

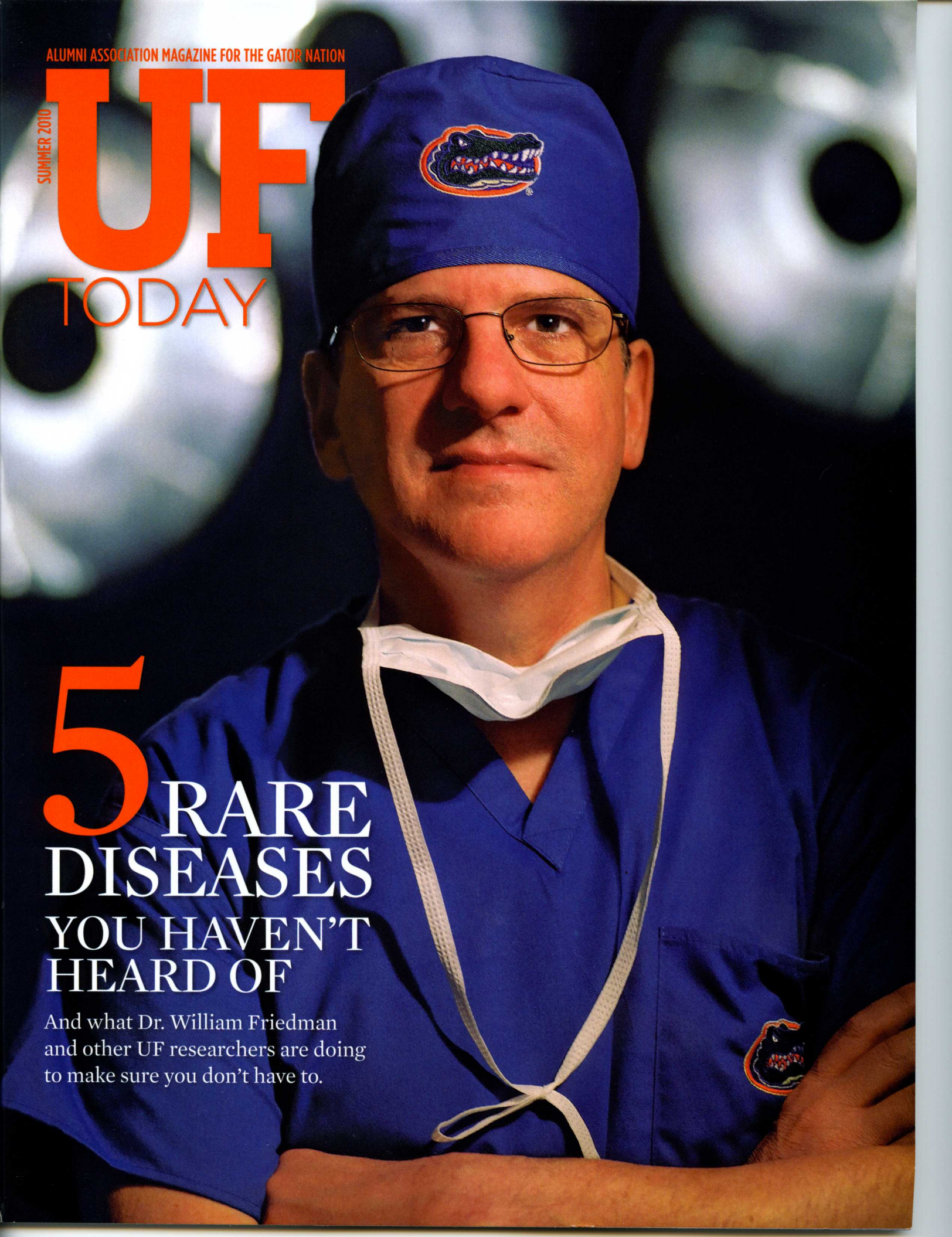
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE FOR THE GATOR NATION

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UF TODAY

5 RARE DISEASES YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF

And what Dr. William Friedman
and other UF researchers are doing
to make sure you don't have to.



Five Ways UF is Extending Your Life

Researchers are studying how hygiene, exercise and a glass of wine can add more shine to the golden years.

| FACT |

When *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* evaluated the cost of higher education in America, it ranked UF No. 2 for having the best educational value. Only the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ranked higher. Four other Florida colleges also made the list (New College, 12th; FSU, 17th; UCF, 36th; USF, 60th).

| QUOTE |

"We're trying to give something to people that they already know and love — the Gators — associated with something they need — soap," says Telly Concepcion (BA '08), who has teamed with engineering student Eric Layton to make soap from glycerin produced by UF's biodiesel plant.

Adding LIFE to Your Years

In what will be the largest trial of its kind, UF's LIFE study will investigate whether physical activity can help prevent age-related disability. Led by Marco Pahor, director of UF's Institute on Aging, the study — Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders — will follow 1,600 sedentary adults ages 70-89 to assess whether structured exercise can prolong their mobility. Along with acting as a field site, UF will oversee other universities — including Stanford, Tufts, Yale and Northwestern — for the six-year, \$60 million project funded by the National Institute on Aging.

Floss for Your Life

We know taking care of teeth and gums makes for healthy mouths, but few people realize oral bacteria are linked to heart attacks and strokes. One study showed that people with periodontal disease are three times as likely to have heart attacks, says Ann Progulsk-Fox, a UF researcher whose team found live oral bacteria in artery-clogging plaque. By identifying the types of bacteria that contribute to cardiovascular diseases, Progulsk-Fox is laying groundwork for a chairside test dentists can use to determine who's most at risk. In the meantime, she wants people to know good oral hygiene could save their lives, not just their teeth.

"Given the numbers of people who die from cardiovascular disease — the No. 1 cause of death in the Western world — better diagnosis and treatment could be a huge contribution to public health," she says.

Red Wine for the Mind?

Resveratrol, a compound found in grapes, pomegranates and red wine, has been linked to some of the same heart-healthy benefits as a low-calorie diet. But, a new study at UF's Institute on Aging is examining resveratrol's potential to boost cognition, too. The study, called RIPE — Resveratrol for Improved Performance in the Elderly — is tracing the supplement's effect on memory in 30 seniors.

Tai Chi to Prevent Falls

Half of older adults who are hospitalized for falls die within a year. That sobering statistic motivates Chris Hass (MSESS '98, PhD '01) of UF's Movement Disorders Center to research fall prevention, and he knows exercise helps. A recently completed study he's analyzing shows the martial art of tai chi can help not just by keeping seniors in shape, but also by simulating the movements they need to do in everyday life.

"When you're getting up out of a chair, it's not really similar to the movements you do in the gym.



With tai chi, you're practicing how to rotate and shift your weight smoothly and effectively," he says.

While he's still evaluating the results, "the participants feel it was beneficial," he says.

But Don't Give up on the Gym ...

Weight training, Hass says, still has its place. Seniors with better muscle tone show increased ability to link two motor actions, such as standing up from a chair or bed and walking. Even if hitting the gym is out, everyday activities such as vacuuming can help seniors stay strong.

— Alisson Clark (BSJ '98)

Learn more about UF's research concerning aging at www.aging.ufl.edu. To support the Institute on Aging, contact Sandy Fackler at sfackler@ufl.edu or 352-265-7227.