

# THE BRAINSTORM

*The McKnight Brain Institute of the University of Florida e-newsletter*

Issue 28, Late Fall 2022

## Message from MBI Leadership

Dear Colleagues:

We want to thank you all for your preparedness and flexibility during Hurricane Ian. While we avoided the brunt of the storm's impact, we know some of your friends and families weren't as fortunate. Please let us know if there's anything we can do to assist them during their time of need.



It's been a busy and exciting fall, and we encourage you to scroll through and learn about some of the recent research, awards and events happening in our neuro research community, including photo galleries of our MBI celebrations for Hispanic Heritage Month and Postdoc Appreciation Week.

We'd like to extend a big congratulations to Dr. Carol Mathews, the new chair of UF's department of psychiatry. Dr. Mathews is a longtime member of our executive committee, and we look forward to continued collaborations with her. Read more about her appointment below.

As we approach the holiday season, we hope you find time to hit the pause button to unwind, recharge and spend quality time with your loved ones.

Happy holidays!

Steven T. DeKosky, M.D., MBI Deputy Director

Jada Lewis, Ph.D., MBI Deputy Director

Kevin St.P. McNaught, Ph.D., MBI Chief Science Officer

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## Dr. Carol Mathews named chair of UF psychiatry

Internationally renowned clinician and translational researcher in the areas of OCD, tic disorders and anxiety disorders named psychiatry chair.

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## Eight UF research teams awarded MBI grant funding

\$744K in grants will support UF research projects and equipment.



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## MBI Rising Stars: Priscilla Amofa-Ho

Priscilla Amofa-Ho is the latest investigator to be featured in the MBI Rising Stars video series.

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## Neurologists who treated Muhammad Ali provide evidence for primary Parkinson's diagnosis

Amid questions about the late boxing great's symptoms, UF's Dr. Michael Okun and colleagues conclude his primary diagnosis was young-onset Parkinson's disease.

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## FDA approves new ALS drug tested in clinical trial at UF

AMX0035 was tested at UF, Mass General and partnering sites and then approved by the FDA to treat ALS.

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## UF neurologist co-leading landmark study on autism and aging

Dr. Brandon Zielinski is co-leading one of the largest and most comprehensive studies of what happens to autistic adults as they grow older.



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## Drs. Frank Bova and Sara Jo Nixon promoted to distinguished professor

Medical physicist and researcher in neurobehavioral mechanisms of addiction joined Drs. Kenneth Heilman and Mark Sherwood as distinguished professors in the UF College of Medicine.

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## MBI members honored with endowed chairs and professorships

The 2022 Celebrating Distinction ceremony took place on Oct. 13 at the Health Professions, Nursing and Pharmacy Auditorium. Faculty members were formally recognized as endowed chairs and professors, receiving specially engraved chairs as a symbol of their dedication to medical education, research and leadership.

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## Neuroscientist appointed PPHP associate dean for research & named to UF Foundation Term Professorship

In his new role with UF's College of Public Health and Health Professions, Dr. Adam Woods will focus on the development of junior faculty, and building college-level programs and resources. [READ MORE »](#)



Dr. Woods was awarded a professorship to support UF's preeminence goals and advance research efforts. [READ MORE »](#)

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## UF neurologist co-recipient of Tom Isaacs Scientific Award

Dr. Michael Okun was a joint recipient of an award recognizing researchers who have significantly impacted the lives of people living with Parkinson's.

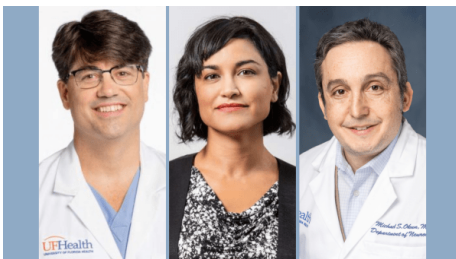
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## UF Women of Neuro

Our UF Women of Neuro series shines light on some of the incredible women leading our neuroscience and neuromedicine research initiatives.

- [Dr. Dawn Bowers](#): neuropsychology director of the movement disorders and neurorestoration program at the Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases at UF Health.
- [Dr. Carolina Maciel](#): director of research for the department of neurology's division of neurocritical care.



## DBS trial for difficult-to-treat Tourette syndrome shows promise

Human trial of closed-loop DBS in four participants with difficult-to-treat Tourette syndrome finds treatment to be safe, beneficial.

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## This geneticist's goal: Cure the disease that runs in his family

UF Explore Magazine highlights Dr. Eric Wang's innovative work at UF's Center for NeuroGenetics.

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## Identifying optimal timing of physical therapy to mitigate Parkinson's symptoms

Drs. Ramzi Salloum and Michael Okun co-authored a JAMA Neurology viewpoint article.

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## Engineering the hi-fi brain

Dr. Kevin Otto will co-lead a public-private UF collaboration seeking to optimize clinical outcomes through novel neuroprostheses fabrication.

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## UF researcher receives grant to study dura mater grafts

Dr. Lakiesha Williams will lead a \$1.7M NIH grant comparing the effectiveness of different dura mater grafts.

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## UF chemical engineer earns grants for immunotherapy and TBI projects

Dr. Carlos Rinaldi-Ramos will lead projects involving Drs. Marcelo Febo, Lan Hoang-Minh, Duane Mitchell and Lakeisha Williams.

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## UF neuroscientist co-leads study into causes of frontotemporal dementia



A research team co-led by Dr. Malú Gámez Tansey will investigate possible links between the immune system and neurodegeneration in frontotemporal dementia.

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## UF neuroscientist receives Parkinson's Foundation award

Dr. Coralie de Hemptinne was honored with the Stanley Fahn Junior Faculty Award to advance her research into new neuromodulation strategies for movement disorders.

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## UF investigators to study possible link between sepsis and cognitive decline in Alzheimer's disease

Under new grant, the team will study mechanisms involved with systemic inflammation in rodent models of Alzheimer's.

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## Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

On Oct. 14, the MBI celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with a free catered Peruvian lunch for all MBI members.



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## Postdoc Appreciation Week Recap

On Sept. 22, the MBI celebrated Postdoc Appreciation Week with free personal pizzas for all postdocs. Earlier in the week, all postdocs received free ice pops.



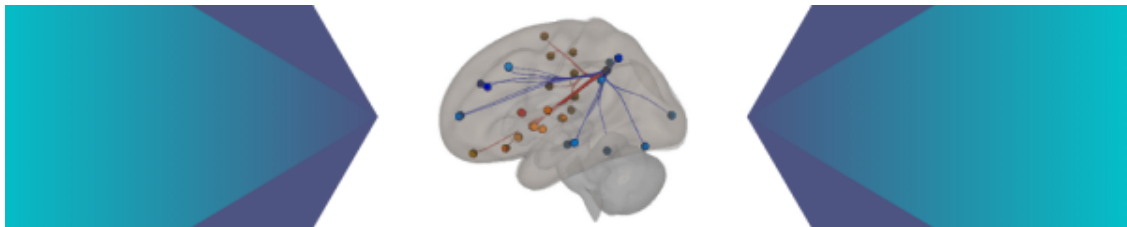


## MBI researchers in the spotlight

Journalists regularly reach out to our MBI members for their expertise on many subjects. If a reporter contacts you, please alert assistant director of communications [Todd Taylor](#) or science writer [Michelle Koidin Jaffee](#) so we can assist with, archive and promote your media endeavors. Here are recent examples of MBI researchers in the news:

- **Dr. Sara Jo Nixon (Independent Florida Alligator)** — [UF awards distinction to first female College of Medicine professor](#)
- **Dr. Brandon Lucke-Wold (NPR's All Things Considered)** — [How a new hard hat technology can protect workers better from concussion](#)
- **Dr. Eric Porges (Inverse)** — [Vagus nerve stimulation: Does this anxiety hack actually work?](#)
- **Dr. Irene Malaty, Dr. Ashley Rawls & Heather Simpson (Parkinson's Foundation)** — [Local Parkinson's program reaches Black and African American community](#)

[SEE MORE EXAMPLES OF MBI RESEARCHERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT»](#)



## Highlight your work with MBI's Research Snapshots

*Showcase your discovery by pairing an impactful image from your latest published research with a written description of your findings. Share with our MBI communications team and work together to convey how this research has influenced your field of study.*

**Drs. Eric W. Atkinson and Kevin Otto** report that a novel implantable device called MARTEENI showed promise in a rat-model study to potentially improve functionality of prosthetic devices designed to work with peripheral nerves in place of a lost limb. [Read the Snapshot »](#)


[READ MORE SNAPSHOTS AND SUBMIT YOUR OWN »](#)




## Reminders from the Communications Team

Please [become an MBI member](#) (if you haven't already), make sure you have a [professional headshot](#), update your [UF Health Directory profile](#) and let our [communications team](#) know early and often when you have big news or research coming out of your area. All of these efforts will help us shine an even brighter light on neuro research at UF.



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