

# **ANNUAL BULLETIN 2020**



UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS



# **CU PHYSICAL THERAPY**

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# a letter from THE DIRECTOR

It's been an eventful year for the University of Colorado Physical Therapy (CU PT) Program! Dr. Margaret Schenkman's notable record of academic leadership was recognized during a wonderful celebration featuring many leaders, alumni and friends of the program. Two physical therapy educators who are long-time collaborators of Dr. Schenkman, Judith E. Deutsch, PT, PhD, FAPTA, and Kathleen Gill-Body, PT, DPT, MS, NCS, FAPTA, opened the celebratory event with a guest lecture. Their lecture, "Evolving the Integrated Framework of Clinical Reasoning: Implications for Current Clinical Practice," highlighted how their past and present scholarly work with Dr. Schenkman will continue to shape physical therapy practice for many years to come.



As the incoming Program Director, it was important for me to attend the celebratory event held in Dr. Schenkman's honor. While new leadership invariably brings change, it is equally important to recognize the history and events that shape the character of an academic program. The ripples of change are being felt by physical therapy programs across the U.S. The commercial values that are exerting a growing influence on higher education demand that faculty, students and alumni reflect on the University of Colorado academic mission and the key features of the CU PT Program that distinguish it from other programs. My many recent meetings with our faculty, clinical partners, CU Physical Therapy Alumni Association (PTAA), DPT and PhD students, Scholarship and Endowment Board members, and various CU Anschutz Medical Campus Deans and Program Chairs, reflect my effort to identify the core traits and ideals that define our program.

While the CU PT Program has attained national prominence by many measures, the focused advocacy of our scholarship donors reveals our long-standing commitment to addressing the physical therapy needs along the Front Range and throughout our rural communities in Colorado. Notably, our scholarship offerings reached an all-time high of over \$204,000 for the academic year of 2019-2020.

Additionally, the faculty have clearly communicated that our shared program value of altruism may be expressed as service to the community by linking physical therapy to public health. Thanks to the establishment of the Joanne Posner-Mayer Endowed Chair in Physical Therapy at the University of Colorado, we will be able to pursue health education initiatives and service projects that address this aspect of our mission.

My conversations with physical therapists such as PTAA President, Tim Loar (Class of 2016), have highlighted the opportunity that we have to build vibrant Communities of Practice that connect students, recent program graduates, faculty members and experienced alumni. The CU PT Program and our network of graduates can elevate clinical practice by not only pursuing continuing education, but by also serving as a resource for one another. Entry-level DPT students in their pivotal first year of study will greatly benefit from strong ties with alumni who are familiar with the journey.

Our program continues to honor our mission in numerous ways. We have 70 new students in the Class of 2021 that have joined the CU family, and 67 students in the Class of 2019 who graduated in December. Regarding the faculty, Mike Bade, PT, DPT, PhD, OCS, FAAOMPT and Dan Malone, PT, PhD were recently promoted to Associate Professor. Jennifer Stevens-Lapsley, PT, PhD was awarded the prestigious Marion Williams Research Award and Dorothy Briggs Memorial Scientific Inquiry Award by the American Physical Therapy Association. Finally, Cory Christiansen, PT, PhD had quite a year as he was recently promoted to Professor and awarded a 5-year, \$1.9 million R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health.

Thanks to our talented students and faculty, along with committed alumni and university partners, our future remains bright.

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Michael Harris-Love, PT, MPT, DSc, FGSA Program Director Joanne Posner-Mayer Endowed Chair in Physical Therapy Associate Dean for Physical Therapy Education

# welcoming DR. MICHAEL HARRIS-LOVE

Michael Harris-Love, PT, MPT, DSc, FGSA, a clinicianinvestigator with more than 20 years of experience serving federal medical centers and academic programs, was appointed Director of the University of Colorado School of Medicine's Physical Therapy Program and Associate Dean of Physical Therapy Education, starting in August, 2019.

In addition to his duties as a professor within the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Harris-Love will continue his role as a Veterans Affairs (VA) investigator through his affiliation with the Eastern Colorado Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center.

"Dr. Harris-Love will build upon the tremendous growth of the Physical Therapy Program under Dr. Margaret Schenkman's tenure, while exploring new ventures related to education and research," said Venu Akuthota, MD, Chair of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Harris-Love comes from the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center (VAMC) and George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health, bringing extensive clinical research experience to the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. His VA scientific leadership roles included serving as the associate director of the Human Performance Research Unit and co-director of the Polytrauma/Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Research Rehabilitation Fellowship Program at the D.C. VAMC Clinical Research Center.



From L to R: Department Chair Venu Akuthota, Michael Harris-Love and School of Medicine Dean, John Reilly



Michael Harris-Love with Margaret Schenkman

A committed advocate of rehabilitation science training, he helped to establish both the postdoctoral training program and the Skeletal Muscle Laboratory at his VA medical center. Before his faculty appointment at George Washington University, Harris-Love spent time at universities in Virginia, Maryland and Indiana.

"My time working in public and private institutions, federal and university laboratories, and entry-level and post-professional education may help me to address the needs of the program and effectively build partnerships at the Anschutz Medical Campus," said Harris-Love.

"My goals include building our physical therapy residency programs, increasing our efforts to support rural PT practice, and better serving Colorado students by expanding our educational outreach. This may occur through strategic alliances with CU system partners like the University of Colorado South Denver and the Hybl Sports Medicine and Performance Center at UCCS."

"Addressing the dual challenge of college enrollment trends and cost concerns, while also effectively meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students and patients will require us to cross intercampus divides and truly function as one CU."

Harris-Love is a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and a recipient of the Mayo Clinic Physical Therapy Outstanding Alumnus Award. He succeeds Margaret Schenkman, PT, PhD, FAPTA, who led the CU Physical Therapy Program for 15 years.

# GG

"Dr. Schenkman has been a phenomenal architect of a Physical Therapy Program recognized across the country as a leader in research and innovative curriculum," said Venu Akuthota. "Margaret's legacy of dedication to the profession of physical therapy, the program and University of Colorado community is truly unmatched. While she may be down-sizing, she will continue to have a tremendous presence through her impactful research and instruction."



Margaret Schenkman with Venu Akuthota

# thank you DR. SCHENKMAN

After 15 years at the helm of Program Director, Margaret Schenkman, PT, PhD, FAPTA, has transitioned to the role of Professor. The program and university are incredibly grateful for her leadership, accomplishments and elevating the program on a national level. Schenkman came to the program in 1999 as the Director of Research and Professor. In 2004, she assumed the position of Director, following Carolyn Heriza, PT, EdD, FAPTA.

**2003:** First member of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation to receive NIH R01 funding

**2004:** Implementation of the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree

**2011:** Establishment of a Rehabilitation Science PhD Program

2012: Establishment of a Pediatric Residency

**2012:** Development of the Scholarship & Endowment Board

**2015:** Led a pioneering curriculum reform to include a year-long internship

**2015-2016:** Director of the Rehabilitation Science PhD Program

**2016:** *U.S. News and World Report* places the program as 15th in the nation

- Commitment to establishing a research presence, totaling over \$11 million in funded research as of 2019.
- A prolific scientist, with over 100 peer reviewed publications, many of which relate to people with Parkinson's disease.
- Lead author of the text book, *Neuroscience for Rehabilitation*, book chapters, and author of publicly available videotapes, and several podcasts.
- Served for seven years as Secretary of the Neurology Section of the APTA and four years as a permanent member of an NIH Study Section, which focused on reviewing rehabilitation-related grants.
- Mentored junior faculty and clinicians around the country.
- Increased scholarship disbursement from \$1,000 in 2011-12 to over \$200,000 in 2019-20, with more than \$5 million in total committed funds.
- Critical in the establishment of the Joanne Posner-Mayer Endowed Chair in Physical Therapy, the first in the CU PT Program and one of only a few in the country. This was created specifically to recognize and support the CU PT Program's continued growth and development.

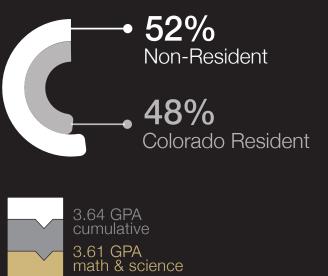
### Scholarship ·

Earlier this year, to celebrate her years of service to the Physical Therapy Program, the university and the physical therapy profession, two anonymous benefactors established the Margaret Schenkman Scholarship Endowment Fund. The scholarship will support outstanding students pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree who also demonstrate academic merit and financial need. The scholarship fund will be administered by the start of 2020 academic year. This new endowment fund is a testament to Margaret's incredible work within the program and the collaboration between the PT Endowment Board and Scholarship Committee. The program would like to thank the benefactors for their vison and incredible generosity. **Support at giving.cu.edu/physicaltherapy** 

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"The first things that strike you on interview day are all the amazing facilities. Not only is campus amazing, but so are the incredible faculty that run our physical therapy program. Though this isn't something I could've known so deeply on that snowy day of January 2018, it is something I have thought every day since. We get the opportunity to learn from a group of individuals who have made amazing contributions to the physical therapy profession. They are the reason I feel successful, supported, and ready to treat patients in our clinical experiences." -Sam Trutmann, Class of 2020

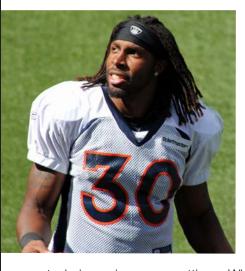


## AVERAGE AGE 25 YEARS OLD

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"My favorite part about this program is how the clinical education is integrated throughout our curriculum. I also really value the community volunteer labs. Both these opportunities allow us students to enhance our communication skills and hands-on skills while continuously growing professionally. I also enjoy how the faculty and students constantly give back to the community around them through various volunteering opportunities." -Aimee St. Martin, Class of 2020

## FORMER NFL PLAYER DAVID BRUTON HOPES TO HELP YOUNG ATHLEES Original article appeared in CU Anschutz Today, authored by Chris Casey



In many ways, the current chapter of David Bruton, Jr.'s, life runs counter to his first career as a strong safety for the Denver Broncos and Super Bowl 50 winner in the National Football League (NFL).

Where he once suited up in raucous NFL stadiums, Bruton now practices massage

techniques in serene settings. Where he played a violent game on rapid-fire instinct, he now takes a thoughtful, analytical approach to evaluating the varying needs of each individual. Where his former employer, the Denver Broncos, expected him to dish out punishment, Bruton's new mission is to become a licensed physical therapist so he can relieve pain and help young athletes get back in the game.

Bruton spent two years completing prerequisites at CU Denver and recently completed his second semester of the CU Doctor of Physical Therapy Program in the CU School of Medicine. The 32-year-old Ohio native played for the Denver Broncos and a final season with the Washington Redskins; the eight-year span was four times longer than the average NFL career.

"The NFL stands for Not For Long, so I definitely had a good run at it," said Bruton, who played collegiately at Notre Dame. "I know in the grand scheme of things, life is a lot more than just between the lines on a football field. I have my family, my dreams and aspirations. Now I'm on to the next chapter."

Bruton frequently volunteers to be the "patient" in class or lab – offering up his shoulders or triceps for exam and evaluation, for example.

Michael "Mac" Mundie, a longtime classmate of Bruton's, enjoys having the former pro athlete in the 70-member PT cohort. "It's definitely interesting working with him – just seeing what his body has gone through in all those years with the Broncos. It makes labs more interesting," he said. Today: Your physical therapy program at CU Anschutz is a departure from playing football. Did you have a turning point where you realized you wanted to retire from pro football and pursue a new career?

DB: In high school, I thought about becoming a physical therapist. Having multiple encounters with different PTs throughout my football career... kind of drove it home. I definitely had my share of concussions ... I don't remember having them at all. The last concussion (with the Redskins) was definitely like an 'a-ha' moment. I realized I have so much more to look forward to ... and I didn't want to worry about hurting myself to the point where I couldn't pursue another career.

#### Today: What do you enjoy about the program?

DB: I enjoy how we get to problem solve on a daily basis. No matter the class, we have to use some form of clinical reasoning as to how we arrived at prescribing a certain treatment, or why we'd use a certain modality, or what muscle tests we'd recommend. Of course, there's a lot more to learn here. They do a great job of making sure that what we're learning in one class is being reinforced in another class.

## Today: Why did you choose CU for your academic program?

DB: A contributing factor was the relationship I built with UCHealth during my tenure with the Broncos (UCHealth is the official health care partner of the Denver Broncos). I knew about their state-of-the-art facilities as well as the different professional disciplines that are on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, and how we would basically be learning from different professionals. That was a big driving force. Also, the professors are very welcoming. They have an open-door policy. They'll dive into any type of question we have during class. We get to learn a lot more than just what's in the text book – it's very engaging. The second- and third-year (students) are also helping to guide us. Everyone is invested in you. They care about you and your well-being and your success.

## Today: What do you envision for your career after graduation in December 2021?

DB: I want to focus on concussion and vestibular rehab, but in a sports-type setting, tailored toward young athletes. I'd like to bridge that gap between the whole family – the child athlete and their parents – and a neurologist or whatever specialist they may get referred to.

# student FEATURES

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"As I've grown older, I am able to see how my experiences as part of a rural community have shaped my life. I've witnessed that even the most minimal healthcare is limited and is often a challenge for rural communities to find and travel to. Thanks to a scholarship, I was able to follow my dream to move across country, explore other types of communities, and gain the knowledge and skills to become a physical therapist; a physical therapist who makes it her business to seek out these forgotten populations in rural America. The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and the rural Rocky Mountain region is the perfect place to learn and become the best version of myself."

- Alison Paul, Class of 2021

"Throughout my time at CU, I appreciated the many professional growth and networking opportunities provided outside of school. These opportunities have helped me with post graduation employment and mentoring that otherwise would not have been possible."

- Pashi Singh, Class of 2019

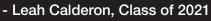




"CU has been such an amazing program to be a part of and I am so thankful to be in the Class of 2020. My favorite thing about the CU PT Program is how much of a family we are. The faculty care deeply about you as a person and as a student, and my classmates are extremely supportive of one another."

- Trevor Dalton, Class of 2020

"As I realized how much CU valued diversity, cultural integration and respect, it further cemented that this was the right decision for me. Diversity means acceptance of all, regardless of race, gender, sexuality or any other characteristic. Being able to attend a school where I know I am accepted and respected is a relief and a blessing."





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## *clinical instructor*, STEVE WESSELHOFF

"Great job with that patient. How did that feel today? Are you doing alright? What do you need to feel prepared and/or confident today? How do you want to debrief? What feedback do you have for me? You got this."

This is how Becky Lotz, Class of 2019, describes her interactions with Steve Wesselhoff, PT, DPT, at UCH Memorial Hospital. "These are all statements and questions I hear from my clinical instructor every day," she said. Lotz nominated Wesselhoff as this year's Clinical Instructor of the Year.

Wesselhoff has been a clinical instructor (CI) for the University of Colorado Physical Therapy Program for the past two years. Graduating from Midwestern University in 2015, Wesselhoff tends to have a close proximity in age to students.

"Exposure to newer evidence based practice does help my ability to connect with students," noted Wesselhoff. "However, evidence based medicine is constantly changing and I often learn just as much from students as they learn from me. I think the fact that I approach the CI/student relationship as mutually beneficial has helped the students have buy-in to their experiences."

Initially, Wesselhoff was on a career path to being an educator. His uncle had a severe cerebrovascular aneurysm, making a full recovery just several weeks after his event. His uncle attributed that to his therapists. "It was that moment that I knew physical therapy was the direction I wanted to go," said Wesselhoff.

After pursuing physical therapy, he realized that teaching was in fact an opportunity for him, not just in educating his patients, but to also educate other young professionals wanting to start their own careers. "As soon as I could, I volunteered to start taking students and have loved every opportunity to instruct ever since," he noted.

"Steve challenges me and encourages me in every situation," said Lotz. "His explicit goal is for me to learn, grow and feel empowered."

Wesselhoff noted that the greatest harm clinical instructors can have is stifling creativity or not providing an enriching environment filled with opportunities to learn about the profession and healthcare in general.

After finding out and discussing a student's learning style, Wesselhoff is committed to adapting to meet their needs and foster internal growth. "Steve has never pressed his professional opinion on me nor guided me towards the 'what he thinks is best' intervention," said Lotz. "Instead, he asks me why I did or would do something and allows me to explain my clinical reasoning completely. He always affirms my clinical decision."

"At the end of the experience, the student needs to be selfsufficient and passionate about our profession; we should be their guiding light," said Wesselhoff.

Wesselhoff also emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary practice and collaboration within the profession.

"I have been so impressed and incredibly grateful for the interprofessional experiences my CI provides for me," said Lotz.

Within the first few weeks of clinic, Wesselhoff organized days for Lotz to shadow the acute care floor, support groups for patients, hospital wide practice council meetings, the medical research board, nursing Magnet meetings, and interdisciplinary oncology rounds to advocate for PT's role, among many others.

"We as clinical instructors need to provide opportunities for our students to learn what other healthcare professionals do and give them the chance to interact with people from all sides of healthcare delivery," said Wesselhoff.

In addition to his professional role in the Rehabilitation Patient Care Unit at Memorial Hospital, Wesselhoff is currently pursuing a Master's of Business Administration in Healthcare Administration. He volunteers on the Board of Directors for Backbones, a nonprofit that helps people with spinal cord injury and their families connect with their communities. He also helps out with marketing for the current Magnet push, is an aspiring triathlete and enjoys hiking, camping and rock climbing.



# FACULTY accounts

Mike Bade, PT, DPT, PhD, OCS, FAAOMPT was promoted to Associate Professor.

**Catherine Bilyeu,** PT, DPT, OCS was accepted to a competitive grants workshop through the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) & American Council of Academic Physical Therapy (ACAPT), Grantsmanship and Mentorship in Education Research.

**Cory Christiansen,** PT, PhD was awarded three research grants, including principal investigator on two newly awarded research grants: 1) a five year, \$1.9 million R01 grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research/NIH/DHHS and 2) a four year, \$0.6 million Merit Award from VA RR&D. These studies will examine novel interventions for improving walking activity and walking patterns after dysvascular amputation. In addition, he is site principal investigator on a new multi-site, five-year, \$3.2 million U01 grant (NIH/NINDS) that supports a clinical trial for the study of endurance exercise for people with Parkinson disease. He was also promoted to Professor.

**Lisa Dannemiller,** PT, DSc, PCS was awarded the Bob Doctor Service Award at the APTA Colorado Chapter meeting. She is a newly elected member of the Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy Nominating Committee.

Robyn Gisbert, PT, DPT received the 2019 Professor Bernie Karshmer Award from the Center for Bioethics and Humanities.

**Michael Harris-Love,** PT, MPT, DSc, FGSA was awarded the Eugene Michaels New Investigator Award by the APTA. He also served as a Special Issue Editor for the Journal of Functional Morphology and Kinesiology. Additionally, the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) recognized him as a 2019 Health Sciences Fellow.

#### Michael Harris-Love Selected as 2019 Gerontological Society of America Fellow

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA), recognized Michael Harris-Love, PT, MPT, DSc, FGSA, as a fellow in 2019. GSA is the nation's oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging the field of aging.

Harris-Love was named a fellow in the Health Sciences Section. He was formally recognized during GSA's 2019 Annual Scientific Meeting in November.

The status of fellow, the highest class of membership within the Society, is an acknowledgment of outstanding and continuing work in gerontology. This recognition can come at varying points in an individual's career and can



acknowledge a broad scope of activity. This includes research, teaching, administration, public service, practice, and notable participation within the organization. The principal mission of the Society, and its 5,500+ members, is to advance the study of aging and disseminate information among scientists, decision makers, and the general public.

Sharon Jordan, MA, PT was awarded the Bob Doctor Service Award at the APTA Colorado Chapter meeting.

**Dana Judd,** PT, DPT, PhD was awarded the University of Colorado School of Medicine Academy's Medical Educator Award for Curriculum Development or Educational Innovation.

**Dawn Magnusson,** PT, PhD participated in the 2019 Symposium on the Culture of Disability in Xi'an China. She was also invited to speak about the role of physical therapists in promoting population health at APTA's Insurer's Forum.

**Daniel Malone,** PT, PhD was promoted to Associate Professor and completed his 2nd and final term as President of the Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Section.

**Mark Manago,** PT, DPT, PhD, NCS was invited to be on the steering committee for the International Symposium in Gait and Balance in Multiple Sclerosis for 2020.

**Amy McDevitt,** PT, DPT, OCS, FAAOMPT was elected to the APTA, Academy of Orthopaedics Awards Committee. Amy and **Paul Mintken**, PT DPT, OCS, FAAOMPT received the AAOMPT Cardon Research Grant for the project: "Dry needing and eccentric-concentric exercise versus traditional physical therapy in the treatment of individuals with bicipital tendinopathy: a pilot study." They were also awarded the Dick Erhard first place overall platform presentation at the AAOMPT conference.

**Paul Mintken** was awarded the James A. Gould Excellence in Teaching Orthopaedic Physical Therapy Award at the 2019 APTA CSM in Washington, D.C. He was also the keynote speaker for the Middle East Manual Therapy Conference.

**Amy Nordon-Craft,** PT, DSc was elected Director-at-Large for the National Interprofessional Education Collaborative for ACAPT.

**R. Joe Palmer,** PT, DPT was accepted and began a PhD Program in Education Leadership Policy & Research at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

**Mike Pascoe,** PhD gave an invited presentation in London at the 19th Congress of the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists (IFAA) on social media and anatomy education. He was also awarded Best Poster Abstract Award at the 7th Annual Education Innovation and Scholarship Symposium, TSP Project title: Nice to know vs. need to know: A survey of PT program stakeholders on essential anatomy content required for excellent clinical care. Pascoe was also an invited keynote speaker at the Transforming the Learning Environment in Biomedical Education symposium at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Margaret Schenkman, PT, PhD, FAPTA delivered the prestigious Anne Shumway-Cook Lectureship at APTA CSM.

**Jennifer Stevens-Lapsley,** PT, PhD was awarded the Marion Williams Research Award and the Dorothy Briggs Memorial Scientific Inquiry Award by the APTA. She was also appointed to the American Physical Therapy Association's Scientific and Practice Affairs Advisory Committee and Chair, Data Safety Monitoring Board for Chronic Low Back Pain in Older Adults: The Role of Co-Existing Hip Impairments.

**Tami Struessel,** PT, DPT, OCS, MTC completed 10 years of service on the State of Colorado Physical Therapy Board/ Advisory Committee through the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA).

# a letter from the PTAA PRESIDENT

2019 was another productive year as the University of Colorado Physical Therapy Alumni Association (PTAA) continues to refine and improve how we assist and engage our valued alumni and current student base. We have implemented a new process to assist with milestone class reunions, updated the alumni website, increased the PTAA social media presence, and found new avenues for supporting current DPT students.

One accomplishment of note this year was the launching of the PT toolkit fund which accomplishes two primary goals. First, it assists in offsetting the costs of the toolkits (goniometers, blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, reflex hammer, etc.) for the PT program. Secondly, and



perhaps more importantly, it gives our alumni the opportunity to provide a tangible and valuable gift to an incoming student which will serve them not just during their time on campus, but also as they venture into clinical practice post-graduation. If you have not donated to this fund yet, I would strongly suggest considering it.

I would be remiss if I did not take the time to put in a plug for the upcoming APTA Combined Sections Meeting in Denver (February 12-15, 2020). This event will provide a great opportunity for alumni and students to network and learn together right in the backyard of our alma mater. Please mark your calendars for the evening of February 13 as the PTAA will be co-hosting a complimentary Alumni and Friends reception. This event will include: an introduction of our new Program Director, Dr. Michael Harris-Love, an awarding of the 2019 Alumni of the Year Award, and a celebration of the University of Colorado Physical Therapy Program. We certainly hope to see you there, be sure to check your emails, the PT program's website, and social media accounts for updates and details.

Lastly, the PTAA would not be able to accomplish or pursue the goals we have set forth if it were not for time and hard work invested by those in the PTAA Board, the physical therapy program and our alumni. I am grateful for your efforts and appreciative of your dedication.

If you are not currently involved and would like to be, know that we will always welcome new perspectives, whether you want to join the board, or simply provide a suggestion. You can contact the PTAA at cupt.alumni@ucdenver.edu.

I look forward to hopefully seeing you at our CSM reception, and value the opportunity to serve you.

Sincerely,

Tim Loar, PT, DPT, Class of 2016D President, University of Colorado Physical Therapy Alumni Assocation

# -CLASS OF 2019

On December 13, 2019 the Physical Therapy Program celebrated the Class of 2019 with a convocation ceremony for 67 graduates, followed by the Fall Commencement Ceremony the following day alongside other programs within the University.

In addition to program and university leadership, Robyn Gisbert, PT, DPT, delivered a convocation address which drew a standing ovation. Early on, Gisbert had the graduates take a minute of silent reflection, giving gratitude and thankfulness to all who encouraged the graduates along their journey.

Gisbert emphasized that, "Patients are more than muscles, more than bones, patients are not diagnoses or prognoses, they are not complex problems, they are people, and people have hopes, dreams, and experience fear and loss."

She also noted that as physical therapists the graduates will "need courage, humility and will need vulnerability" and "in your work with patients, let there be silence, listen."

Former Program Director, Margaret Schenkman, was honored with the Cerasoli Award for Outstanding Contributions to Physical Therapy Education.

In addition, program awards were presented during the convocation, honoring student achievement and service.

A special congratulations to the following graduates who were recognized:

Rebecca Altic

Outstanding Doctor of Physical Therapy Student

Zachary Davis Altruism Award, Richard D. Krugman Award

Hayley Kerley Capstone Award Mariel Little Mary Gosnell Award

Phillip Turner Herb Levy Award

Nicole Schremp National Physical Therapy Student Honor Society







1- Phillip Turner with Assistant Professor Lisa Dannemiller 2- Mariel Little with Senior Instructor Catherine Bilyeu

3- Rebecca Altic with Assistant Professor Amy McDevitt











1- Zachary Davis with Senior Instructor Wendy Kriekels 2- Nicole Schremp with Senior Instructor Catherine Bilyeu 3- Robyn Gisbert during her convocation address



4- Associate Professor Jenny Rodriguez with Margaret Schenkman5- Zachary Davis with Associate Professor Amy Nordon-Craft



As a former competitive figure skater, Jenna Walton, PT, DPT, OCS, was recently able to bring that part of her life into her role as a physical therapist, volunteering with the US Figure Skating Team as medical personnel.

Walton competed competitively for almost 20 years, including collegiately at the University of Denver. The wear and tear took its toll, forcing Walton to undergo four hip surgeries, all while she was a Doctor of Physical Therapy student.

Walton's physical therapist throughout those recoveries was Joy Anderson, who has been actively involved with the US Team for several years. "During my rehab, we always talked about how cool it would be to eventually work with figure skaters given my athletic history," said Walton. "I did think that this would be quite the reach for me, especially so early in my career." The stars certainly aligned for her, as the implementation of Safe Sport practices created a need for additional medical personnel for US Figure Skating.

Walton was able to get connected, with her most recent involvement taking her to Moscow. As a physical therapist, Walton provides treatment of any acute or chronic injuries needed by the athletes. She is present rink-side for all practices, competition events and exhibitions, and accompanies athletes during antidoping testing processes.

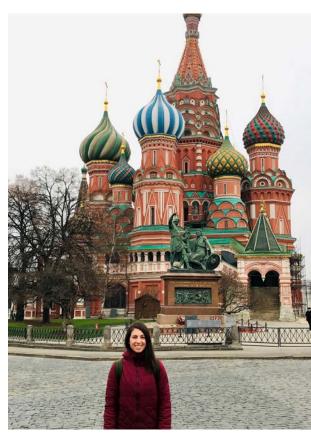
Being a volunteer position, Walton had to find a way to balance her new involvement with her existing full-time job. "I worked extra hours before my departure to make up for some of the time I would be gone, but my supervisors were incredibly supportive of this opportunity, making it an easier endeavor," she said.

"It has been so much fun to return to the sport I love from a different perspective," said Walton. She plans to continue her involvement with international travel once or twice a year, and volunteering with local trainings when possible.

Walton currently works for UCHealth Steadman Hawkins at Inverness, primarily working with orthopedics/sports medicine and is highly involved with the hip team and performing arts athletes. Alongside her colleague Christina Haugland, she also helped to establish the women's health/pelvic floor physical therapy program at the clinic.

The CU Physical Therapy Program's model of interdisciplinary education opportunities was a driving factor for Walton. "Collaboration and teamwork across disciplines is so incredibly important in healthcare and something that not all students have the chance to actively practice and participate in prior to clinical experiences."





Once obtaining her degree at the University of Colorado, Walton went on to residency training in orthopedics at the University of Utah. After completing her board certification in orthopedics, she began her pelvic floor certification track through the American Physical Therapy Association. She will be submitting her final case report in 2020 as a candidate for the Certificate of Achievement in Pelvic Physical Therapy (CAPP).



From outpatient to Air Force Base, alumna Tara Fisher's, PT, DPT, OCS, MTC, CSCS, career path may seem a bit untraditional, but it's exactly what she was working towards. After 11 years in outpatient settings, Fisher is currently a contract physical therapist at Patrick Air Force Base (PFAB), located between Satellite Beach and Cocoa Beach on the east coast of Florida.

After moving to Florida for a training opportunity for her husband, Fisher was able to work in a hospital-based outpatient clinic which provided benefits and stability for her young family.

"I was used to working with a healthy, active sports population in Colorado, to include treating lots of CrossFitters, MMA, police, and firefighters," noted Fisher. The more rural Florida hospital-based outpatient population didn't bring the same level of activeness and was overall more medically complex. "I continued to pursue working with CrossFitters, weightlifters and tactical athletes through my local community, as well as pursuing continuing education opportunities to stay current and advance my professional knowledge in these fields," she noted.

As Fisher's family life started to settle down, her plan was to decrease clinical hours and put more time into her own business working with local fitness and tactical athletes. "I happened to receive an email with a job posting for a physical therapist at PAFB, which was less than 10 minutes from home," said Fisher.

As she investigated the job opportunity, she learned about the Preservation of the Force and Family Program, which embeds healthcare workers in military special operations units to provide care for their physical and mental health needs. The mission of the program is to build and implement a holistic approach to address the pressure on service members, implementing innovative, valuable solutions aimed at improving the short and long-term well-being.

The physical therapist position is part of a team that includes a strength coach, athletic trainer and social worker, and involved





setting this up as a new program for the pararescue squadron at PAFB. "I had all of the required credentials and experience, it was as though the job description was written for me as a dream job," said Fisher.

Fisher noted, "This particular program is funded under the concept of investing in the maintenance of their human operators in the same way aircraft and weapons systems require ongoing maintenance for optimal performance.

Fisher is now a civilian contractor, who is credentialed and has the privileges of a military PT, allowing her to order diagnostics and perform dry needling. Fisher said, "My position is very non-standard in terms of a clinical physical therapist, and this is still an adjustment and evolving work in progress." She is a member of the 308th rescue squadron, which is an Air Force Reserve Guardian Angel unit. Their mission is combat rescue "that others may live." The special operators are pararescuemen and parajumpers who are trained in scuba, paramedics, and survival techniques. They also provide rescue and recovery support for NASA and in national emergencies such as hurricanes.

## "Opportunity doesn't knock. It presents itself when you beat down the door." - Kyle Chandler

"I provide care to these tactical athletes in a manner similar to the model of a professional sports program," said Fisher. "I am involved with their workouts, encouraged to be out there observing jumps and training operations, provide movement screenings, and treat everything from sore muscles to sprains/ strains to chronic back pain to post-operative conditions."

Fisher noted the incredibly high level of mutual respect that she gains from her role. "My population is highly motivated and appreciative of the care they receive. I am honored every day to be able to support such an incredible group and meaningful mission," she said.

"This role is a dream job for me, but I could not be here without the work I put in and the experience I gained from many years in more traditional settings." Throughout her career, Fisher pursued and sought out continuing education opportunities and professional development for things that interested her and about which she felt passionate.

"While in some ways it seemed like this opportunity fell in my lap, in reality I had been working towards this my whole career." Fisher offers advice through a quote by Kyle Chandler, "Opportunity doesn't knock. It presents itself when you beat down the door."

# message from the chair of the SCHOLAKSHIP & ENDOWMENT BUARD (SEB)

#### Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to 2020, and a celebration of physical therapists visiting Denver for the Combined Sections Meeting in February. I am honored to write to each of you as the Chair of the Scholarship and Endowment Board. This Board, comprised of many leaders in physical therapy and business in Denver and nationally, will meet prior to the CSM on February 11 on the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, Colorado. The Board is so thankful to the alumni who have helped us achieve a \$5 million goal in contributions and commitments, set five years ago. We set this goal because of the burden of debt experienced by our students, and students across the country. After hearing from our students that the burden of debt is still a challenge as they graduate and join our profession, we've set another stretch goal at our last Board meeting, of raising \$3 million more.

We celebrated a terrific year after receiving a wonderful contribution from one of our Board members, alumna Joanne Posner Mayer, Class of 1973, to fund the Joanne Posner-Mayer Endowed Chair in Physical Therapy. Michael Harris-Love, PT, MPT, DSc, FGSA, is the first recipient of this chair, with a celebration held this past November. Please do attend the University of Colorado CSM Reception, to be held on Thursday, February 13, from 7-9 p.m., to welcome Michael as the new Director, to thank Margaret Schenkman for her leadership during her tenure as Director, and to meet many of our present students, who will be attending CSM.

This letter is co-written with one of the present students, David Romero, who serves as a student representative on the Scholarship and Endowment Board. David is a second year student, who is a graduate of The Ohio State University and received a Diversity Scholarship his first year at CU. His words so outweigh my thanks to each of you!

Colleen Kigin, PT, DPT, MS, MPA, FAPTA *Clinical Professor, Physical Therapy Program Chair, Scholarship and Endowment Advisory Board* 





1- Back row, L to R: John Reilly, Venu Akuthota, Chancellor Donald Elliman, Front row, L to R: Michael Harris-Love, Joanne Posner-Mayer, Bill Silberstein, Jason Mayer. 2- Guests at the Chair celebration. 3- Joanne Posner-Mayer with Michael Harris-Love and Lauren Y. Casteel, President and CEO at The Women's Foundation of Colorado.

I want to welcome all those who will be attending CSM in February, and I hope to meet as many of you as possible at CSM or other future events. For those not able to attend, I send my greetings and thanks for all your support for the scholarships many of us receive. I knew CU was going to be a special place to attend, and after completing a year and a half of the program, I realize I am indeed receiving an exceptional education, experience and solid foundation to my career. It is not only the professors that make the program so solid, but the support and contributions from alumni, both advisory and financially. The creation and growth of scholarships have been critical to me and my fellow students in being able to attend the program. The reduced financial burden has allowed me time to focus on my education and to grow through participation in outreach programs which include Punching for Parkinson's, the Stout Street Clinic for individuals suffering from homelessness, and the Coalition for the Homeless.



Receiving this scholarship has been a financial benefit, a career benefit and a personal benefit for which I am immensely grateful. As a future alumnus, I hope I am able to give back just as all of you have, so that the future of our profession is achieved with less burden and more opportunity to learn. Thank you!

David Romero, Class of 2020

## *celebrating the establishment of the* JOANNE POSNER-MAYER ENDOWED CHAIR



#### More about Joanne

After earning her degree at CU in 1973, Posner-Mayer worked for more than six years in Switzerland where she became acquainted with the use of "Swiss Balls" in physical therapy. Ten years after returning to the United States, she left clinical practice to lecture and train others on the orthopedic and sports uses of the ball. Joanne Posner-Mayer then embarked upon an entrepreneurial journey in the private sector, founding Ball Dynamics International, Inc. in 1991 – meeting the growing market demand she created through her teaching. She subsequently pioneered the use of the Swiss Balls in the fitness market through her second company, Fitball, Inc.

As a first-generation college graduate and the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, Joanne Posner-Mayer has a profound appreciation for the University of Colorado and the program. The Joanne Posner-Mayer Endowed Chair will honor all that she has accomplished and the lives she has touched through education, clinical practice, entrepreneurship and her personal philanthropy. We are pleased to announce the establishment of the Joanne Posner-Mayer Endowed Chair in Physical Therapy at the University of Colorado School of Medicine Anschutz Medical Campus. This Chair is made possible with generous commitments from alumna, philanthropist and physical therapy entrepreneur Joanne Posner-Mayer, Class of 1973, and the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. This endowed chair is the first in the CU PT Program and one of only a few in the country; it was created specifically to recognize and support the CU PT Program's continued growth and development.

Through this philanthropic support, talented faculty leaders will have the valuable resources they need to keep the University of Colorado Physical Therapy Program at the forefront of innovation and support future generations of physical therapists.

"It's hard to acknowledge the privilege of having an endowed chair without first recognizing the generosity of Joanne and the strong advocacy of the Office of Advancement," noted inaugural Chair recipient, Dr. Michael Harris-Love. "But more than that, this generous gift is in many ways a reflection of the growth and maturity of the physical therapy profession itself."

Posner-Mayer has been a longtime supporter of the program, including developing named scholarships that have been instrumental in recruiting students, as well as hosting an annual scholarship reception.

"It is a wonderful milestone for the CU PT Program, and we are so fortunate to have benefactors like Joanne as well as institutional support from the CU School of Medicine and the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation," remarked Department Chair Dr. Venu Akuthota.

"The endowment is a living thing with roots that are bound to this campus, helping to sustain the program long after our time ends, and new leaders emerge to take the reins," noted Harris-Love. "Thanks to the commitment of people like Joanne, and the vision of people like our immediate-past Director, Margaret Schenkman, that vision of the future starts today."

The establishment of the Joanne Posner-Mayer Endowed Chair in Physical Therapy would not have been possible without the generosity and vision of Joanne Posner-Mayer, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Chair Venu Akuthota, MD, and Dean John J. Reilly, Jr., MD, and in close partnership with Travis Leiker and Karen Aarestad in the CU Anschutz Office of Advancement.

#### What is an endowed chair?

An endowed chair is a position permanently paid for with the revenue from an endowment fund specifically set up for that purpose. Typically, the position is designated to be in a certain department. The donor might be allowed to name the position. The endowed chair is structured so that the principal value is kept intact, while the investment income or a small part of the principal is available for use each year.

## LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE WITH PHYSICAL THERAPISTS inspires patient to give back

Colleen Rapp has worked as a journeyman and press operator at *The Denver Post* for more than 30 years. Decades of physically demanding work plagued her with back, shoulder and knee injuries as well as significant chronic pain, ultimately requiring surgery on her shoulder. Starting in 2014, she turned to physical therapist and University of Colorado faculty member Tami Struessel, PT, DPT, OCS, MTC, for care. They currently work together at PhysioPro in Denver.

Colleen reflected, "Life-changing care, to me, is defined as care that influences great changes in self." From the beginning, Tami approached Colleen's treatment from the whole-person perspective. "In addition to my treatment, Tami showed me online anatomy classes so I could learn muscle groups and have a better understanding of my body," she said. Colleen's outlook on maintaining a healthy lifestyle began to shift as Tami introduced her to things like stress reduction, breathing and meditation, in an effort to reduce the toll of injury on her physical and mental health. They have also worked together to reduce Colleen's risk of injury at work. "Tami has taught me the concept of working smarter, not harder," said Colleen.

"For years, I viewed my work as my exercise," she said. Through the help of Tami, Colleen lost 30 pounds, has better eating habits and consistently exercises. "I feel like a whole new person and I have a newfound appreciation for exercise and for keeping my body strong," Colleen added. "Tami really wants to see her patients succeed, it matters to her."

Tami noted, "Colleen is one of those patients who truly embraces the idea of becoming stronger and healthier, and is a huge believer in physical therapy."

Admittedly, Colleen wasn't fully aware of physical therapy and its importance when she was first referred. She learned to move, exercise, and work differently and realizes now that there were many elements of physical therapy beyond what she initially thought. "I realized that physical therapy was the most important thing in between the points of injury and health," she said.





Colleen's experience and Tami's impact was so life-changing that Colleen felt inclined to give back. With Tami being a Professor for the University of Colorado Physical Therapy Program, Colleen felt the best way to honor her was to support funding for student scholarships. Colleen has initiated a number of fundraisers to benefit CU physical therapy student scholarships, supporting future leaders in physical therapy.

Most recently, Colleen put together a benefit concert. "I believed that if I could bring recognition to such a great program, the impact could be incredible," noted Colleen. The Hazel Miller Band performed in September, with proceeds going to the physical therapy scholarship fund. The event raised more than \$3,000 for scholarships. During the concert, two scholarship recipients spoke about the impact that financial relief has had on their pursuit of a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. "When I got to hear what impact these scholarships are having and how grateful they are, it gives me a deep sense of accomplishment."

Colleen is not only motivated to improve herself and her quality of life, but strives to ensure the availability of funds to help the next generation of physical therapists impact their own patients.

"I believe there is a full circle of impact from student to physical therapist to patient," she said. "I know that my efforts will impact a student's life just like Dr. Struessel has impacted mine," added Colleen.

# LEVY FAMILY CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR

Original article appeared in CU Anschutz Philanthropy Publication Momentum, written by Devin Lynn

In 1948, the CU Physical Therapy Program at the CU School of Medicine graduated its first class of six students. Among those graduates was Herbert Levy, who began a family tradition that would span generations. Herbert led a successful physical therapy practice in Denver and credited CU with launching his career.

Herbert's son, Andrew, was the next to enroll in the CU Physical Therapy Program, earning a bachelor's degree in 1977. He was inspired to pursue physical therapy by his father. Andrew initially graduated from Colorado College with a degree in biology. He then worked as a research assistant with National Jewish Health. Andrew guickly realized that he wanted to connect with people in a clinical setting, rather than spend his days in the laboratory, and decided on physical therapy because of his desire to help people regain their mobility. "If I was going to attend physical therapy school, I was going to CU," said Andrew. "I wanted to follow my father's legacy." Andrew's brother, Hal, also received his physical therapy and medical degrees from the CU School of Medicine.

Brent chose CU for several reasons. "I always had an affinity to CU. My grandfather, uncle and dad all graduated from the CU School of Medicine," he said. In addition, when Brent was looking at medical schools, the CU Anschutz Medical Campus was nearing completion, so he was one of the first classes to benefit from state-of-the-art training facilities.

"During my third-year medical school rotations, I was exposed to a lot," Brent said. "I learned that I wanted to be in a fast-paced environment with different cases. The variety in emergency medicine is amazing. You have to prepare for everything."

In 2017, Brent, along with his father, Andrew, aunt Stephanie, uncle Hal and other Levy family members, created the Herbert J. and Sandy Levy Endowed Memorial Fund to celebrate the legacy of the man who started it all and to create opportunities for future leaders in physical therapy.

"My father took great pride in what he was able to accomplish as a result of the education he received at CU," said Andrew. "This scholarship is our way of continuing my parents' legacy and giving back to the school that has given us so much."

For Brent, the scholarship represents a way to honor family history. "My grandfather, Herbert, was the one who inspired me to go into health care, so it just made sense to give back in his name," he said. "All of us recognize how fortunate we were to go to such an outstanding school and be part of the CU community. That path was set by my grandfather and it is our view that we should help create opportunities for others."

"This scholarship is our way of continuing my parents" legacy and giving back to the school that has given us so much."

Andrew's son, Brent, followed his family to the CU School of Medicine to pursue a medical degree. After graduation in 2012, he completed his residency at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire, and entered a private emergency medicine practice, primarily at Rose Medical Center in Denver. "Most of my family is in Colorado, so the goal was always to move back and be close to home after my residency," he said.



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