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I am so pleased to provide this brief recollection on the wonderful 60th anniversary of this great college. Thank you Dean Perri, your predecessors as dean, past and present faculty and staff, representatives of my program (Health Services Research, Management and Policy), and tonight's attendees.

My father, Lowell Hammer, was admitted to the University of Florida's Ph.D. program in clinical speech pathology in Summer 1960. Our family, including my mother Beverly, my sister Chrissy, and I, moved to Gainesville in August 1960 so he could begin classes.

The Health Science Center in those days was very different, barely a quarter the size it is today. Founding Dean Darrel Mase had started the College of Health Related Services in 1958, later to be widely known as Health Related Professions or HRP for short. It was then the only one of its kind. My dad's department, Communicative Disorders (now Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences), was housed in the basement, near the PT and OT departments. As kids, my sister and I loved to go to the health center and experience the environment in which my dad worked.

Those were the days of excitement over the Kennedy presidency and stark terror over the Cuban missile crisis. We actually rode out the missile crisis, or at least followed civil defense orders to consider doing so, at the health center. Even years later, there were still water and rations stored in the sub-basement.

Once my dad earned his Ph.D., he joined the faculty full-time. My mother got a master's degree and began teaching school, first at Westwood, then at GHS. My sister and I attended Stephen Foster Elementary and Westwood Junior High School. Our paths diverged, though, as I went to GHS and she became a member of the charter class at Buchholz. Ultimately, however, we both obtained UF degrees. My mother also started a life-long association with the Shands Auxiliary, which she continues to this day.

Over the years, professional colleagues became friends, including department chair Ken Bzoch, faculty colleague Ken Pollock, Alice Jantzen and Lela Llorens of OT, and Claudette Finley of PT. Thereafter, those work friends (and others) became lifelong family friends. Later, after Dean Mase retired, Dr. Suzuki became dean. In the period between their tenures, my dad served as Acting Dean. For nearly his entire career, my dad also served Florida Cleft Palate Association by devoting one workday a month to clinical practice in Orlando.

Of course, our whole family also became lifelong Gators, and our love for the university grew stronger every year. Eventually, I started working at Alachua General Hospital, and health care became my career as well. As my own career progressed, I was able to establish a fellowship in honor of my father and the life's work that was so important to him. Later, I was asked to be a member of the college's Advisory Board, where I have proudly served ever since.

To all those associated with the College of Public Health and Health Professions, very best wishes for the next 60 years of growth, service and success.

