Maria Gitin

As part of the University of South Alabama Gender Studies Series and USA Black History Month events, civil rights veteran Maria Gitin will share stories from her journey as a teenage freedom fighter during the summer of 1965 in Wilcox County, Ala., at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 28, in the USA Library Auditorium.

This event, which is free and open to the public, is sponsored by the USA Gender Studies program and the USA department of history in the College of Arts and Sciences, the USA African-American Studies program, and the USA Office of Multicultural Student Affairs. Seating is limited.

Gitin's presentation, “This Bright Light of Ours 1965: Stories from a Teenage Freedom Fighter in Rural Alabama,” will include slides and excerpts from her book “This Bright Light of Ours 1965: Stories from the Wilcox County Voting Rights Movement.”

As a 19-year-old freshman at San Francisco State College, Gitin felt a call to action when she viewed televised images of the brutal treatment of women, children and men during the historic Selma, Ala., Bloody Sunday march. Gitin immediately volunteered for the Summer Community Organizing and Political Education project, SCOPE, a project of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, SCLC.

The SCOPE project worked in partnership with local organizations in 60 counties in six states for 10 weeks focusing on counties with a majority black population and few registered black voters. In Wilcox County, selected SCOPE workers, including Gitin, were also members of a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee team from Selma. Gitin believes that it is important to increase awareness about the Freedom Summer of 1965, which she states has been neglected by many authors and historians, who have focused on Freedom Summer of 1964.

Atypical among white civil rights volunteers, Gitin came from a low-income rural family. She raised funds to attend an intensive six-day orientation in Atlanta featuring legendary civil rights leaders Hosea Williams, Ralph Abernathy, Andrew Young, Septima Clark and others, with a keynote and two sessions led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. About 600 black and white students and field staff attended the orientation prior to traveling to their assigned counties.

Gitin spent the rest of the summer canvassing for voters with local youth in Wilcox County where the Ku Klux Klan was active and the sheriff vitriolic. Her life-changing experiences included speaking at mass meetings, being jailed, and learning the role of whites in the black freedom fight. She never forgot the courageous local black residents who risked their lives to work side by side with her.

Gitin has devoted the past four years to completion of a manuscript based on her original letters, conversations with her co-workers, and interviews with Wilcox County activists and their families. She is determined to create a channel for the unheard voices of the grassroots freedom fighters that formed the backbone of the civil rights movement.

She put herself through college by working low-wage jobs including as a maid and at an inner city Boys Club. Upon graduation from Antioch College, she led the founding of an emergency shelter for abused women and children while executive director of the Monterey, Calif., YWCA. For 28 years, Gitin has led national fundraising and diversity training as principal of Maria Gitin & Associates consulting firm. In addition to her unpublished manuscript, “This Bright Light of Ours 1965,” Gitin has written columns on diversity and voting rights for California newspapers and international professional journals.

Gitin and her husband Samuel Torres Jr., a retired attorney and photographer, live in Santa Cruz County, Calif., where they continue to support diverse leaders through membership in the NAACP, the Cesar Chavez Democratic Club, and through personal friendships. Her foundational work in the civil rights movement has led this Jewish Western woman to live a life of activism, education and philanthropy.

USA Surgery Hosts Greater Gulf Coast Trauma and Acute Care Surgery Symposium

The University of South Alabama Department of Surgery will host the 3rd Annual Greater Gulf Coast Trauma and Acute Care Surgery Symposium on March 22-23 at Five Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort.

The symposium will provide physicians, surgeons, nurses and technicians with current evidence-based concepts and techniques of resuscitation, diagnostic evaluation and therapeutic intervention.

Objectives of the symposium are to identify and demonstrate the standard of care and leading edge techniques for diagnosing and managing thoracic, abdominal and pelvic trauma; to interpret and demonstrate improved surgical skills in diagnosing and managing thermal injuries; intestinal hemorrhage, pancreatitis and pulmonary insufficiency; to summarize emergent endoscopic and radiographic interventions for the critically ill or injured patient; and to explain information concerning health care reform and trauma system funding.

The 5th annual William A.L. Mitchell Endowed Lectureship in Traumatology and Surgical Critical Care will be held in conjunction with the seminar. This year’s lecture will feature Dr. Donald A. Trunkey, professor and chair emeritus of surgery at Oregon Health & Science University. It will take place on March 22 at 6:30 p.m. at Five Rivers Delta Resource Center.

Trunkey will lecture during the two-day seminar. Guest lecturers include: Dr. Sherry M. Melton, associate professor of surgery and medical director of trauma at UAB Medical Center; and Dr. John M. Porter, professor of surgery and chief of trauma, critical care, and acute surgery at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

USA faculty lecturers include: Dr. Jorge E. Alonso, professor of orthopaedic surgery; Dr. Sidney B. Brevard, associate professor of surgery, division of trauma services; Dr. Amin M. Frotan, assistant professor of surgery, division of trauma services; Dr. Mark N. Gillespie, professor and chair of pharmacology; Dr. Richard P. Gonzalez, professor of surgery and director of trauma services; Dr. Silvio W. de Melo Jr., assistant professor of internal medicine, division of gastroenterology; Dr. Paul F. Rider, assistant professor of surgery; Dr. Charles B. Rodning, professor of surgery; Dr. Jon D. Simmons, assistant professor of surgery, division of trauma services; Dr. Brad A. Steffler, associate professor of radiology and director of interventional radiology; and Dr. Dan Taylor, adjunct professor of surgery.

Education credits are available for the two-day seminar. For more information, contact Cindy Pritchett at (251) 471-7496.
Dr. Mohammad S. Alam

Dr. Mohammad S. Alam, chair of the department of electrical and computer engineering, recently presented the keynote address at the 2012 International Conference on Computers and Information Technology.

Alam spoke on “Estimating and Mitigating the Impact of Oil Spill Disasters Via Hyperspectral Imaging.”

The conference, which was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, was attended by researchers from 16 countries.

Renowned Surgeon to Present William A.L. Mitchell Endowed Lectureship

This year’s William A.L. Mitchell Endowed Lectureship in Traumatology and Surgical Care will feature Dr. Donald D. Trunkey, professor and chair emeritus of surgery at Oregon Health & Science University.

The lecture, “Healthcare Reform in the 21st Century,” will take place on March 22 at 6:30 p.m. at Five Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort. A welcome reception will be held at 5:30 p.m.

Trunkey’s special areas of interest are trauma and vascular surgery. His research is primarily directed toward the study of shock, particularly cellular pathophysiology and immune deficiencies.

Trunkey earned his medical degree in 1963 from the University of Washington School of Medicine. He completed a residency in surgery at the University of California San Francisco and a fellowship in traumatology at the University of Texas Southwestern School of Medicine.

Leaders in healthcare, such as Trunkey, are invited to lecture to university and community physicians with the intent of improving patient care.

The lecture is presented annually in memory of Mitchell, who succumbed in 2005 from severe traumatic injuries sustained in a car crash. In appreciation for the care he received at the USA Trauma Center, his family established the endowed lecture series to memorialize their son and brother and to improve trauma patient care in the region through education. Mitchell was a senior at UMS-Wright Preparatory School at the time of his demise.

The USA Trauma Center is this region’s only Level 1 Trauma Center, serving as a community response for citizens throughout the central Gulf Coast region. The center provides the highest level of care for critically ill and/or injured patients.

For more information about the lecture or the USA Trauma Center, call (251) 471-7496.

Send USA Campus Calendar Events Today

Items may be submitted to the calendar the following ways:

- E-mail items to midweekmemo@usouthal.edu and pubrel@usouthal.edu
- Fax to the Office of Public Relations at 460-7827
- Mail to the Office of Public Relations in Room 256, Administration Building
- Use the submission form on the calendar page Web site

You can access the calendar at

www.southalabama.edu/usacal/campuscalendar

USA Mitchell Cancer Institute Donation — The University of South Alabama Mitchell Cancer Institute recently received a gift from the Mobile Fire Rescue Department. At the check presentation are, from left, Alfred Patrick, fire service driver and president of Local 1349; Jim Spafford of MBI Inc.; USAMCI Oncologist Dr. Windy Dean-Colombo; and James Connick, fire service captain and vice president of Local 1349.
Thanks to the University of South Alabama Medical Center, my sons can still duck hunt with their dad.

On a foggy winter morning in the Mobile River Delta, a hunting trip suddenly became a life or death situation when my duck boat collided with a bass boat.

I was critically injured, knocked unconscious and submerged in the frigid water. By the time I was pulled ashore, the situation looked hopeless. Emergency personnel knew there was only one place that could treat my degree of injuries - the Trauma Center at the University of South Alabama Medical Center.

Before my accident, I wasn’t aware that when the worst case scenario occurs, your life depends on having access to a unique hospital whose doctors and staff are specifically trained and certified to treat the most severe trauma injuries. My experience taught me why we are so blessed to have the USA Medical Center, which houses the only Level I trauma center in our region.

Thanks to the University of South Alabama Medical Center, my sons can still duck hunt with their dad.

– Rob Diehl
Husband, father and BankTrust Executive

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA MEDICAL CENTER
The highest level of care.
Senior Bowl Players Visit Children’s & Women’s Hospital — Aches and pains were almost forgotten by many young patients at the USA Children’s & Women’s Hospital recently when players in the annual Senior Bowl visited. In the left photo, Kristian George, right, accepts an autographed football from Coastal Carolina University’s Josh Norman while Nick Foles of the University of Arizona jots her a note. In the right photo, patient Abby Vaughn enjoys a visit with members of the North team, from left, Alameda Ta’amu, University of Washington; Brad Nortman, University of Wisconsin; and Bradie Ewing and Donnie Fletcher, Boston College.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

CAMPUS CALENDAR

Friday, February 10, 2012

Stanton Lanier, Pianist for Peace, will perform at Broussard’s Piano Gallery, 1541 East I-65 Service Road South, at 7 p.m. Event proceeds will help donate Stanton’s CDs through his Get Music, Give Hope program to patients at the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute. A silent auction will also be held to benefit the USAMCI. Reserved tickets will be $15 for adults and $10 for students. A Student Composing Workshop will also be available on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 10 a.m. To reserve tickets, or for more information, call Broussard’s at (251) 344-8856.

Sunday, February 12, 2012

The Archduke Trio (pianist Robert Holm, violinist Enen Yu and cellist Guo-Sheng Huang) will be joined by violinist Hsiaopei Lee and violinist Evangeline Thies for a 3 p.m. presentation in the Laidlaw Performing Arts Center. Tickets for this Musical Arts Series event will be sold only at the door. Tickets will be $8 for general admission and $5 for USA faculty, staff, students, youths under age 18 and all senior citizens (cash or check only). For more information or special accommodations, call (251) 460-7116 or 460-6136.

Tuesday, February 14, 2012

University students and alumni are invited to speak with representatives from various companies and organizations during the 2012 Spring Career Expo, which will be held from 1-4 p.m. in the USA Mitchell Center. The career fair, sponsored by USA Career Services, provides students and alumni with information about current job openings and career fields. Undergraduate students can also learn about co-ops and internship opportunities. Faculty are asked to encourage their students to attend. For more information, contact USA Career Services at (251) 460-6188 or visit their Web site at www.southalabama.edu/careerservices.

The department of music will present the world premiere of composer Brian Joyce’s “Songs of Robert Burns: An entertainment for Soprano and Tenor Soloists Set to Tunes of the Poet’s Own Choosing,” accompanied by flute, oboe, violin, viola, harpsichord and percussion, at 7:30 p.m. in the Laidlaw Performing Arts Center. Tickets for this Musical Arts Series event will be sold only at the door. Tickets will be $8 for general admission and $5 for USA faculty, staff, students, youths under age 18 and all senior citizens (cash or check only). For more information or special accommodations, call (251) 460-7116 or 460-6136.

Monday, March 26, 2012

The 19th Annual USA Faculty Development Council Forum begins at the Mitchell College of Business in the lobby areas. Faculty and graduate students are encouraged to attend to present their research, scholarly and creative projects. The forum, which continues through Friday, March 30, provides the opportunity to talk with faculty from across campus. Deadline for submissions is 5 p.m., Friday, March 16. The submission form, with information concerning the abstract, is available at http://www.southalabama.edu/graduateprograms/forumsubmissionform.pdf. For unique presentations, e-mail deannacobb@usouthal.edu to arrange accommodations.