

FALL 2023

EMORY Physical Therapy

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Celebrating the People Who Make the Emory Division of PT Exceptional

Legendary American Poet and Philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

This year's issue of *Emory Physical Therapy* celebrates some of the exceptional people within the Emory Division of Physical Therapy who are trailblazers both nationally and globally in physical therapy. Our faculty was a major reason why the director position was so appealing to me more than a year ago when I moved to Emory from Syracuse, NY. They help make our division one of the most prestigious PT academic programs in the country.

I know you will enjoy getting to meet the brilliant Emory Department of Rehabilitation Medicine Professor Edelle (Edee) Field-Fote, PT, PhD, FAPTA, FASIA, in the cover story. Earlier this year, Edee reached the pinnacle of our profession when she was chosen to deliver the 54th Mary McMillan Lecture at the American Physical Therapy Association's annual conference. Edee, who I am proud to say has been a dear friend of mine since 2010 when we began working together on the *Journal of Neurologic Physical Therapy*, joins Emory Department of Medicine Professor Steve Wolf, PT, PhD, FAPTA, as the second member of our faculty to have delivered the lecture. As you will read, Edee's relentless drive for breakthroughs in rehabilitation research is surpassed only by her compassion for people who have experienced spinal cord injuries. Edee is a true pioneer in our field and our division is so fortunate to have her expertise and leadership.

I'm also pleased to celebrate the incredible career of former long-time Department of Rehabilitation Medicine Professor Bruce Greenfield, PT, MA, PhD, FNAP, FAPTA, who retired in September after more than 28 years at the Emory Division of Physical Therapy. You would be hard-pressed to find anyone in our field who has reached the pinnacle in two very different areas — in Bruce's case, he started off and excelled in orthopedics and later in his career, transitioned to a national thought leader in clinical ethics. What's even more impressive is how universally admired and respected Bruce is by our entire division faculty and student body. I wish him nothing but the best in his well-deserved retirement. What a tremendous impact he has made!

And finally, we would like to introduce you to the newest member of our faculty who, in 2018, only five years after graduating from the Emory

Division of Physical Therapy, had the courage to collaborate with a fellow Emory PT graduate to directly address the diversity crisis in our field. Department of Rehabilitation Medicine Assistant Professor DeAndrea Bullock Melvey, PT, DPT, co-founded the National Association of Black Physical Therapists which now has more than 700 members. She is doing an amazing job of promoting our profession to young Black students who previously knew little about the PT field. At Emory, DeAndrea does a great job of ensuring that our students have optimal clinical rotation experiences with one of Emory's several clinical partners across the nation and is involved in several division committees to help ensure that we can attract and retain a qualified student body that reflects the diversity around us. DeAndrea is an asset to our division and I encourage you to learn more about her on page 8.

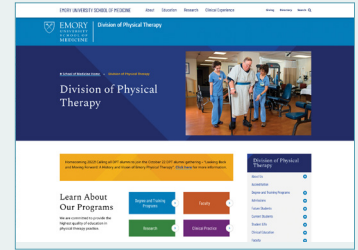
In the center spread of the magazine, please read the fascinating coverage of our division's ongoing work in the fast-evolving world of artificial intelligence (AI). Because physical therapy is a field where human touch and relationships are foundational to the healing process, some may worry that AI threatens those critical elements. I encourage you to read this article to learn how our faculty researchers are investigating how AI can increase access to care in underserved areas and actually enhance the patient/therapist relationship by reducing the administrative burden and allowing therapists more quality time with their patients.

As we craft the vision for the new Center for Physical Therapy and Movement Science which will serve as the storehouse for our AI efforts, know that we are boldly entering this world with the commitment to be at the cutting edge of this revolution while at the same time, protecting and enhancing the patient/therapist relationship. As both a researcher and leader, I am excited by the potential that AI offers and look forward to updating readers on this transformational work that Emory University and the Division of Physical Therapy are known for.

I hope you enjoy this publication and sincerely thank you for your engagement as a student, alumni, faculty, staff and friend to make the Emory Division of Physical Therapy one of the best PT training and research centers in the world.

George Fulk, PT, PhD, FAPTA
Professor and Director

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On the Cover

Emory Division of Physical Therapy Professor Edelle Field-Fote stands inside the Emory School of Medicine Building.

'SHE'S DONE IT ALL' EMORY'S EDELLE FIELD-FOTE CONTINUES REMARKABLE CAREER DELIVERING PRESTIGIOUS MCMILLAN LECTURE

For Emory Division of Physical Therapy Professor Edelle (Edee) Field-Fote, PT, PhD, FAPTA, FASIA, the most recent presenter of the American Physical Therapy Association's prestigious Mary McMillan Lecture, her brilliant career in research started with turtles.

While getting her PhD from Washington University in St. Louis in the early 1990s, Field-Fote became fascinated by involuntary scratching behaviors in turtles generated by the spinal cord. At the time, her passion for research using turtles didn't quite take the rehabilitation research world by storm. While her peers were being invited to physical therapy conferences to give talks about their research, her own proposal for a poster at the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) was declined.

"I had never heard of the WCPT declining a poster proposal," Field-Fote said. "I started to despair that nobody was interested in a physical therapist who was well trained in understanding scratching behaviors in a turtle."

Her break came at a conference where she was introduced to an investigator whose manuscript on involuntary stepping in a person with spinal cord injury (SCI) had just been accepted for publication. The new connection validated her passion and the investigator became Field-Fote's post doc advisor, launching her on a journey that would take her from turtle scratching to locomotor training as an intervention for improving walking function in people with SCI.



In one of her early projects, she learned that for people with SCI, training that involves walking on the ground is more beneficial than training that involves walking on a treadmill. Walking on the ground requires the brain to be activated in ways that doesn't happen when walking on a treadmill, and in turn, the brain is then better able to activate the spinal circuits involved in walking.

"And so, I started to think: Maybe we need to do a better job of focusing on training that propels those brain signals down to the spinal cord to move the limbs for walking," Field-Fote said. "And that's when I started focusing on the brain."

For the relentless Field-Fote, findings from one research project spawned another project and through a series of published papers, she began to carve out a name for herself for her exhaustive research of walking and hand functions in people with SCI.

In February of this year, after delivering a riveting 50-minute lecture titled "Mastering Our Magic in the Evolution Toward Precision Practice" on perhaps the biggest stage in the entire physical therapy field — the coveted 54th Mary McMillan Lecture (watch full lecture at <https://youtu.be/vmfveQ7ELBE>) — no one is snickering anymore about her interest in turtle scratching.

Today, Edelle Field-Fote, among many other duties, serves as the director of graduate studies for the Emory Division of Physical Therapy's DPT/PhD dual-degree program — a collaboration with Georgia Tech's program in applied physiology — and she leads the spinal injury cord research program at Shepherd Center in Atlanta. She is unquestionably one of the most respected, well-known rehabilitation science researchers in the world.



An Awkward Beginning to a Valued Friendship

Those who know Field-Fote well describe her as much more than a brilliant researcher. She's regarded as an intense, tenacious workaholic with a tender side driven by the idea of giving hope to people who suddenly find themselves immobile and in despair after experiencing an SCI.

Legendary Emory Division of Physical Therapy Professor Steven Wolf, PT, PhD, FAPTA, who delivered the McMillan Lecture in 2002, marvels at Field-Fote's career.

"I can't even begin to name all of the things that she's done," Wolf said. "She's done it all."

While Wolf considers Field-Fote a great friend today, he laughingly recalls his first recollection of her at a national meeting in the late 1990s that was awkward but underscored what a force of nature Field-Fote is.

"It was the combined sections meeting in 1997 in Dallas and I was walking down a hallway with a woman who was a project officer on the study section for which I served at the Medical Rehabilitation Research at the National Institutes of Health," Wolf explained. "We're walking and this young woman comes out of nowhere and stops us and she says in a very stern voice, 'What is it about my grant that you didn't like?' I was just stunned. We were both stunned. When you're a study section member, you're taught that you don't respond to people who approach you. You refer them to the administration if they have any questions.

"And she went on saying, 'I can tell by the way the comments are written that you had to be one of the reviewers and I want to know, beyond what you've written, what's wrong and why didn't I get funded?' So, I didn't say anything and just said, 'I think you're going to have to talk to the administration if you have some concerns. It's not appropriate for me to be having this discussion with you.' That was my first encounter with her."

Ironically, Field-Fote went on to chair the same study section and Wolf, who became her mentor, brought the 1997 interaction up to Field-Fote more than 20 years later.

"I said to her, 'You now know something you didn't know in 1997 that study section members do not discuss individual projects with anyone,'" Wolf recalled. "She said, 'I know. I know. I remember that was not appropriate, but I was really eager.'"

Wolf later revealed to Field-Fote another truth about the unfunded proposal in question.

"I said to her, 'Enough time has gone by for me to tell you that while I listened very intently to all you had to say about your concerns of my review of your grant, I can tell you now I was not one of the reviewers,'" he said.



Field-Fote stands with her husband, Alek (left), and son, Tray (right), after delivering the 54th Mary McMillan Lecture in February.

Wolf can laugh at the interaction many years ago because, today, he is one of Field-Fote's biggest fans. He was instrumental in nominating her for the McMillan Lecture and when discussing her career, uses superlatives like "outstanding," "terrific" and "all encompassing."

He's especially proud of the way that Field-Fote invests in tomorrow's generation of rehabilitation researchers. Through her role as co-principal investigator of the national Training in Grantsmanship for Rehabilitation Research (TIGRR) — of which Wolf is a founding member — TIGRR has secured 20 years of federal funding to train emerging rehabilitation researchers to be successful in obtaining grant research support.

While Wolf credits Field-Fote's leadership for positioning TIGRR as a "showcase for rehabilitation research" in which mentees from years ago are now faculty members, Field-Fote's hope is that she is remembered years from now for "helping rehabilitation professionals to become scientists."

She especially values her role as a mentor to young women in the field.

"We are fortunate in rehabilitation science in that, unlike other areas of science, it's much more equitable in terms of women's representation," Field-Fote said. "So many rehabilitation professionals and therefore, those who pursue the PhD, are women. I really want to be a good role model for women in rehabilitation science. And because of that, I've taken every opportunity to have visibility."

Discovering the 'Magic' of Physical Therapy

Field-Fote, whose mother was a licensed practical nurse, remembers volunteering at the local nursing home as a teenager, working with physical therapists and likening the profession to magic (the same word used in the title of her McMillan Lecture) because of its ability to restore movement in people with disability. It was there that her passion for physical therapy was born.

She earned her undergraduate and Master of Science degrees from the University of Miami (UM) and after getting her PhD in St. Louis, returned to UM for her postdoctoral work at the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, one of the premier spinal cord research institutions in the world.

While serving as an investigator in Miami working on high-visibility projects related to walking and hand function, Field-Fote's desire to work directly with clinicians grew but was limited by the lab-based research focus

at her center. She took a sabbatical and did a year-long professorship at the Guttmann Institute for Neurorehabilitation in Barcelona, Spain.

"The Guttmann Institute is a rehabilitation hospital with a very strong research department, and I realized that you really could do high-level research at a rehab hospital," she said.

For Field-Fote, the job overtures that Shepherd Center had made to her in the past suddenly made sense. Having cultivated a relationship with Wolf who is an icon in the rehabilitation community, she was hopeful that she could move to Atlanta and perform research at Shepherd while establishing an academic affiliation with Emory.

"At that time, the person who was the director of the Emory Division of Physical Therapy had developed this idea in collaboration with Georgia Tech that students who were getting their clinical degree in physical therapy could also get a PhD through a dual-degree program," she explained. "I had directed a PhD program at the University of Miami's physical therapy program and so it was really good timing to combine my expertise in leading a PhD program with the needs of both Emory and Georgia Tech. It all worked out just perfectly and here we are today."

Field-Fote moved to Atlanta in 2014 and works with PhD students who want to contribute to rehabilitation science.

"I train them how to think about science, how to do science, and how to write grants in a way that convinces other people that their idea is a good one so they can get funding to do the work," she said. "I try to help them become the next generation of rehabilitation scientists."

At Shepherd Center, she uses her research to help people with SCI at one of the leading neurorehabilitation facilities in the world.

"At Shepherd, my research team uses a pragmatic approach for many of our studies, where we integrate the research into clinical practice," Field-Fote explained. "One of the barriers to clinical research is that clinicians have limited time, so after a patient has consented to be a participant in our study, we identify the time they are scheduled for therapy. Then, a member of the research team comes down from the lab and does the experimental intervention on top of the patient's regular therapy, so it doesn't take time from the clinician."

"We've been able to pull together the research and the clinical component and answer questions about whether or not interventions are helpful early after SCI. This capitalizes on that phase of injury when people have the greatest potential for improvement in their function."

Debbie Backus, PT, PhD, FACRM, Shepherd Center's vice president of research and innovation who has known Field-Fote for more than 30 years, calls her "a giant in the field of physical therapy."

"She has laid the groundwork for upper limb rehab, for rigorous research in physical therapy maintaining the highest standards of ethics and research," Backus said. "She has shaped the way research should be done in physical therapy to truly have an impact."

You Can Still Enjoy Holland

Field-Fote's decorated research career includes serving as editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Neurologic Physical Therapy* for 12 years and as the co-lead principal investigator on a recent large international study to assess the value of transcutaneous spinal stimulation over the cervical spinal cord to improve hand function in people with SCI. Despite these impressive accomplishments, Field-Fote is a physical therapist at heart.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



From Women's Tennis Tour to Thriving PT Clinic, Karen Davis Warren Reflects on 30 Years in PT

1993 Emory Division of Physical Therapy graduate Karen Davis Warren, PT, MPT, OCS, ATC, CSCS, loves the fact that when patients see her Emory diploma on the wall, she has instant credibility.

"When you start practicing in Atlanta with that Emory degree, whether people know it or not, they feel better because they know what a great institution Emory is and how rigorous its academic programs are," she said.

During the last 30 years, Warren, founder of the Atlanta-based One on One Physical Therapy, has used a little Emory brand recognition and a whole lot of grit to carve out a successful career that has included a globe-trotting year as a PT with the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour and the creation of a practice that has grown to 10 PTs (five are Emory graduates) and six support staff.

Many might view the first 10 years of her PT career as nondescript. But Warren will tell you that each step — from her early days of working in a PT clinic, to serving as an athletic trainer at Friday night high school football games, to six years working for two orthopedic surgeons who let her start and lead the PT side of their practice — was integral in preparing her for the next challenge.

Ten years after graduating from Emory in 2003, she was offered a unique opportunity to travel the world as a primary healthcare provider for the WTA Tour that would take her to 19 annual tournaments — including all four Grand Slam tournaments — and trips to places like Bali, Tokyo and Rome.

The workdays were often 12 to 14 hours, and the pay didn't reflect the time commitment, but Warren says the experience was priceless and helped take her skillset to the next level.

"When you're on the court, ESPN cameras are on you and you have exactly three minutes to treat that athlete so that they can continue to play. You have to act fast," she said. "When one of the best players in the world is playing in an hour in Arthur Ashe Stadium at the US Open and she can't turn her neck, you have to pull it together quickly."

Having spent 35 weeks on the road in 2003, Warren left her full-time position at WTA with a desire to marry, start a family and create her own PT practice. She would continue to work occasional tournaments for the tennis tour on a part-time basis for the next five years.

"For me, the most memorable part of that time was how nice all the athletes were — from Martina Navratilova to the Williams sisters," Warren said. "Whether they were number one or number 200 in the world, they were all super grateful and were just really easy to work with."

After leaving the tour in 2004, Warren rented a room inside a chiropractor's office and started One on One seeing patients at whenever time they preferred seven days a week. She also worked in other clinics as needed to help her pay her mortgage as she built up volume through word of mouth.

Warren takes a special amount of pride in the fact that from the first day, One on One has thrived as an "out-of-network" practice meaning she has no contracts with insurance carriers. She estimates that 60 percent of her patients use their out-of-network benefits meaning that insurers will pay the provider less and patients pay more out of pocket.

Why not contract with insurers when so many patients have PT coverage on their plans? Warren doesn't mince words when talking about the traditional payment mechanism.

"It absolutely limits the time with the patient, it limits the quality and it burns therapists out," she said. "It's not good for the profession, the PT or the patient. The only one who benefits is the insurance company."

In treating Medicare recipients, because PT is a service that Medicare covers, all PT clinics must enroll either as a "participating provider" or a "non-participating provider" and file each claim to Medicare. Warren says that One on One is a non-participating provider meaning that a Medicare patient will pay the clinic at the time of service, One on One files with Medicare and Medicare later reimburses the patient.

"As a business owner, because they don't teach this in many schools, you have to hire business coaches and consultants who are experts in the field and I've hired many of them in the last 20 years," Warren said.

After 30 years of practicing physical therapy, Warren has maintained her love for the profession by changing her day-to-day routine. She treats several NFL and NBA players in her Atlanta office during their offseasons and will even travel to the athletes' respective cities during the season to provide private one-on-one PT treatment.

As a mother of two teenage girls who are active in soccer year-round, One on One is funding an extensive risk assessment study on about 100 female soccer players, ages 14-18, that is designed to reduce the risk of ACL injuries. Warren tracks the data, identifies injury risk factors and pays a strength coach to administer a year-round workout program that aims to mitigate those factors.

"With boys' football, they lift weights year-round," Warren explained. "That's what you do when you play football. With girls' sports, it's not part of the culture yet so we've got to change that mindset and make these programs available. It's one of the ways we give back."

Nearly 20 years after starting One on One and doing whatever necessary to make ends meet, Warren is grateful for her current success but is quick to give others credit.

"This practice is not just me," she said. "It's everyone who surrounds me. One on One is only as good as the team that's in the building and I am so fortunate and thankful to be surrounded by so many wonderful therapists and support staff who love what they do and take such great care of our patients." **EPT**



Emory Takes the Lead on *Integrating AI with PT*

Early in 2022, Emory University went all in on the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution by unveiling its new AI.Humanity initiative, which according to the initiative's website, "brings together the full power of Emory University to shape the AI revolution to better human health, generate economic value and promote social justice."

With last year's appointment of well-known PT educator and researcher George Fulk, PT, PhD, FAPTA, as the director of the Emory Division of Physical Therapy, it was all but guaranteed that the division would follow suit and make the use of AI an integral part of its strategic direction. Since Fulk's arrival more than a year ago, he has cast the vision for the creation of the Emory Center for Physical Therapy and Movement Science which will feature, among other things, an emphasis on machine learning and AI and how they can contribute to better patient care and outcomes.

Today, while planning for the Center for Physical Therapy and Movement Science is underway, the mission to integrate AI into the PT curriculum at Emory has begun.

As part of AI.Humanity, Emory University:

- Announced plans to recruit 60 to 75 new faculty who infuse AI-related research and inquiry into the university's core areas such as business, health care and law.
- Created the Center for Artificial Intelligence Learning this fall that promotes AI literacy across every area of the campus and provides "co-curricular learning opportunities" that help the Emory community thrive in a future driven by technology.
- Created a minor in Artificial Intelligence this fall that gives Emory undergraduates a broad understanding of what AI is, how it can be used, its intended and unintended consequences and how it interplays with human, societal and ethical issues.

Not Replacing PTs, But Making Them Better

As a rehabilitation scientist, Emory Division of Physical Therapy Associate Professor Michael Borich, PT, DPT, PhD, has heard all of the concerns about AI. In fact, he wholeheartedly agrees that “there is no replacement for the manual skills that an expert physical therapist possesses.”

But Borich, who is helping to lead the charge in the research and development of AI in the Emory Division of Physical Therapy, hopes that naysayers realize that AI’s greatest potential is not replacing physical therapists, but enhancing the great work they already do.

“I think we would all agree that the reimbursement and the availability of physical therapy for patients are resources that are not increasing with time,” Borich said. “So, there is a real need to become more efficient and effective with the diminishing patient/therapist time that’s available. What we’re trying to do is meet a need rather than replace one. We’re trying to augment what is currently available because I think most therapists would say that, ‘In a perfect world, I’d see my patients significantly more than I do.’ But that’s not a reality and probably is not going to be a reality in most cases in the future.”

Fulk agrees and provided an example of using phone video technology and AI to reduce the administrative burden that reduces a PT’s time with patients.

“Think about using video on your phone to analyze the patient’s movement and then combining it with artificial intelligence to help better identify problem areas and automatically populating the electronic medical record so that you don’t have to spend a lot of time entering that in,” Fulk explained. “As a physical therapist, you could read the report in real time and then use it to help make decisions. The major benefit is that you can actually spend more time working with your patient than the administrative responsibilities that take so much time.”

AI also has the ability to train a computer to “see” what expert therapists see. In doing so, Borich explained, you could increase the amount of skilled rehabilitation that an individual can receive without the direct supervision or frequent treatment by a therapist.

“Picture a scenario where an individual can go through a standard set of exercises for the upper limb that are performed in an environment where

there are cameras that can do what we would call ‘markerless’ assessment of movement quality,” Borich explained. “And the computer, based on being trained by models of normal movement, can essentially identify to the patient in real time how normal their movement is and provide them this feedback.”

While there are already several AI-driven apps on the market to help PTs track their patient’s mobility and assign exercise protocols, Borich says that the litmus test for each of the apps is that every-day PT clinicians are heavily involved in the design and monitoring of the new technology.

“Clinicians are really necessary to provide input at these development stages to ensure, or at least to maximize the likelihood, that these AI approaches are giving us what we want,” he said. “These machines are only as good as the data and the information we feed them.”

Using AI in Brain Studies, Stroke Care

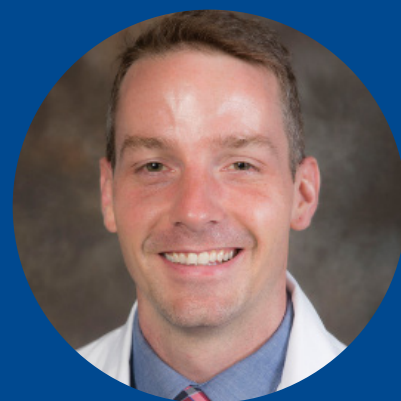
While the complete fulfillment of Fulk’s vision for the Center for Physical Therapy and Movement Science is years away, the work of Emory’s rehabilitation research team using AI is already happening.

In one National Institutes for Health (NIH) training grant, involving Borich and Emory Division of Physical Therapy Professor Lena Ting, PhD, Emory clinicians and biomedical engineers from Georgia Tech are collaborating on the development of computational models that seek to answer the question: When is the brain the most or least receptive to rehabilitation?

“That involves being able to intelligently interact with the brain in real time using noninvasive ways of recording brain activity and then identifying patterns of brain activity that will identify to us when we should intervene,” Borich explained. “Moment to moment, when is the brain most ready for learning? Learning is fundamental to recovery especially in neurological disorders.”

Once the model has collected the brain data and is trained, therapists will observe new brain activity and know exactly when an individual can deliver optimal performance in a PT session.

“As complex as the process is, it all goes back to this idea of getting more bang for your buck in terms of effective physical therapy,” Borich said.



Michael Borich, PT, DPT, PhD

On an international level, Emory is part of the NIH Stroke Net trial, called VERIFY, involving 31 sites and 657 stroke patients. VERIFY attempts to validate an algorithm developed by collaborators in New Zealand that uses certain biomarkers to predict the likelihood that a patient will recover motor functions following a stroke. The five-year study targets and measures all areas that affect upper arm mobility three months after the stroke has occurred.

For PTs, being able to better predict stroke recovery will help them craft customized therapy plans that are ideally suited to each patient.

“If this predictive algorithm turns out to be validated and shown to have a good level of accuracy, this now changes how a therapist approaches a patient because this information can be collected bedside from anyone in any setting and helps you answer the question that every single stroke patient and their family has which is, ‘Am I going to get better?’” Borich said.

While Borich says that Emory PT has been involved in AI research for several years, he calls the efforts “Baby AI” because it only scratches the surface of what is to come.

Fulk envisions a center that supports AI-related research in PT and movement science and trains future clinicians on how to implement the research. When it comes to using AI with physical therapy, he doesn’t mince words.

“It’s already happening,” Fulk said. “We’ve got elementary school kids already using this technology. If we don’t, we’re going to be left behind.”



New Emory Division of Physical Therapy Assistant Director of Clinical Education DeAndrea Bullock Melvey and her husband, Michael, were married in March 2023.

Newest Faculty Member DeAndrea Bullock Melvey Enhancing PT Diversity at Emory, Nationwide

While no one is ready to declare victory, the Emory Division of Physical Therapy's newest faculty member, Assistant Professor and Assistant Director of Clinical Education DeAndrea Bullock Melvey, PT, DPT, can finally see positive efforts in physical therapy academia and clinics when it comes to diversity. The trend is especially evident at the Emory Division of Physical Therapy and Melvey, who graduated from Emory PT in 2013 and serves on the division's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Leadership and Advocacy Committee, has played a key role in the uptick.

"The classes here have definitely become more diverse in these last few years and that just enriches the learning potential and the conversations that happen in class, and as physical therapists it broadens your perspective when treating patients," said Melvey, who is optimistic about the division's equity and inclusion strategies as well. "I can also see a change in faculty meetings where we're talking about things that we need to change in policies and curriculum to make sure that we're being inclusive."

Emory Division of Physical Therapy Associate Professor Tami Phillips, PT, EdD, DPT, MBA, who has known Melvey since 2011 when she was a student, says that while the division has, for several years, recruited a qualified, diverse student body, it was not as successful in matriculation. Phillips credits Melvey, along with Director of Clinical Education Anjanette Nuñez, PT, DPT, for playing a major role in the division's recent success.

"DeAndrea has not only been integral in speaking to the possibilities for the lack of matriculation or resources that minority students might need but has offered many ideas including social events that may help them feel connected as they think about making that decision to come to the program," Phillips said. "She's not only passionate, but she's also very balanced, reflective and thoughtful about the way she asks questions and contributes information."

After spending the last six years in an outpatient neurology clinic in Marietta, Ga., Melvey was ready for a change and jumped at the chance to join her alma mater when the clinical education position opened in 2021. Since clinical education is 30 percent of the division's curriculum and has a profound effect on the overall student experience, she is passionate about ensuring that the 36 weeks of clinicals — three two-week rotations and three 10-week rotations — offer a wide range of experiences that are edifying for each student.

"Everyone is coming from a different background and with these rotations, we encourage students to be open to seeing what the community they are assigned

to is like," Melvey explained. "We want them to experience what health care is like in the northeast versus the south versus other areas that they go. We are just trying to make sure that they are safe in each of those environments."

As a new faculty member on a staff that includes many of her former professors, Melvey has enjoyed seeing academia from the other side and has appreciated the camaraderie of the faculty.

"It's been a great transition," she said. "Everyone is very open to answering questions and meeting with me. It's definitely a huge difference from working in a clinic to being a faculty member. It's a new language and a lot of different things to learn, but every single faculty member has been very open and helpful to me."

While Melvey's impact at Emory has been significant, her contributions at the national level have been even more remarkable.

In 2018, she and fellow 2013 Emory Division of Physical Therapy graduate Remi Onifade, PT, DPT, MEd, launched the National Association of Black Physical Therapists (NABPT) to help increase diversity in both PT educational institutions and clinics.

In just five years, NABPT has grown to more than 700 members — primarily clinicians and some students — and 17 chapters throughout the country. While the group's annual conferences have all been virtual since its inception, the first in-person conference will be in St. Louis in 2024. Melvey is especially proud of the association's mentorship program, Each One Teach One.

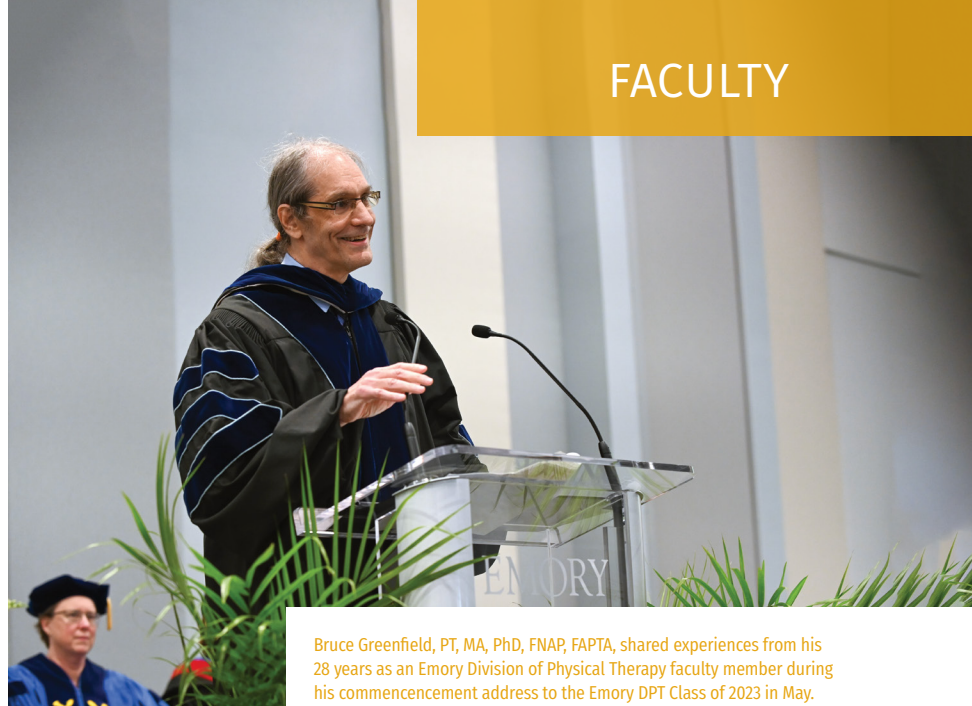
"With the program, we ask clinicians to mentor students and we ask students to reach back and mentor perspective students," Melvey explained. "We're trying to keep a continuous line to the career."

While balancing the demands of her new role at Emory and the growth of NABPT, Melvey, who grew up in Tennessee in a large family, loves to "reset" by spending time with her family and walking in one of many of Georgia's scenic landscapes.

"I love to walk and just be in nature," she said. "That's my one way of being able to reset after a long workday. There are so many walking trails in Georgia that are really pretty."

In December, Melvey and her husband, married in March of this year, will take a long-awaited honeymoon to Cartagena, Colombia. **EPT**

Professor Bruce Greenfield Concludes Career of Courage, Transformation and Success



Bruce Greenfield, PT, MA, PhD, FNAP, FAPTA, shared experiences from his 28 years as an Emory Division of Physical Therapy faculty member during his commencement address to the Emory DPT Class of 2023 in May.

Having recently concluded a decorated career in physical therapy that spanned more than 40 years — 28 of those on the Emory Division of Physical Therapy faculty — it might be surprising to some that the career path for a young Bruce Greenfield, PT, MA, PhD, FNAP, FAPTA, was always supposed to be a lawyer.

After earning his undergraduate degree in history from Oglethorpe University, he began graduate work in history at Georgia State University. During that time, Greenfield sat in a large classroom in 1977 with 500 other students at the Emory Law School to take the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). About 10 minutes into the test, he realized that the dream to attend law school was not his own.

"I was looking at the questions and I kept thinking, 'Why am I doing this?'" Greenfield recalled. "I don't know this stuff and I don't really care."

Greenfield promptly closed his test booklet, handed it to the proctor and walked out the door.

He later went to the career counseling center at Georgia State and took a series of exams that determined he would be best suited to serve in the health care field.

"I had always been active physically, so I got a job for a year as an aide in physical therapy and that's how my career began," said Greenfield.

After earning a certificate in physical therapy from Emory in 1981, Greenfield worked at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta for a year and then went back to Emory to get his master's in medical science in orthopedic physical therapy.

Greenfield joined a private clinical practice in sports and orthopedic physical therapy eventually becoming a partner. Seeing 25 to 30 patients a day in a practice model that he described as "profit over patient-centered care," Greenfield reached burnout and knew it was time to leave. In 1995, the Emory Division of Physical Therapy offered him a faculty role to teach orthopedics and he found a permanent home in academia eventually receiving an appointment to professor.

Emory Division of Physical Therapy Associate Professor Beth Davis, PT, DPT, MBA, FNAP, who calls Greenfield an "amazing mentor," remembers taking Greenfield's orthopedics and kinesiology classes as a student in the 1990s and being captivated by his teaching style.

"He not only had this incredible experience and knowledge, but he had a wonderful sense of humor," she said. "The combination of his personality and engaging teaching certainly kept students' attention. He really was a passionate and effective teacher."

Greenfield rose to the top of the academic field in musculoskeletal content authoring two textbooks and receiving numerous national awards and citations. But once again, to the surprise of many, his passion shifted away from orthopedics

to the evolving field of ethics where he obtained a master's in bioethics. Greenfield, remembering the constant tension he felt in his clinical days, set out to develop strategies within the physical therapy field that focused on improving patient-centered care and helping clinicians adapt to the changing values and concerns of patients living with disabilities.

Today, Greenfield is a pioneer in clinical ethics and has been quoted in several national publications while serving as a Fellow for the Emory University Center for Ethics and as a member of the Emory University Hospital Ethics Committee.

In his commencement speech to the Emory DPT Class of 2023 in May, Greenfield chronicled his unusual career journey and implored graduates to persevere and trust themselves even when their career paths are unclear.

Long-time Emory Division of Physical Therapy Professor Marie Johanson, PhD, PT, FAPTA, who has worked alongside Greenfield since the early 1980s when they served in private practice together, refers to Greenfield as her "professional soul-mate" and marvels at his ability to change and thrive.

"Bruce is just an amazing guy," Johanson said. "It takes a lot of courage to do what he has done first becoming a really good clinician and then a great teacher of musculoskeletal content. He then branched out into ethics and became a novice all over again. I've always admired him for his ability and courage to do that."

As he reflected this summer on his decorated career in academia, Greenfield shared that one of his most valued possessions in his office is an email he framed from a former student who thanked him several years later for taking time to provide career advice that later proved beneficial.

"I framed it because of all the awards and accolades I've had, to me, that's one of the most meaningful because I had an impact on somebody's life in a positive way," Greenfield said. "It doesn't get any better than that."

In retirement, Greenfield, 69, has no concrete plans other than to spend more time with his wife, three daughters — all Emory graduates — and six grandchildren. Whatever he decides to do, he will forever be grateful for the experience at Emory that he says has defined his life. He will especially miss his fellow faculty members.

"They're all good people who are not only committed to academics, scholarship and teaching, but to the well-being of every student," he said. "In my 28 years here, I've never worked with a faculty member who I didn't like. In fact, a lot of the faculty now were once my students."

While Greenfield will be greatly missed, he left an impressive, indelible mark on Emory and the physical therapy profession. **EPT**

EMORY DIVISION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EMORY DPT FACULTY DATA



Conference
presentations in 2023

43 GRANTS

43 combined current grants by
faculty. 14 DPT faculty with grants.



\$65,135,311
TOTAL FUNDING

Grant amount total funding on
all the grants that faculty had in
2023 (including NIH grants)



**In 2023, two faculty members
won national awards**

Marie Johanson: Catherine Worthingham Fellow

Michael Borich: Eugene Michels New Investigator Award

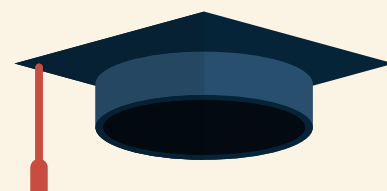
\$52,898,742

Total funding from National Institutes
of Health (NIH) in 2023.



STUDENT DIVERSITY DATA FOR THE NEW CLASS OF 2026

This June, we were privileged to welcome the **Class of 2026** to the Emory campus. The 57-member class consists of **more than 54 percent minority students** indicating remarkable progress in our commitment to achieve **greater diversity in PT**. Our new students represent **19 states** and **47 universities** as well as Argentina, China and Korea.

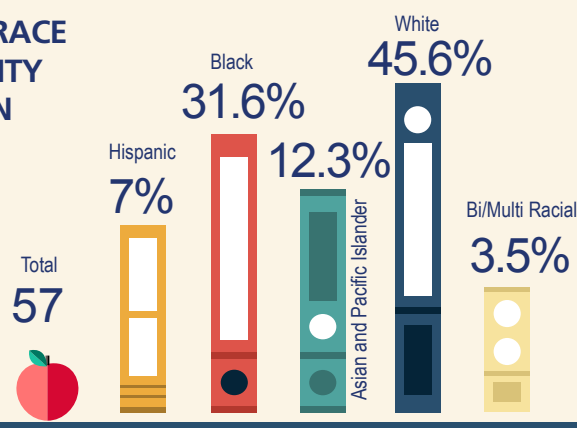


MORE DATA ON THE CLASS OF 2026



23% MALE
77% FEMALE

HERE'S THE RACE AND ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN



2023 CLINICAL PARTNER AWARD

Emory Alum Takes Lead in Forming Successful Partnership with First Step Physical Therapy



Brenda Chan

In the summer of 2021, Brenda Chan, PT, DPT, Cert. DN, newly graduated from the Emory Division of Physical Therapy, started with First Step Physical Therapy and immediately noticed that the practice, with three clinics in Metro Atlanta and one in Buffalo, NY, did not have a clinical rotation partnership with the Emory DPT program.

Thanks to Chan's leadership and a love for her alma mater, First Steps took its first Emory student in 2022 and this year, is already hosting six Emory students for clinical rotations earning the practice the Emory Division of Physical Therapy's 2023 Outstanding Clinical Partner award.

According to Chan, clinical rotations at First Steps are more challenging than most because students will see the clinic's primary case mix — neurological cases such as brain and spinal cord injuries — as well as orthopedic cases.

"A lot of times the students will tell me, 'I feel like I'm incorporating every single one of my major classes during this clinical rotation,'" Chan said. "They have the general medical condition class because there's a lot of transfers and bed mobility issues, and then, their neuro and musculoskeletal classes. So, they're able to combine all of them into this rotation. I'm really proud of the students who finish the rotation because it's a big challenge."

Three years ago, Chan was also a student at Emory. So, imagine how strange it was for her when her first Emory student last year was someone she knew from class.

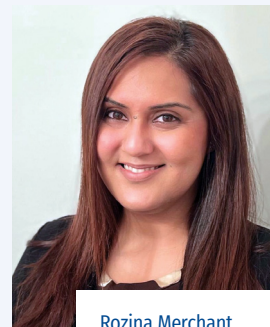
"It was super weird because when I was a teaching assistant at Emory, I met her in one of those classes," Chan said. "But the cool thing was that because I was so fresh out of school, I knew what she was learning, so it was nice to be able to help her walk through it."

While Emory students are relatively new to the mix, First Steps takes students from several other PT schools around the country including Georgia, Texas, Mississippi and New York. Chan, who is the clinic director at the Roswell, Ga. location, says that Emory DPT students definitely stand out.

"I remember how challenging the curriculum at Emory was," she said. "Because it's so strenuous, it definitely puts them at a different starting point at the beginning of the rotation." **EPT**

2023 CLINICAL EDUCATOR AWARD

2011 Emory Grad Rozina Merchant *Loves Investing in Next Generation of PTs*



Rozina Merchant

As a clinical instructor for the past 10 years at Emory Decatur Hospital in Decatur, Ga., 2011 Emory Division of Physical

Therapy Graduate Rozina Merchant, PT, DPT, is fully aware that many patients are initially hesitant to be treated by a student. That's why she is so intentional about not only empowering the student but taking time to talk to the patient and providing background on the student including his/her school, year in the program and area of study.

"As a clinical instructor, I know that when a patient sees that I have full confidence and faith in my student, the patient automatically develops that," Merchant said. "It helps facilitate trust."

For her long-standing dedication to providing Emory PT students an optimal clinical rotation experience, Merchant has been named the recipient of the Emory Division of Physical Therapy's 2023 Clinical Educator Award.

Merchant and Emory Decatur Hospital usually take about two Emory students each year both for short- and long-term rotations. Merchant says what distinguishes Emory students are that they are fully prepared for the rotations and are committed to taking a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to patient care.

"I can definitely trust them," she said. "I give them their space and yet I'm there to guide them and educate them along the way. That definitely helps build a stronger rapport with the patient."

Merchant loves seeing the difference in a student at the beginning and the end of a 10-week clinical rotation.

"It's so gratifying to see a student go from feeling nervous and unsure in creating and implementing a solid patient treatment plan and then being able to educate the patient and family on it with confidence," she explained. "That really shows the level of growth and development of the clinician and how effective these internships are in building confidence and independence."

Merchant also enjoys working with Emory students because as an Emory alum, she can relate to them on their journey.

"Some of the content has changed but the basics and foundation haven't," she said. "I believe in the program and I have gained so much from it. It's such a privilege to give back to Emory in this way and invest in others who are aspiring physical therapists." **EPT**

Class of 2023 *Student Awards*

Each year, the Division of Physical Therapy presents awards to graduating students.

Director's Award for Academic Excellence | This award was given to **Nina Llado, Kylie Mink, Kayleigh Rathbun** and **Madison Strickland** in recognition of exceptional academic work.

Director's Award for Excellence in Growth Mindset | This award acknowledged **Wellsley Brown, Gabriel Jones, Uche Monago** and **Kayla Spencer** for modeling perseverance and courage in meeting challenges and who, through hard work and dedication, demonstrate resilience and a love of learning.

Excellence in Service Award | This award acknowledged **Vision Orton** and **Madison Winter** for outstanding service contributions to the program and/or physical therapy's professional association.

Frances A. Curtiss Award for Excellence in Community Service | This award recognized the outstanding service contributions of **Peri Charapich, Lydia Rotenberger** and **Zi Yan Xu** to the community at the local, national or international level.

Frank S. Blanton Humanities in Rehabilitation Scholar Award | This award was presented to **Madison Beasley** for being dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge in the humanities, demonstrating a deep desire to foster awareness of humanities in health professions, and exhibiting kindness and compassion in relating with others.

Ian H. Tovin Scholarship Award | This award was given to **Maxwell Ji** and **Brenee Rockholt** in recognition of outstanding performance throughout the program and an intention to focus on orthopedics after graduation.

Johnnie Morgan Award for Excellence in Clinical Science | This award was given to **Jessica Audy, Raul Garcia** and **Madison Winter** for going above and beyond what is expected of students during their clinical affiliations.

Journal of Humanities in Rehabilitation Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Humanism Scholar Award | This award was given to **Madison Beasley**.

Pamela A. Catlin Award for Excellence in Critical Inquiry | This award was given to **Brandon Ford** and **Uche Monago** who were deemed by the faculty and their research advisers to have shown leadership, mastery of content knowledge, problem-solving ability, enthusiasm, and value to overall research projects.

Susan J. Herdman Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice | This award was given to **Joshua Fournier** and **Madison Strickland** for exemplifying the drive to advance the profession and who demonstrated knowledge and skills in a specialized area of patient care.

Zoher F. Kapasi Award for Excellence in Leadership | This award was given to **Joshua Fournier** for showing considerable initiative and organizational skills related to class and program activities.



Jessica Audy



Madison Beasley



Wellsley Brown



Peri Charapich



Brandon Ford



Joshua Fournier



Raul Garcia



Maxwell Ji



Gabriel Jones



Nina Llado



Kylie Mink



Uche Monago



Kayleigh Rathbun



Brenee Rockholt



Lydia Rotenberger



Kayla Spencer



Madison Strickland



Madison Winter



Zi Xu



Vision Orton

2023 ALUMNI NOTES



Nikki Bailys, 19DPT and **Eric Johnson, 19DPT**, were married in March this year. They are both board-certified orthopedic clinical specialists in Sandy Springs, Ga.

Jennifer Delman, 18DPT, is a clinical specialist at Sword

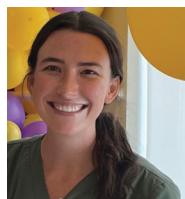
Health which is a digital musculoskeletal health company that provides an end-to-end solution to predict, prevent and treat pain symptoms. She directly supports Sword's sales team in interacting with potential clients through virtual calls, in-person events or conferences. Delman spent her first 18 months at Sword Health as a physical therapist before recently accepting the clinical specialist role.



Philip Kennedy, 17DPT, is the director of outpatient rehabilitation services for District of Columbia Physical Therapy (DCPT) in Washington, D.C. Founded in 2020 as a home health company, DCPT recently expanded into the outpatient sector under Philip's leadership. DCPT is a premier provider in the Washington metropolitan area with multiple clinics throughout the nation's capital. With an emphasis on prioritizing employee well-being and a commitment to delivering superior patient-centered care, DCPT strives to implement effective change within the physical therapy industry.

Krista (Watson) Marquard, 17DPT,

began her career working as a PT in an outpatient clinic for the Indian Health Service (IHS) in rural Arizona serving more than 8,000 American Indian/Alaska Natives. Her work with IHS allowed her to become a lieutenant in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps where she was deployed for medical missions in underserved areas in the U.S. Her work opening an IHS clinic in Lawrence, KS and efforts during the pandemic earned Marquard an Achievement Medal and Commendation Medal and a promotion to lieutenant commander in USPHS. Aside from her continued PT work at USPHS, she is a program analyst for the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS).



Meghan (Stanley) Wollman, 17DPT, recently passed the Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Clinical Specialist Certification Exam. She presently serves as a senior physical therapist at NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn, NY.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4



That's why she's never been prone to get swept up in the latest technological advancements that most people with SCI can't afford, which ultimately are not as effective as approaches that can be easily integrated into clinical practice.

"I can say with confidence that despite the fact that things like stem cells and high-tech approaches get the attention of the media, the literature does not indicate that their effects are meaningful for real-world function," Field-Fote said. "Instead, the literature indicates that the most effective intervention we have right now is the neuroplasticity that comes from intensive training and practice, which is done by physical and occupational therapists. And so, my work focuses on answering the question, 'How can we best augment that excellent neuroplasticity that comes from PT and OT?'"

After completing the McMillan Lecture, which she called the highest honor of her career, Field-Fote remains driven by the opportunity to give hope to those whose lives have been altered by SCI.

"That involves helping people understand that SCI is something that could happen to anybody, and your life is going to change, but you can still have a very good life," she said.

While few would dispute Field-Fote's reputation for being intense and relentless, Shepherd's Backus describes a person who loves creating community within the workplace and is "graceful and humble in addressing other people's needs."

Field-Fote, who often provides encouragement to patients and their families who are faced with a new reality caused by an SCI, frequently recalls a powerful poem titled, "Welcome to Holland", that serves as a source of inspiration to her efforts.

"It's written by the mother of a child who was born with a developmental disability, and the poem describes the anticipation of childbirth allegorically as the anticipation of an Italian vacation," Field-Fote explains. "The mother describes all these plans she has for Italy — the gondolas in Venice and all of the historical sites. With the birth of a child with disability, her plans changed; figuratively speaking, instead of Italy, she ended up in Holland. But the mother says that she learned that while it isn't Italy, Holland has its own beauty and magic. Once again, it's all about being able to see the magic that's right there in front of us." **EPT**



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