure.

## Kevin Kitchnefsky Hosts 25th Annual Golf Tournament

Back in 1996, while employed by a construction firm in New Jersey, Kevin Kitchnefsky's life took an unexpected turn. While unloading two stacks of hefty chain-link fence from a tractor-trailer, an unfortunate mishap occurred. A total of 27 units of chain-link fence, each weighing around 100 pounds, suddenly shifted off the truck and trapped him against the tractor-trailer, resulting in paralysis. Despite this life-altering incident, Kevin's determination to enhance the lives of those grappling with spinal cord injuries remained unshaken. This resolve led him to initiate his inaugural golf tournament in 1999, aimed at generating funds for paralysis research.

This year marked a momentous occasion as Kevin produced this 25th Annual Golf Tournament at the Tunkannock Stonehedge golf course. To commemorate this milestone, Dr. David McMillan, Director of Education at The Miami Project presented details on



David McMillan, Ph.D., (center) with supporters at the Kevin Kitchnefsky Golf Tournament.

the organization's research initiatives and clinical trials. A gathering of over 144 golf enthusiasts and well-wishers participated, making it a day brimming with entertainment and jubilation. Through the years, the foundation has amassed an impressive sum exceeding \$800,000, earmarked for advancing spinal cord injury research. Furthermore, an additional \$150,000 has been garnered to offer grants that enhance the quality of life for individuals in Pennsylvania living with spinal cord injuries. The Miami Project extends heartfelt gratitude to Kevin and his family for their role as beneficiaries of this remarkable tournament.





## 2023 HOT RODS & REELS FISHING TOURNAMENT PRESENTED BY GLOBAL ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY

*Hall of Fame Drag Racer Darrell Gwynn Gathered NASCAR Legends for Charity Fishing Tournament and Donated a \$25,000 Wheelchair to a Spinal Cord Injured Dirt Track Racer*

NASCAR Driver **Erik Jones** led his team to first place honors with a three-fish total of 6.86 pounds at this year's Hot Rods & Reels Charity Fishing Tournament on February 17<sup>th</sup>, presented by **Global Electronic Technology**, to benefit The Darrell Gwynn Chapter of The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis. NASCAR drivers and Legends convened this morning on Lake Lloyd at Daytona International Speedway for the charity-fishing event that kicks off the racing season.

Joining Jones for the event were **Donnie Allison, Bobby Allison, Christopher Bell, David Blaney, Chase Briscoe, Matt Crafton, Mike Dillon, Noah**

**Gragson, Chris Hacker, Brad Keselowski, Michael McDowell, Ryan Newman, Martin Truex, Jr.** The Jones team's three fish total beat out David Blaney's team that came in 2nd with 6.52 pounds, and Donnie Allison's team came in third with a total of 5.08 pounds.

The largest fish, weighing 2.98 pounds made David Blaney and his team eligible to try to win the Global Electronic Technology Million Dollar Challenge. There were specially marked envelopes, with 5 holding a certificate for a million dollars. Unfortunately, they did not open the lucky envelopes, but it was an exciting moment, and they did win a boat for next year's event.

"We're so happy to be able to give this chair to Grady. It's because of our sponsors, drivers, friends from Daytona International Speedway that we are able to be successful each year. We thank all our supporters and friends for continuing to stand up for those who can't," said Darrell Gwynn.



Hot Rods & Reels Charity Fishing Tournament annually benefits The Darrell Gwynn Quality of Life Chapter of The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis. This year Darrell donated a \$25,000 custom wheelchair to a spinal cord injured dirt track racer Grady Chandler. The wheelchair will allow him to return to the track, enjoy the outdoors, and be more active.



Event sponsors include presenting sponsor Global Electronic Technology, Daytona International Speedway, Bass Pro Shops, Bass Online, Stanley / Black & Decker, NASCAR, Dobbs Equipment, Halifax Health, and DMR.

The Darrell Gwynn Chapter works to “Stand Up For Those Who Can’t” by raising awareness and funds for critical spinal cord injury research programs through, not only our quality of life initiatives, but by working as a team to ultimately find a cure for paralysis.

## Darrell Gwynn Wheelchair Challenge 2023

The Darrell Gwynn Wheelchair Challenge campaign continues in 2023, and Darrell is using his recent induction into the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America to continue to promote the event. The Challenge is a great way to show the public that paralysis does not discriminate, and it can happen to anyone at any time, in addition to raising the much-needed funds for spinal cord injury research.

The idea is to convey how it feels to be unable to perform everyday tasks that many take for granted. Challenges faced by our friends in wheelchairs are enormous and, without a cure, permanent. This has

been Darrell’s reality for more than 30 years. It is his hope that this effort will get people to understand much more about the challenges faced by millions around the world.

We ask that each challenge participant commit to raising a minimum of \$10,000; participate in a videotaped testimonial, and agree to pay it forward by challenging a friend or colleague to be the next Darrell Gwynn Wheelchair Challenge participant.

By joining this challenge you will join the likes of NASCAR personalities **Tony Stewart, Ryan Newman, Denny Hamlin, Kelley Earnhardt** and **Bill Elliot**, businessmen **Pete Coors** from Coors Brewing and **Johnny Morris** from Bass Pro Shops, WWE personality **Bill Goldberg** and dozens of others who choose to Stand Up for Those Who Can’t.



The Buoniconti Fund directly supports The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, the world’s preeminent spinal cord and brain injury research center, which is located at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. Advances The Miami Project makes can have positive impacts on many other neurological diseases and disorders so your participation can be far reaching in terms of making a difference in many people’s lives. Search the hashtag #DGWheelchairChallenge to see what others have done or look at our social profiles for some examples. They are Facebook @DarrellGwynnChapter; Instagram @TheMiamiProject and Twitter @BuonicontiFund Hashtags: #DarrellGwynnChapter, #BuonicontiFund, #HotRodsandReels and #CureParalysis

# Healthy Tips for Living with SCI

by Marc Buoniconti

Since my injury in 1985, I have been able to gather a lot of great information that I use on the daily basis to help improve my quality of life. I wanted to share with the spinal cord injury community some of my tips for healthy living.

Every morning, as part of my routine, the first thing I do is catharize to relieve my bladder. Over the past 23 years, I have had the pleasure of working with Hollister, Inc. Together, we launched the Advance Plus closed system catheterization kit. All in one package you have the catheter, the collection bag, a disposable paper, and betadine swabs. Everything you need to be able to have a sterile catheter, which is the best option to help prevent urinary tract infections.

Next, I am thoroughly cleaned with a washcloth followed by alcohol swabs, and then I apply an AllKare protective barrier wipe to the area, which creates an adhesive medium for my condom external catheter to be more secure. The external condom catheter that I use is the InView Extra, which has more adhesive and helps it stay on better. It provides me a level of confidence and independence when you know your products are high quality, dependable and secure. In my day-to-day life as a quadriplegic there are enough other challenges that we go through, so it is a relief to know that I don't have to worry about my continence. Thanks to Hollister, Inc. for creating such wonderful products with the disabled community in mind, putting our needs as their primary focus and always looking to the future to better serve the spinal cord injury community. I know for me, using Hollister products has been life saving and I highly recommend them for your consideration.

Next, I do an exercise routine by stretching my muscles to increase range of motion, get my spasms to quiet down, and help with contractions. I then place a compression sock on my legs to help prevent swelling and deep edema. While getting dressed, I always have nurse pulls inspect my sacrum and peritoneal area for skin integrity. Probably, one of the biggest challenges any spinal cord injury person goes through is preventing pressure sores. Inspecting your skin should be a top priority and part of your daily routine. The skin is our first line of defense, so if I have any sign of redness or breakdown I apply Silvadene .1%. It's a topical cream by prescription that has worked well for me over the years. If it's a more advanced breakdown, such a stage 1 which is a breaking of the skin, then I use the Silvadene cream and cover with a DuoDerm patch. However, if any more advanced skin irritation should result, please consult your physician.

Supplements are a big part of my regimen that I feel have provided substantial benefits to me over the years. Every day I take vitamin C, vitamin D, CoQ10, Folic Acid, Zinc, Magnesium, Omega3, Probiotics, and Calcium. Each of these provides benefits that my body needs to keep running at optimal levels.

Lastly, I recently discovered a product that has significantly improved my quality of life. One of my biggest challenges has always been urinary tract infections. It was getting to a point where even some antibiotics were resistant. I learned about a product called Fosfomycin. This is a powder that I drink once a week to help prevent urinary tract infections. I have been taking it now for about a year and I have not had one urinary tract infection. This has been a small miracle in my life, and an overall benefit to my health. It is obtained by prescription, so please consult with your physician to see if it is right for you. I hope these tips provide you with some help for a healthier and better quality of life.



21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL

## THE BUONICONTI FUND CELEBRITY GOLF INVITATIONAL AT THE BEAR'S CLUB

Hosted by Jack Nicklaus

to benefit

**THE BUONICONTI FUND**  
TO CURE PARALYSIS



## Sunday and Monday | Spring 2024

### The Bear's Club Jupiter, Florida

***Join Jack Nicklaus and our celebrity friends at Nicklaus' exclusive course!***

- Golf legend Jack Nicklaus will play with the Presenting Sponsor in this tournament.
- Golf with sports and entertainment stars at this exclusive golf course, The Bear's Club.
- Seated dinner at The Bear's Club clubhouse on Sunday evening of event.
- Hotel stay on Sunday evening of event.
- Silent Auction featuring one-of-a-kind Sports Memorabilia, Exquisite Jewelry and Exotic Getaways on Sunday evening of event.
- Early morning breakfast at The Bear's Club clubhouse on Monday morning of event.
- Dazzling day of golf with on-course contests.
- Awards ceremony luncheon following golf invitational.
- First class golfer gifts.



## **For Golf and Sponsorships**

Stephanie Sayfie Aagaard  
305-243-6385  
ssayfieaagaard@miami.edu

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MICHAEL JORDAN



SIMONE BILES



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VENUS WILLIAMS



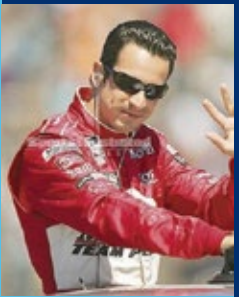
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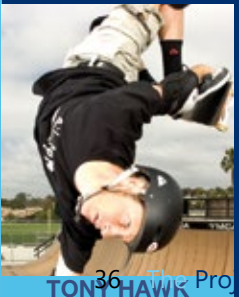
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TONY HAWK



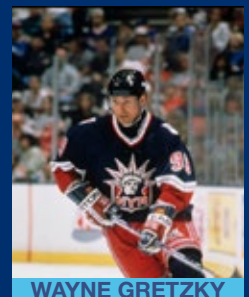
NACHO FIGUERAS



JOHN ELWAY



MARIANO RIVERA



WAYNE GRETZKY

# 39th Annual GREAT SPORTS LEGENDS DINNER

to benefit

 **THE BUONICONTI FUND**  
TO CURE PARALYSIS

**FALL 2024**

5:30pm Cocktails and Silent Auction  
7:30pm Dinner

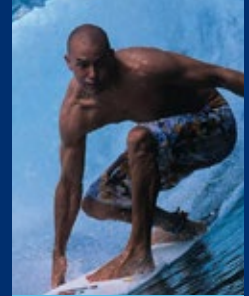
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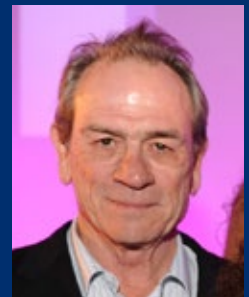
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DAVID ORTIZ



TOMMY LEE JONES

\*Past Legends and Honorees Featured

# Planned Giving

**T**hrough a personalized planned giving arrangement, you can assure yourself a lifetime income, realize major and immediate tax savings, pass important assets to your children, and leave the legacy of a better community. Planned gifts can pay you, someone you care about, or both for a specified time. Such gifts may postpone, reduce, or in some cases even eliminate capital gains, gift, estate, transfer, and income taxes. Federal law encourages planned giving by offering important tax benefits for your gifts. The following information outlines a brief synopsis of various planned giving programs.

## **Cash**

Although gifts of cash are the most convenient and common way to support The Miami Project, other assets may make equally valuable donations. All gifts provide federally encouraged tax savings.

## **Publicly Traded Securities**

Tax savings increase when you give highly appreciated stock to The Miami Project. This is because the fair market value of the gift is deductible, and there is no tax on the capital gain. It may be possible to get a higher return on your stock by giving the shares to The Miami Project in return for a specific income.

## **Closely Held Stock**

Stock in a family-owned business may be given to The Miami Project. You receive an income tax deduction for the value of the stock. At some point in the future, your company may want to purchase that stock back from The Miami Project or exercise a right of first refusal. Substantial gifts may require an independent appraisal.

## **Life Insurance**

Gifts of life insurance may be made by purchasing a life insurance policy and making The Miami Project its owner and beneficiary. You receive a tax deduction for the annual premiums you pay. You may also contribute an existing policy and can deduct from your taxes its cash surrender value. If you donate the ownership of a full paid policy, you may receive a tax deduction for its replacement value.

## **Bequest**

Bequests are simply gifts made through a will or trust. The vast majority of charitable gifts and bequests are motivated by the donor's desire to provide financial support for the charitable beneficiary. However, tax rewards can also be important. In certain cases, tax benefits can permit donors to give more to their charitable causes at significantly less after-tax cost to their other beneficiaries. Every dollar that is given to The Miami Project through a bequest or other testamentary gift is fully deductible for federal estate tax purposes. If you would like to place The Miami Project in your will, please include the following language: I bequeath the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars to the University of Miami, a charitable organization located in Coral Gables, Florida to be used only by The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis.

## **Real Estate**

Gifts of real estate include homes, condos, apartments, rental property, undeveloped land, farmland, mineral rights, or a fraction interest in any of these. Your gift of land may alleviate the responsibilities of managing the property or the cost of selling it. It is possible to make the gift to The Miami Project, receive a tax benefit, and reserve the right to use the property throughout your lifetime.

## **Personal Property**

Gifts of personal property include works of art, jewelry, oriental rugs, family silver, antiques, and yachts. These often make attractive gifts because they are no longer used regularly, are costly to insure and are difficult to sell.

To further discuss planned giving options or if you have any questions, please call our Director of Annual Giving at (305) 243-7147.



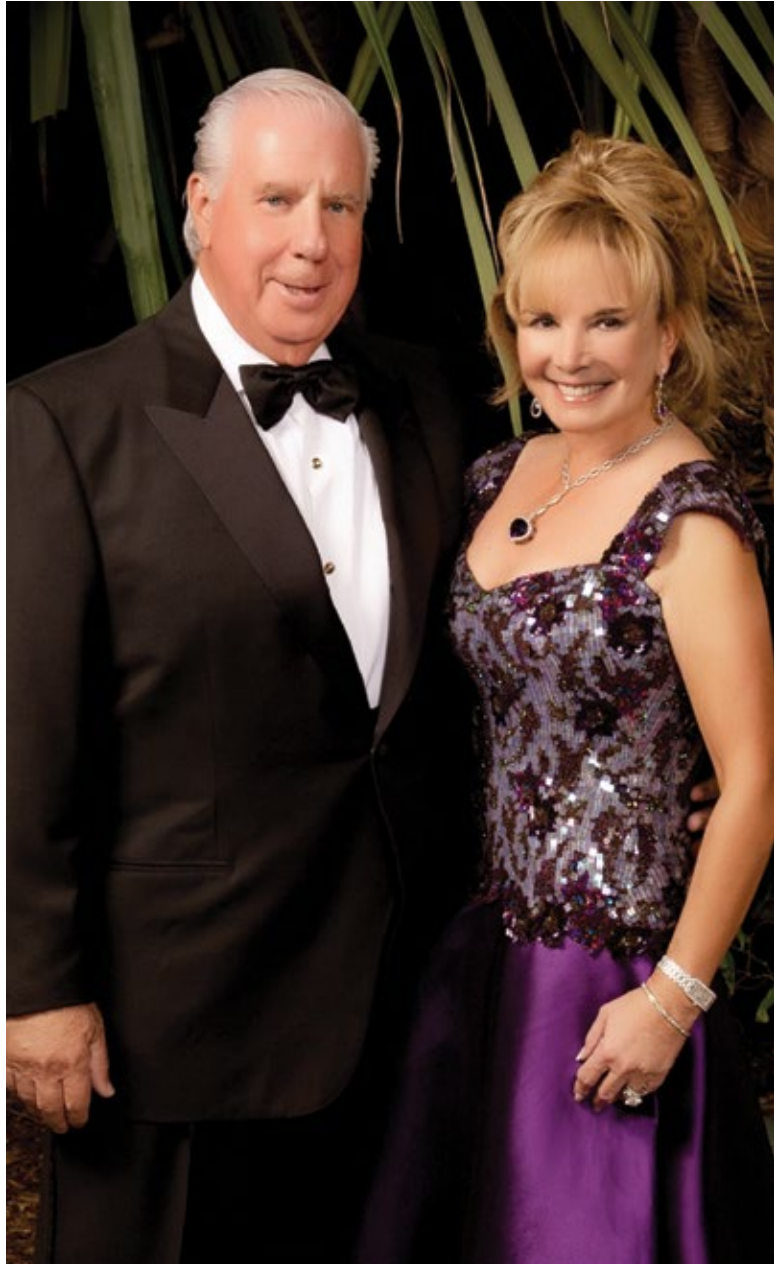
## In Memoriam

### Paul J. DiMare

April 14, 1941 – December 30, 2022

Paul J. DiMare was one of South Florida's most dedicated philanthropists. He founded the Paul J. DiMare Foundation and gave generously to numerous worthy organizations. Paul served on The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis Board of Directors for over 14 years and positively impacted The Fund with his organizational skills, vision, active participation and generosity.

As a Board of Trustees member of The University of Miami, Paul and his lovely wife Swanee also gave generously to the research efforts of The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. Paul's dream was to establish the DiMare Institute at The Miami Project to find a cure for the incurables: Alzheimer's, Parkinson, Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, Spinal Cord Injury, Cerebral Palsy, Macular Degeneration, Tourette Syndrome, Huntington's Disease, CJD – Prion, to name a few. Paul is survived by his loving wife, Swanee, and sons, Tony, Paul Jr., Scott, Gino, Jim Husk, 14 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. He is greatly missed by all.





## Lenore Gold Elias

January 22, 1931 – November 11, 2022

Lenore Elias, often referred to as Queen Lenore, was a giant in the South Florida Community for over 70 years.

Lenore volunteered at many organizations as President or Chairman of the Board. Lenore was devoted to The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. Her beloved daughter, Beth Roscoe, was paralyzed in a 1983 car accident. Beth was instrumental in founding The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. Subsequently, Lenore helped found, with Teresa “Terry” Buoniconti, The Miami Project Women’s Guild. Lenore worked tirelessly to raise funds to support our spinal cord injury research projects.

There are not enough words to describe her love and devotion to The Miami Project’s mission throughout the years. Lenore will always be fondly remembered.

# The Project

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## For Those Who Can't

#StandUpForThoseWhoCan't #CureParalysis

