

# THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

JAN | FEB 2026

## Fran McCaffery Comes Home



Protecting Identity Ownership—  
and the First Amendment

Sophia Rosenfeld and *The Age of Choice*

Homecoming & Alumni Awards of Merit

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# THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

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By Trey Popp

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# Identity Issues

**F**ran McCaffery W'82 has a lot of admirers, to match the lofty expectations being placed on him to restore Penn's men's basketball team to its rightful prominence in the Ivy League after a generally lackluster couple of decades. (Case in point: a single appearance in the NCAA tournament since 2007 versus 22 in the period from 1970 up to then.)

In "Full Circle," associate editor Dave Zeitlin C'03 follows McCaffery's journey from catching Big 5 double-headers with his brother Jack at the Palestra, where their police-officer father worked security; to his playing days as a "crafty Quaker point guard" in one of the peak eras for men's basketball; to his highly successful coaching career at several schools and his return to Penn last March following the firing of Steve Donahue after nine seasons.

The portrait that emerges of McCaffery is energetic (roaming the sidelines and favoring a fast-paced game style), at times emotional (he's been known to mix it up verbally with referees), and open. "He's fiery, but at the same time he's clear about what he wants from you," one player said. "He'll never let someone guess what they're supposed to be doing out there."

There's a fair amount of nostalgia baked in, but the article and McCaffery also engage with the changed landscape of college sports brought about by Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) rules that have led to many top college players jumping from school to school for better financial opportunities, making it hard to build team camaraderie. McCaffery is confident that the lifelong advantages Penn offers will mostly win out, but if "somebody throws a bag of money at them, and they want to go, then go. We'll get somebody else."

I was a little surprised to find a connection in senior editor Trey Popp's eye-opening

interview with law professor Jennifer Rothman, a leading expert in "the ways intellectual property law is employed to turn people into a form of property," but she cites student-athletes as particularly vulnerable to exploitation in terms of selling away digital rights to their identities.

"Who Will Own Your Digital Twin?" delves into the complexities of regulating the burgeoning AI technologies that can create convincing replicas of, well, anything, with special emphasis on the NO FAKES Act being considered in Congress. Rothman offers her thoughts on how to craft protections allowing individuals famous and not to keep control of their digital identities, without unduly compromising First Amendment principles.

Also in this issue, in "A Historian of the 'Taken-for-Granted,'" Julia M. Klein profiles Annenberg Professor of History Sophia Rosenfeld on the occasion of her recent book, *The Age of Choice: A History of Freedom in Modern Life*. The book draws on an eclectic variety of sources—auction catalogs, dance cards, restaurant menus, election ballots, as well as fictional works—to look at how the idea of choice developed as a central, much-touted feature of modern democracy and capitalism, and whether that has always been such a good thing. Not that she thinks it's for her to decide: "My entire goal is to challenge all sets of ideas," she told Julia.

And this is the issue where we mark Homecoming with our annual photo essay and share this year's Alumni Award of Merit citations. Congratulations to all the winners!

**"He's fiery, but at the same time he's clear about what he wants from you."**

## THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

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EDITOR John Prendergast C'80

SENIOR EDITOR Trey Popp

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Dave Zeitlin C'03

ASSISTANT EDITOR Nicole Perry

ART DIRECTOR Catherine Gontarek

PUBLISHER F. Hoopes Wampler GrEd'13

215-898-7811 fhoopes@upenn.edu

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR Linda Caiazza

215-898-6811 caiazza@upenn.edu

### EDITORIAL OFFICES

The Pennsylvania Gazette

3910 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111

PHONE 215-898-5555 FAX 215-573-4812

EMAIL gazette@ben.dev.upenn.edu

WEB thepenngazette.com

### ALUMNI RELATIONS

215-898-7811

EMAIL alumni@ben.dev.upenn.edu

WEB www.alumni.upenn.edu

### UNIVERSITY SWITCHBOARD

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IVY LEAGUE MAGAZINE NETWORK Heather Wedlake

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# Revolutionary Roots

Tracing Penn's unbroken line of innovation in service to society.

By President J. Larry Jameson

This fall has been a highly productive semester at Penn, with many achievements and milestones to celebrate. In my meetings with students, faculty, and staff, and while engaging with our alumni and friends at home and abroad, I am also seeing and hearing people's excitement about Penn's missions and momentum. Like me, they are eager to discuss what is next and how Penn can lead while honoring our distinctive history.

In August, at the Kislak Center, I had an excellent opportunity to get up close and personal with an exhibit on Penn's formation, structure, and mission during the American Revolution. Guided by Penn Libraries experts, I examined colonial-era artifacts including pamphlets, maps, manuscripts, a full-scale recreation of a coffee house, and one of the exhibit's centerpieces: Penn's 1755 charter.

I thought of the people over the centuries who had stood as close as I was to the document: Benjamin Franklin, early trustees, colonial governors, generations of our faculty, students, staff, and archivists. I looked around at our library, with its advanced facilities, and out over College Green, where we were getting campus ready for new and returning students and the new academic year. Our past and future, interconnected. It was a powerful moment.

In my last column, I discussed our strategic planning initiative, *Penn Forward*. Today, I want to highlight just a few examples of how Penn's future is already taking shape.

In an applause-worthy act of commitment to the arts, Penn Trustee Julie Beren Platt C'79 and her husband, Marc E. Platt C'79, recently made a visionary

gift to name the new Platt Student Performing Arts Center, currently under construction and rising rapidly at 33rd Street and Woodland Walk. The crown jewel of the Center will be the 325-seat Edward W. Kane Theatre, named for the generosity of former Penn Trustee Ed Kane C'71 and his wife, Marty.

**Penn's pioneering endures—in our academic missions, our campus, and the contributions of our students, faculty, alumni, and staff.**

Thanks to another historic gift, this from Bruce I. Jacobs G'79 GrW'86, Wharton launched its first new degree program in half a century: the Dr. Bruce I. Jacobs Master of Science in Quantitative Finance. It combines Wharton's intellectual and academic heft and offers a rigorous, data-intensive curriculum with practical experience and exposure to industry leaders. It also positions Penn to lead in an increasingly important and rapidly changing field.

In September, I helped cut the ribbon for Penn Medicine's reimagined facility at 3600 Civic Center Boulevard. As our epicenter for autoimmune disease research, 3600 Civic Center will bring together researchers in the Colton Center for Autoimmunity and a truly impressive range of expertise—from vaccinology to epidemiology to healthcare innovation.

Innovative new facilities and programs help position Penn to lead, but

where I see our future most powerfully is in the exceptional contributions of our students, faculty, staff, and of course our global alumni.

During Family Weekend in October, for example, I joined four fourth-year undergraduate students onstage for a deep dive into their Penn journeys. We talked about discovering their passions and finding community at Penn while navigating classes, clubs, and the city of Philadelphia.

I could not begin to cover their incredibly impressive Penn stories. They have worked closely with rockstar faculty on original research; spent the summer caring for patients in our hospital's Emergency Department; led in student government; served as members of Kite and Key and mentors to newer students; volunteered with our *Penn Forward* initiative; and this does not even scratch the surface!

We also recently celebrated another Penn Rhodes Scholar, Florence Onyike C'26 W'26, who joins a distinguished tradition of Penn scholars committed to making a difference in the world.

As this issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* arrives in mailboxes and inboxes, the United States, Philadelphia, and Penn are commemorating the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding. No other university was nearer the epicenter of the American Revolution, intellectually or in physical proximity. Consider that eight Penn affiliated leaders, including Benjamin Franklin, signed the Declaration of Independence; 12 signed the US Constitution. Penn's facilities at that time at Fourth Street and Arch Street were just a few blocks from Independence Hall.

Penn's pioneering endures—in our academic missions, our campus, and the contributions of our students, faculty, alumni, and staff. During my Kislak Center visit, Penn's past felt immediate and our future, imminent, linked by an unbroken line of innovation in service to society. Together, through Penn's 300th anniversary and beyond it, we will keep that line strong.

# On the meanings of play, approaches to Alzheimer's, final resting places, and more.

## We Welcome Letters

Please email us at [gazette@ben.dev.upenn.edu](mailto:gazette@ben.dev.upenn.edu). Letters should refer to material published in the magazine and may be edited for clarity, civility, and length. For more letters, visit [thepenngazette.com](http://thepenngazette.com).

### Grounds for Play

Reading “Tossing Out the Playbook” [Nov|Dec 2025], I remember my own 1972 sophomore-at-architecture-school designs for “The Playground” project, designs inspired by a childhood of tree-houses, residential construction sites, a backyard creek, ice skating on nearby frozen lakes, jitney racing in the middle of the road, and Tarzan-style vine-swinging in those dark woods down the way.

“*Whaddya tryin’ to do, kill all the kids in the neighborhood?*” was typical criticism then. It’s wonderful to know that materials, designers, urban parks, and, above all, social attitudes have changed to allow for these remarkable creations featured in your article. Playgrounds of such caliber are too good to be limited to children, though. Why not something similar for those over 70?

*Daniel Naegele GFA’94 Gr’96, Sapulpa, OK*

### As Seen on TV

Regarding JoAnn Greco’s article, “Tossing Out the Playbook”:

Rod Serling and Gene Roddenberry—creators of the iconic TV series *Twilight Zone* and *Star Trek*, respectively—know about play.

*Twilight Zone*, “Kick the Can,” aired February 9, 1962:

Charles Whitley is an elderly resident of Sunnyvale Rest, a home for the aged. It’s not a happy place and Charles’s hopes of moving in with his son David are dashed when he’s told they can’t take him in. He wistfully recalls his youth, where they played kick the can and didn’t have a



**“It’s wonderful to know that materials, designers, urban parks, and, above all, social attitudes have changed to allow for these remarkable creations.”**

worry in the world. His close friend Ben Conroy begins to worry about him when Charles suggests all you have to do is wish it, and you can be young again. Ben is worried his friend will end up in the loony bin, but it’s Ben who is in for a surprise.

*Star Trek*, “Shore Leave,” aired December 29, 1966:

Captain Kirk: “The more complex the mind, the greater the need for the simplicity of play.”

Then again there is *Lord of the Flies*.

Thanks for the article.

*Peter Feinman C’71, Purchase, NY*

### Complete, Informative, Accessible

I was thrilled to read Mary Ann Meyers’s marvelous article “Alzheimer’s Now” [Nov|Dec 2025].

In addition to being a health lawyer for 35 years, I became even more committed to learning about Alzheimer’s through the years I was caretaker for my beloved husband Michael [M’66] during his Alzheimer’s journey [“Obituaries,” Nov|Dec 2025].

I report this just to say that despite my endless reading and researching, I never read a more complete, informative, accessible piece about Alzheimer’s and dementia. I have circulated it widely to many friends including my Support Group. Thank you, Mary Ann!

*Stephanie Naidoff L’66, Haverford, PA*

### Time for a Balanced Approach

Regarding “Alzheimer’s Now” [Nov|Dec 2025], the most appropriate time to address Alzheimer’s disease is before it is a *fait accompli*, i.e., during the stage of mild cognitive impairment (MCI). Screening tests should include APOE4 if MCI is present and requires a multifaceted approach. Steps to halt progression may include assiduous observance of a Mediterranean or Japanese diet; checking for hyperhomocysteinemia, which is also elevated in vascular dementia; and, if elevated, checking for both B vitamins *and* a toxic metal screen is indicated. Methylated B vitamins are indicated if the MTHFR TT mutation is present. Serum ammonia should also be checked as even modest elevations can promote

neurodegenerative changes. Gut and oral dysbiosis are both major contributors to the pathogenesis of Alzheimer's disease, as are immune dysfunction and magnesium, vitamin D, selenium, and other micronutrient deficiencies. Components of the exposome—the lifetime exposure to pesticides, air pollutants, organic solvents, and other toxicants—are additional risk factors and need to be minimized. Indeed, causative factors of Alzheimer's are very heterogeneous and also include exposure to mycotoxins and cyanobacteria producing BMAA. Inflammation, the combination of inflammation and defective clearance, among those aging relates to both cumulative toxicity and deficiency of micronutrients.

Clinical research addressing these aspects of neurodegeneration should be expanded, not dictated by pharmaceutical manufacturers, but informed by neuroscience research. Such an approach would likely also reduce other degen-

erative disorders in the advancing years, including atrial fibrillation, deafness, and macular degeneration—all also characterized by hyper-homocysteinemia. How long can we keep putting off such a balanced approach?

*Arnold R. Eiser C'70, Philadelphia*

*The writer is an adjunct faculty member at the Perelman School of Medicine and the author of Preserving Brain Health in a Toxic Age.—Ed.*

### Music's Salutary Effect

I was surprised that there was no mention of the salutary effect that music has for people suffering from this dementia. My wife, who is 82 and suffers from this affliction, sings the lyrics to the pop tunes of the 1950s for two hours every day. These are songs she remembers from when she was a teenager, and I believe it raises her spirits (and mine).

*Jerry Sobol W'59, New York*



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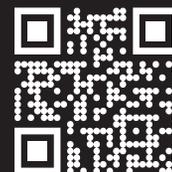




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### How to Donate Your Body

This is a comment on Susan Fishman Orlin's article "Where Rolling Hills Meet the Sky" ["Rabbit Hole," Nov|Dec 2025].

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*Frances Schleifer Sletvold HUP'62, Allentown, PA*

### Revisionist History

I read "Pandemic Lessons: The misfires last time" ["Gazetteer," Nov|Dec 2025] with stunned disbelief. I had to reread it a few times, and ask a couple of friends to read it, as assurance that I had not overlooked something obvious.

How was it possible for the article to reflect generally on how America's "politics failed us" without a single specific mention of President Donald J. Trump W'68? Not a word about the President's false assurance that the virus would disappear in the warm April weather, his deliberate undermining and mockery of CDC guidance, those incoherent press conferences where he speculated about the efficacy of light and disinfectant as cures, the tweets urging his supporters to "liberate" their state houses, the super-spreader campaign rallies that directly resulted in the deaths of attendees, including businessman and former presidential candidate Herman Cain.

And while specifically mentioning and decrying President Joe Biden Hon'13's vaccine mandates, scant attention is paid to differential death rates by state post-vaccine. In vaccine-skeptical Flor-

ida, for example, most COVID fatalities occurred after the vaccines became available. Nationwide, the trend was just the opposite.

Imagine if, before he first left office, President Trump had appeared on national television and said, "Look, this is a public health crisis and should not be politicized. Me and my family all took the jab. I urge you to do the same. It will not prevent you from contracting COVID, but it may very well prevent your hospitalization or death." How many American lives might have been saved had the President chosen to publicly state those simple truths rather than tacitly pander to his "medical freedom" base?

Based on some of the letters you've chosen to print recently, I'm sure some of your readers will dismiss this letter as "TDS." The fact remains that America, one of the wealthiest and most technologically advanced nations on Earth, accounted for 4 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's COVID deaths by the end of 2020, with President Donald J. Trump in the White House.

I cannot help but see the massive elisions in this article as revisionist history and a form of capitulation that has been all too prevalent since President Trump's reelection. I find this very disappointing in a publication that I have come to trust and value as a source of unbiased information.

*Michael Arsham SW'81, New York*

### Creating a Welcoming Environment for Discussion

Thanks for reporting on the discussions that ensued from the School of Arts & Sciences 60-Second Lecture series regarding the US Constitution ["Gazetteer," Nov|Dec 2025]. Dean of the College Peter Struck's worry that students are no longer "saying intemperate things, strange things," nor "mouthing off all the time" is indeed worrisome.

As Struck suggested, students and, collectively, all of us learn nothing from

people who think like we do. Nor do we learn from people who think differently but don't share their thoughts. So, ensuring that this generation "feels that they can speak their minds" is an imperative.

But how?

Professor Karen Tani's suggestion that the entire university, not just professors, must cultivate a "culture of curiosity" makes sense. Her other concern, students' feeling that they have no political agency, is causative. Without political agency, there is little reason to expend effort to develop and investigate one's curiosities—or to draw, express, and defend conclusions.

Professor Emma Hart's commitment to ensuring that dialogue and debate permeate every class session, even lectures, can help students to realize that their opinions are worthy of consideration, and thus, plant a seed of agency. But the idea also presents a problem.

What happens when an expressed opinion is premised upon no evidence, mis- or disinformation, or hateful ideologies? Does presupposing that any opinion voiced in the classroom is worthy of hearing award it a degree of validity and influence it ought not have?

I have confronted that very problem when teaching economics to graduate and undergraduate students and when facilitating discussions for a nonprofit I run to enhance political discourse (discoursefordemocracy.org). I typically have time to question the premise and thus give discussants opportunity to evaluate whether the expressed opinion represents received wisdom, a dubious proposal, or something in between. I imagine though, that in classrooms where a professor works against the clock, there might not be time enough to explore the premise. Then what?

Perhaps the *Gazette* could feature an article addressing how our Penn professors contend with the matter. Keep up the good work!

*Matthew S. A. Feely WG'92 Gr'04, Dedham, MA*



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# My Adventures in Radiation

“Each day I went to class carrying my trusty Geiger counter.” ▶

By Thomas Belton

**P**hysics was my most difficult subject at Penn. To some, the mechanics of the physical world are as simple to read as the nightly baseball scores. For me it was more like trying to reassemble the family clock after I'd pulled it apart as a child to see how it worked. Every piece came away with superb logic on disassembly, but the reconstruction eluded me. Without a diagram, I couldn't discern the obvious mechanical connections to recreate time's swift passage in a box. I might as well have gone outside and looked at the sun.

Yet in spite of this shortcoming, when my wife and I were broke in graduate school and needed money to keep the wolf from the door, it was a job as a radiation safety technician at Penn that kept us from penury. The Radiation Safety Office was tasked by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to inspect labs and affirm the safe use of radionuclides in every academic and medical department. In the basement of the University hospital, I stumbled upon a hermetic molecular biologist who injected isotopic iodine-137 into nanny goats, then studied kidney failure when she subsequently deprived them of essential amino acids. At the physics department I measured isobars of invisible radiation leaking from lead-encased sources of thorium and radium.

This job proved to be the best all-around education that a budding scientist—studying marine biology, in my case—could ever hope for. In my daily inspections I observed every possible permutation of inquiry devised by the scientific community and their unique modes of application to physics, chemistry, and medicine. Each day I went to class carrying my trusty Geiger counter and a pack of toluene-soaked papers to take wipe samples on lab benches. It was a great icebreaker for making new friends, or meeting maniacs, as I chatted with hundreds of curious people who wanted to debate the ethics of dropping the bomb on Hiroshima or the perils of nuclear energy. I relished these willy-nilly

amateur discussions but found the more interesting anecdotes coming from the researchers I visited. Some described how radiopharmaceuticals would become the diagnostic tool of the century (which they did) while others prophesied the development of cheap and safe nuclear fusion reactors (which has yet to pan out).

My first experience in radiation protection outside of academia, however, came in 1979 when we heard over the Radiation Safety Office radio that a nuclear meltdown was under way at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant, just 90 miles upwind of Philadelphia. A partial core meltdown of the pressurized

## A nuclear meltdown was under way.

water reactor in Unit No. 2 resulted in the most significant accident in the history of the American commercial nuclear power generating industry. We later learned that the accident was due to a stuck valve in the reactor but compounded by operator error. The event released an estimated 43,000 curies of radioactive krypton and 15 curies of gaseous iodine-131 into the atmosphere. Iodine-131 can cause thyroid cancer at dosages much lower than this.

The NRC seemed paralyzed during the ensuing five days, trying to simultaneously understand the problem, communicate about the relative risks, and decide whether the accident required a widespread emergency evacuation of those downwind. The health physicists in my office at Penn immediately began debating the repercussions if the protective containment around the reactor core were to crack. My concerns, on the other hand, flowed from my studies in marine biology. The reactor was built on an island in the middle of the Susquehanna River, which was the primary drinking water source for many communities downstream and sup-

plied half the freshwater flow to Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States and an incredibly complex ecosystem. What would happen to it, I thought, if the meltdown sent tons of fissionable materials downstream to this waterway, a source of seafood for millions of Americans? It would kill millions of animals outright but also bioaccumulate isotopes in the tissue of those that survived. The half-life for many of these fissionable nuclides was in the hundreds if not thousands of years. We could lose the Chesapeake Bay as a natural resource for generations.

That's when John Thomas, the director of our office, received a call from the NRC in Washington asking for help. The Commission was mobilizing all assets in Pennsylvania to perform downwind monitoring and to seek advice on plume meteorological calculations. We found out that day that the shortcomings shown in the blockbuster movie *The China Syndrome*, released only 12 days before the accident occurred, were not far off the mark. The 1979 thriller tells the story of a reporter who discovers safety cover-ups at a nuclear power plant. The title refers to an idea put forth by nuclear engineers that if a nuclear plant melted down and breached its containment, it would melt straight through the earth until it reached China. The parallels with the events going on in central Pennsylvania were disheartening and colored our perceptions of the regulator's deliberations over the next few days as we listened to emergency response personnel on our shortwave radio and helped plan the potential evacuation of the fifth-largest city in the United States.

Uncertainty reigned in those chaotic days as the Three Mile Island disaster paralyzed the nation with fears of nuclear fallout and communities across the US mobilized for safety reviews at every nuclear plant. Even President Jimmy Carter, a former nuclear engineer in the US Navy, visited the reactor facility to try to calm the nation. Eventually the TMI accident was contained and no fur-

ther amount of radioactive material was released into the environment. But virtually overnight, nuclear electrical power generation became a target for anti-nuke environmentalists and apple-pie politicians alike.

As it happens, my job as a radiation safety technician at Penn proved to be my first environmental job but not my last. Upon graduation as a marine biologist, I became a research scientist with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Science and Research, carrying out environmental field studies and assessing the public health impacts from air and waterborne toxins as well as radionuclides. One of these came along quite unexpectedly when, in December 1984, Stanley Watras, an engineer assigned to the Limerick nuclear power plant then under construction in Pennsylvania, set the radiation alarms ringing when he walked through a detector.

Though this might have been understandable if Watras had been leaving the plant after a full day's work, the nuclear rods had not been delivered yet and the alarm went off as he *entered* the plant. He asked Limerick's owner, the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO), to check the radiation levels at his house a few miles away, where technicians discovered the highest concentration of the colorless, odorless, and tasteless radon gas ever found in the US. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources estimated that living in the radon-tainted house for one year, Watras and his wife Diane had been exposed to the equivalent of 455,000 chest X-rays, which increased their risk of lung cancer by 13 to 14 percent. They immediately vacated the house until PECO completed a \$32,000 cleanup. Geologists later determined that the Watras residence sat upon the Reading Prong, a granite formation that extends like a river of stone from near Reading, Pennsylvania, on through a wide section of northern New Jersey and into a narrow band of New York State and Connecticut. This whole formation was

known by mining operators to have high uranium content.

Both Pennsylvania and New Jersey moved quickly to deal with this finding by mapping thousands of houses that lay atop the Reading Prong and sampling their interiors for radon. NJDEP's health physicists estimated that roughly 30 percent of the houses over the Reading Prong in New Jersey had radon levels exceeding a USEPA-calculated action guideline of 4 picocuries per liter of air. My office helped distill this information and focus it into regulatory responses, communicating carefully with homeowners to allay their panic while simultaneously mobilizing them to test and mitigate their homes through simple air venting pumps.

To be honest, back in 1979 when I joined Penn's Radiation Safety Office, I never envisioned using any of the esoteric physics I learned in study hall to help people deal with real public health issues in an emergency.

I look back upon my fear of failing physics in college now and find that in spite of its arcane formulae of sub-atomic particles and nuclear fission, it offered some simple philosophical tools to support an environmental detective. For it was Isaac Newton who proposed a new dynamic and mechanical description of the world in which energy and motion are characterized by acceleration, inertia, and the concept of conservation of momentum. And perhaps it's in his concept of inexorable momentum, with events ever moving forward, that I find a simple explanation for my life and my career. I took what I'd learned and carried it with me until the opportune moment arose, and found meaning and purpose in it.

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Thomas Belton is a marine biologist and environmental scientist who attended Penn between 1975 and 1979. He is the author of *Protecting New Jersey's Environment: From Cancer Alley to the New Garden State* (2010), from which this essay is adapted. Used by permission of Rutgers University Press.

# A Clockwork Orange

Riding the "world's largest model railway."

By David Seltzer

In many ways, Glasgow reminds me of my hometown of Philadelphia: it's a gem with grit. Both cities are known for their quirky local character, self-deprecating humor, and unintelligible accents. And Glasgow, like Philadelphia, was once a huge shipbuilding and industrial center that experienced a painful decline in the second half of the 20th century but has more recently bounced back as a vibrant, hip, and youthful "small" big city. The two cities also share a fondness for strange delicacies: Glasgow has deep-fried Mars bars, while Philly has scrapple, which is an "everything but the oink" pork product.

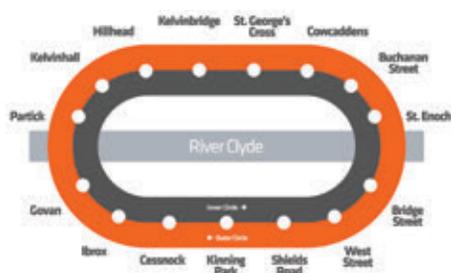
Glasgow has a bonnie wee subway that perfectly befits its size and local character. (Locals call it the "subway," and not the "Underground" or the "Tube," as in London.) It consists of but a single circular line 6.5 miles around, and it's entirely underground. The right side ("Outer Loop") trains run clockwise, and the left side ("Inner Loop") trains run counterclockwise. Sponsored by the private Glasgow District Subway Company, it opened in 1896, making it the third-oldest system in the world after London and Budapest. In most other cities' subway systems, the radial lines are built first, and if there is a circle line it follows years or even decades later, to allow getting around the city without first having to travel to the center to change lines (as in Madrid, Moscow, Tokyo, and Beijing). In Glasgow, the circle came first, but despite on-and-off plans over the past century, no radial lines have ever been built.

In addition to its small scope, the Glasgow Subway is also rather diminutive

in scale: it has been characterized as the “world’s largest model railway.” Everything about it seems tiny: the track gauge is a skinny four feet (15 percent narrower than standard gauge), the twin tubes are only 11 feet in diameter, the island platforms are alarmingly narrow, and the curved car interiors are barely six feet high. In circumference, sound, and *shoogle* (the Scots term for the distinctive sway and shake of the cars), riding the Glasgow Subway is not unlike sitting in a Whirlpool front-loading dryer, set on low tumble. As idiosyncratic a transit line as any I’ve ever ridden, Glasgow’s subway closely reflects the quirky, friendly, and funny character of the city it has so dutifully served since Queen Victoria’s reign. In terms of local character, this small subway runs circles around the much larger but blander systems serving Tokyo or Beijing.

The subway serves the heart of the central business district but also some toney neighborhoods to the northwest and some working-class neighborhoods on the south bank of the River Clyde. For example, one of the south side stations is Ibrox, adjacent to Ibrox Park, home stadium of the vaunted Rangers Football Club. On game days it is filled with high-spirited, singing soccer fans, a fair number of whom have had the Breakfast of Champions at the local pub. At such times, passengers are well advised to avoid wearing green and white (the colors of their archrival, Celtic Football Club).

When the Company decided to develop the subway in the 1890s, electric-powered trains were still a newfangled technology. Instead, they decided upon a cable-pulled system, powered from a central steam engine. But it had limited speed (12 ½ miles per hour), was capacity-constrained, and proved difficult to maintain. The line was eventually electrified in the mid-1930s after the city acquired it from the private operator, and it was renovated in the late 1970s with replacement cars that were painted a bright orange. Owing to the color of the cars and the configuration of the line, local wags immediately



## Riding the Glasgow Subway is not unlike sitting in a Whirlpool front-loading dryer, set on low tumble.

dubbed the subway “A Clockwork Orange,” and the name has stuck.

In preparation for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the Glasgow firm Stand Design was hired to rebrand the old system with new wayfinding, car livery, maps, and marketing material, much as the Boston MBTA had done for its nearly-as-old system in the mid-1960s. The stations had been a series of drab earth tone

ochres, tans, and browns, and are now fitted out in a very smart palette of orange, gray, and white. A brand-new fleet of driverless walk-through train sets entered service in 2024, to be followed by mid-height platform screens. But despite the cosmetic makeover, it would be prohibitively expensive at this point to try to expand the scale of Glasgow’s Victorian-era Lilliputian tunnels and stations. The contrast with another city’s circle line—Beijing’s Line #10—could not be greater. Glasgow’s circle line has 15 stations compared to Beijing’s 45; it takes 15 minutes to circumnavigate compared to 104 minutes in Beijing; and it carries 35,000 daily riders versus 1.9 million.

From street level, most of the station entrances are not standalone kiosks, but stairwells embedded in storefronts of commercial buildings or apartment blocks. As a result, the subway entrances are not that conspicuous from the street, and in some cases may even be a source of confusion, as in the Kelvinhall station’s entrance, in which the municipal subway entrance is a few steps away from a Subway sandwich shop.

However, there are several very impressive exceptions. St. Enoch has a delightful turreted Victorian folly by Scots architect James Miller near the demolished St. Enoch's railway station. Immediately adjacent is a graceful and airy contemporary glass pavilion by AHR Architects, reminiscent of Norman Foster's "fosterito" canopied subway entrances in Bilbao.

Glaswegians seem to take great pride in (and harbor great affection for) their Clockwork Orange; it is almost a mascot for the city. The system has its own official catchphrase, "My Glasgow, My Subway," and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport's website has a section where residents proclaim their devotion to it in video clips. At the new Zaha Hadid-designed Riverside Museum of Transport on the Clyde, one can walk through a full-scale replica of an old station with a vintage car. The subway even has its own music hall-style anthem, "The Glasgow Underground," with such memorable lyrics as: "The train goes round and round / You've never lived unless you've been on The Glasgow Underground!"

My Glasgow tour guide was Andy Campbell of the aptly named Dress for the Weather Architects. He told me about a hallowed tradition among local college students: a pub-crawl called the *Subcrawl*, which involves alighting at each of the 15 stations and downing a pint at a nearby pub before heading on. His firm designed a tour guide pamphlet that maps out not only each station's surrounding architectural and cultural attractions (the Glasgow School of Art and the Kelvingrove Art Museum, for example) but also local pubs with great character, such as the Laurieston, the Lismore, and the Horseshoe Bar. The good news is, if you've been "overserved" and find you've missed your stop, not to worry: It will reappear in due course—like clockwork.

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David Seltzer WG'76 is the author of *Transit Tourism: The Iconic Art and Design of 22 Subway Systems Around the World*, from which this piece has been adapted with permission of Schiffer Publishing.



## Learning in Kalkaji

"There are a lot of aspirations in these narrow alleys."

by Alexei Dmitriev

"Who lives here?" I asked Dharshini, taking in the small, neat room: a dirt floor swept clean, a single bed, a small stove, and an armoire that looked too large for the space. The words escaped before I could stop them, and I regretted them instantly. Dharshini's soft reply felt like a gracious reprimand: "My two sisters, my parents, and me. My little family."

It's hard to shed the lenses we look through, and I thought I'd known better. I had already spent two weeks teaching English to children in a slum in Southern Delhi's Kalkaji neighborhood, volunteering with Prajna Foundation, a local NGO that runs an afterschool center there.

Few experiences prepare you for the India beyond palaces and monuments. The first-time visitor sees only chaos, noise, and dust—what an untrained eye may mistake for misery. But beneath that apparent squalor runs a deep current of raw vitality and relentless striving. I've

been coming to India for years, long enough to know that its contradictions aren't things to be "understood" but accepted. Yet here, standing in Dharshini's one-room home, I still felt like a failure.

Dharshini was one of my students. Her mother sold flowers at a nearby market. I'd stopped by in the afternoon to buy some garlands for my daughter Dora, who was flying in to join me and teach drawing at the center. Dharshini's family had migrated from Tamil Nadu in search of better opportunities. Like countless others, they came north chasing the promise of a better future in a big city.

Many outsiders think of slums as static—places where people are trapped. But they are in fact unbelievably dynamic. Slums like this one are constantly evolving: a tarp tied to a wall one year becomes a tin roof the next; a man pushing a cart today saves for a rented stall tomorrow. As RK Sinha, who joined Prajna as a volunteer in 2005 and now chairs

the board that runs the foundation, told me one afternoon, “Just poverty does not create slums; there must be prospects of social mobility as well. There are a lot of aspirations in these narrow alleys.”

And that, I realized, was why working here never felt depressing. The air is thick not with despair, but with ambition—an urgent, collective hunger to rise. Many Western visitors find it hard to believe that people with so little can laugh so easily. But I’ve heard more laughter by the water pumps in the alleys of Kalkaji than in the gated suburban communities that surround Washington, DC. Darshini and her neighbors don’t see themselves as victims. Their joy serves a function; it’s an endurance skill.

In the Prajna center’s ground-level studio older girls learn hairdressing. Upstairs, two small classrooms pulsate with energy. One is proudly equipped with PCs; digital literacy lies at the heart of Prajna’s mission. “Just because the kids are underprivileged, the facilities should not be underprivileged,” Sinha told me, as he tells his donors.

The younger group arrives first, around two in the afternoon. Despite having no running water, every child comes clean and neatly dressed, as if to prove that dignity does not depend on indoor plumbing.

The day begins with the national anthem followed by a devotional song whose lyrics carry an ecumenical message:

*Early in the morning, taking Your name, O Lord,*

*We begin our work today, O Lord.*

*With pure devotion, we meditate on You.*

*We receive the boon of knowledge from You.*

*You are the beginning, and You are the end.*

*We never forget to respect our teachers.*

*May we become so great that we reach for the sky.*

When they sing the final line, eyes closed and palms pressed together, I can almost see the invisible ladder they’re climbing, one small step at a time. I teach English to newly arrived kids from Central America at a public middle school in Maryland, yet these children somehow



## The children’s joy serves a function; it’s an endurance skill.

seem closer to “reaching the sky” than my students back home. And as I’ve tried to figure out why over the last two weeks, I’ve come to think that this corny ritual—which my stateside students would scorn as irremediably “cringe”—actually plays a big part in it. Singing is definitively outré in American schools, but in Kalkaji it imbues the classroom with a social architecture that seems indispensable.

When these students chant together, they seem to conjure an immediate sense of belonging that loosens the social anxiety that so many American children carry into school. On one side of the globe, tweens file down hallways mesmerized by a thousand algorithmic media feeds. Here they literally sing in unison, preparing their minds for reflection and sustained effort with a collective commitment that morning intercom announcements in US schools cannot hope to match. And the words invoking guidance, honoring teachers, and asking “to reach the sky”—these supply a communal narrative that dignifies striving by infusing daily chores with deeper meaning. In a few minutes, a foundation for steadier self-discipline, a forward-looking confidence, and a patience for gradual progress has been laid down.

They sit on the floor, notebooks on their laps, focused for an hour straight—unthinkable in so many American classrooms. A wedding orchestra clatters by outside, announcing the arrival of a groom, but no one rushes to the window. Some, like Janvi, who looks older in her hand-me-down uniform, bring along younger siblings who curl up in their laps. Yet the mixed ages don’t create chaos; as I write on the board, I feel their eyes on my back. They know instinctively that education is a rope that might pull them up—an attitude that often seems to elude my students back home, who are spellbound by media feeds that glorify lucky breaks and shortcuts to viral fame rather than the humdrum work of steady, cumulative progress.

Arya captivates me most. She doesn’t come daily; she helps her mother at home. But when she is here, it’s as if she brings her own light with her. Her eyes—large, bright, endlessly curious—seem capable of absorbing everything. When I ask for a volunteer to write on the board, her hand rises first. Her handwriting, elegant and assured, puts mine to shame.

From the window I see a woman washing her hair in a courtyard, fully dressed. Privacy doesn’t exist here, life spills into the open. She could be Arya’s mother or aunt. And I find myself wishing for Arya’s future to include a door she can close when she takes a bath.

By five o’clock, the older group arrives. Dharshini and her best friend Mithra come prancing arm in arm. Tall, shy Ayyanar slips in later; his questions are never easy to answer. These teenagers are mostly Tamil speakers, so my Hindi is useless, but communication hardly suffers. Their eagerness bridges every linguistic gap.

Our daily activity features a reenactment of “The Boy Who Cried Wolf.” More hands go up for the wolf’s part than the boy’s. Not because the wolf has fewer lines, but because no one wants to play someone “flaky.” Their moral compass is instinctive. If little Janvi and Arya grow up to be like Dharshini and Ayyanar, Prajna’s work is succeeding.

## Views

I saw that success in Gokila, one of the center's early students. Her grades had improved dramatically after joining Prajna, but when her parents fell deep into debt, they pulled her out of school to work as a housemaid. Sinha intervened, helped the family through the crisis, and Gokila returned—eventually earning a degree in education from Amity University. Today she teaches at the Delhi Tamil Education Association school, where she'd excelled as a student. Almost every afternoon, Gokila comes back to mentor the Tamil children at Prajna. The center's narrow staircase does lead upward.

Watching the kids bent over their notebooks, I kept circling back to a phrase that I can't shake: *the same human material*. These children are made of the same potential and intelligence as their compatriots who, having grown up in the same country but under radically different circumstances, get

into the best US universities, like Penn.

When I first arrived, the children began calling me "sir." I tried to stop it. "Please, call me Mr. Alexei," I said, but the habit proved unbreakable. "Well done, sir," I told Aravind one afternoon after he gave me the perfect answer. The class giggled; Aravind turned red. "You are sir," he protested. "I am not."

"You are as much a sir as I am," I replied. "I am no better than you. We are all human beings." He stared at me, unsure whether I was joking or insane.

That exchange stayed with me. Respect for teachers is instilled here early on, but it carried a sting, too. Their reverence for me, a pale-skinned Westerner, was humbling and often uncomfortable. The only thing that softened this awareness of imbalance was the children's warmth. On our final day the children showered Dora and me with handmade cards, written in the careful, looping

English that they were still working so diligently to master:

*"I feel very happy you come here teach us, Mam."*

*"Your English is good, and I liked it, Sir."*

*"Sir and Mam, we will miss you very much."*

*"You very care of the students, Sir."*

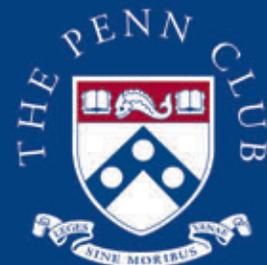
Many cried and so did we. The kids waved until we were out of sight. Yet life in this remarkable place, where hope is woven into the rough cloth of daily struggle, refused to pause for a sad moment. The narrow alley outside the center smelled of jasmine and fried snacks; a stage was being set up for a temple play that would run all night.

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Alexei Dmitriev G'88 last wrote for the *Gazette* about volunteering to support Ukrainian refugees in Poland ["Alumni Voices," Nov/Dec 2022].

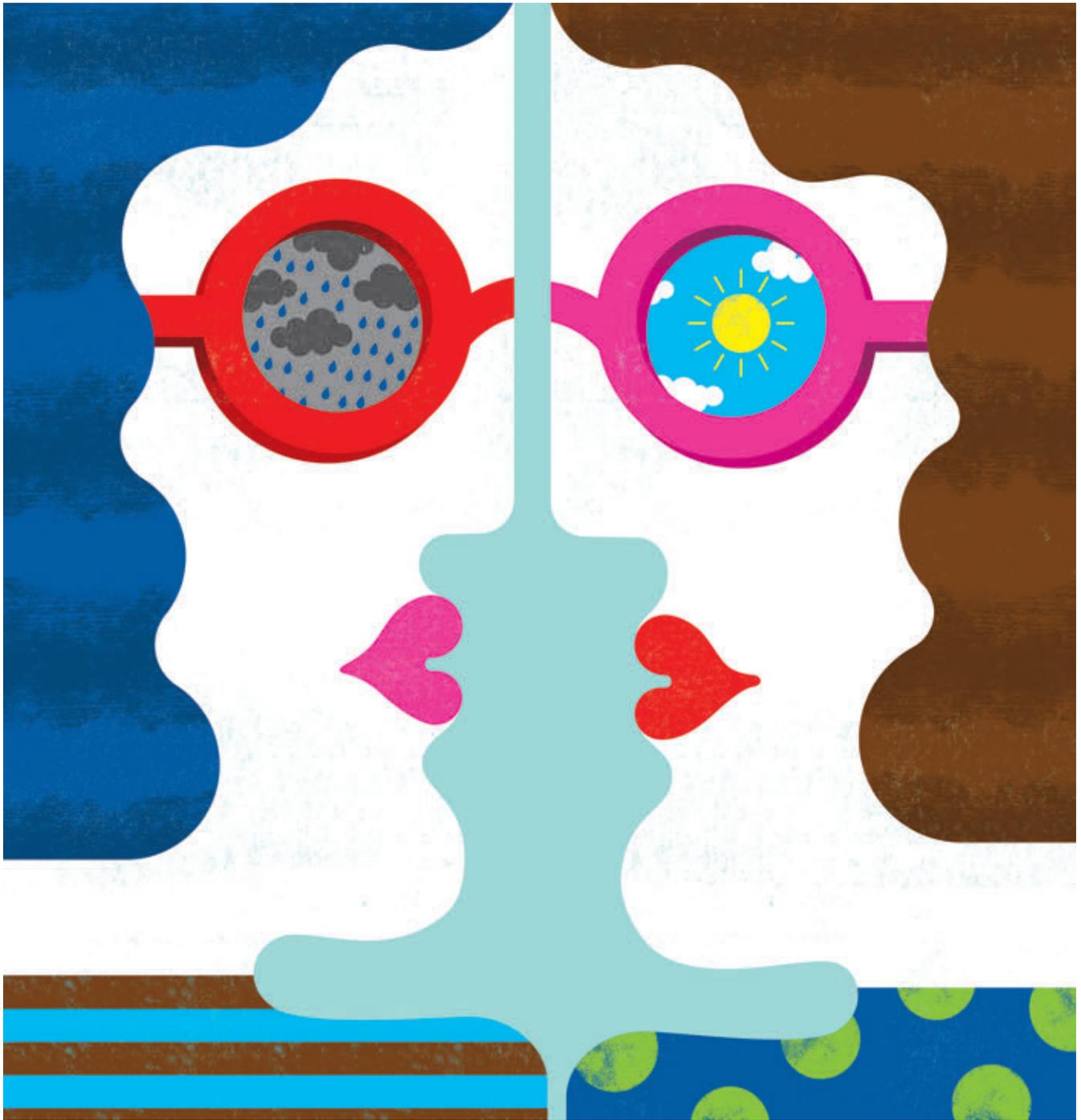
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# What Is True?

The Wolf Humanities Center interrogates the complexities of truth. ▶

**J**ulia Verkholtantsev, topic director of the 2025–26 Wolf Humanities Center Forum on Truth, has an improbable confession:

“Truth,” she says in an interview, “is a little bit boring. I’m actually very interested in everything that is opposed to truth.”

In a manifesto describing the forum, Verkholtantsev, associate professor of Russian and East European Studies at Penn, calls the notion of truth “elusive and intricately complex,” as well as “inextricably intertwined with its numerous conceptual opposites: falsehood, dishonesty, error, delusion, misinformation, illusion, and self-deception.” That perspective inspired the forum’s September conference, “The Edges of Truth: Secrecy, Artifice, and the Limits of Knowledge,” which delved into practices such as astrology, cryptography, and forgery.

Each year the Wolf Humanities Center Forum explores a broad, seemingly amorphous subject through talks, films, and other events, as well as research fellowships for faculty, postdocs, and students. Recent topics have included Revolution, Heritage, Migration and, in 2024–25, the more elliptical Keywords. All events are free and open to the public; many are livestreamed and recorded.

Along with the September conference and a fall film discussion series, the Forum on Truth sponsored an October lecture on “Truth and the Novel,” by the Pulitzer Prize-winning historical novelist Geraldine Brooks, and “Ukraine and Russia: Writing History in

the Time of War,” a November panel featuring historians of the two nations. Slated for the spring semester are “The Truth about Sign Language Acquisition” (February 11, in collaboration with Penn’s ASL Program), and “Make It Look Real” (a March 18 film screening and discussion in collaboration with the Penn Museum).

Verkholtantsev says she first proposed Truth as a forum subject in 2016, after that year’s presidential election. One inspiration was her research into etymology, which she describes as a branch of ancient philosophical thought “based on the belief that language preserves the true meanings of words.” She had a political motivation as well. “I was on the cutting edge,” she says. “Back then, no one was talking about misinformation, disinformation, fake news.”

The idea didn’t get traction at the time. But Verkholtantsev went on to serve as Undergraduate Humanities Forum Director, helping undergraduates pursue research projects. And by the time the topic of Truth resurfaced in conversations at the center, she had an entirely different take. “None of what really motivated me back then motivates me anymore,” she says. “I think there’s enough conversation about misinformation and disinformation. We are caught up in this presentism, and we don’t have a moment of reflection. I wanted to step back into history.”

In fields such as law, politics, and religion, Verkholtantsev argues, truth is “functional”; it has applications. By contrast, “the strength and the

power of the humanities is in approaching [the topic] as something that is not easily defined. This is what the humanities are good for: They teach people tolerance of ambiguity. I wanted to put truth through this test.”

In developing the program, she “was obsessed with finding someone who can talk about historical fiction.” Part of Geraldine Brooks’s allure was that she had first been a journalist, including a stint as Mideast correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*. “I was interested in how she can talk about the tension between fact and fiction,” Verkholtantsev says.

More than 100 people filled the Penn Museum’s Widener Lecture Hall to hear Brooks deliver the Dr. S.T. Lee Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities, touching on both her journalistic career and methods as a historical novelist.

In searching for a book idea, Brooks said she looks “for the thing that actually happened in the past that, if you made it up, nobody would believe it.” Examples include an English village’s choice to quarantine itself during the bubonic plague, which inspired *Year of Wonders* (2001), and the tale of the first Native American boy to attend Harvard, recounted in *Caleb’s Crossing* (2011). “I’m intrigued by these stories that are true but improbable,” Brooks said.

Knowing too much about the history can actually be an impediment, she argued: “If Caleb had left us a diary of his experience, there’d be no room in that story for a nov-

elist’s imagination.” Brooks nevertheless struggles to imbue her novels with accurate historical detail. However, she said that empathy and a knowledge of human nature are more important. “We put ourselves in somebody else’s shoes,” she said. “We empathize. We imagine.”

In her Civil War novel, *March* (2005), about the father in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*, Brooks applied what she had learned about war’s devastation as a foreign correspondent. She had seen attacks in which “teenage Iranians rolled themselves into the guns of teenage Iraqis and ended up mashed into the sand. So, modern weapons, Civil War weapons. The effect on the body is the same, the fear is the same. Human emotions are what shape consciousness.

“And that is where I look for the truth,” Brooks said. “You can move the furniture as much as you like. But the strong emotions are the things that shape us. And they, I believe, don’t change.”

On November 19, Benjamin Nathans, the University’s Alan Charles Kors Endowed Term Professor, served as an interlocutor to Harvard professor Serhii Plokhyy, in a wide-ranging discussion of the challenges of writing the contemporary history of Russia and Ukraine.

While not exactly Monday morning quarterbacks, usually historians “already know how the game has ended,” “who are the winners,” “who are the losers,” Plokhyy said. Not so in the case of the cur-

rent war between Russia and Ukraine. Other challenges, he said, have been the prevalence of misinformation and the unavailability of archival materials. One compensation has been the ability to draw on contemporaneous social media postings.

Ploky—who has written multiple books on the war and cochairs the Ukrainian History Global Initiative—said he first learned about the Russian invasion from a sister in Ukraine, and he makes no claim to being a detached observer. “You can’t stay outside of what is happening,” he said. “I am very clearly taking a particular side. I want not just to write history—I want to influence it.”

His models, he said, are historians of World War II, many of whom took “a very clear moral position.” He added: “My position on this war that I have been writing on is very clear, it’s very personal. It’s very clear who is the aggressor. It’s very clear who is the victim. Once I really identified my position, then the task was to turn all those emotions into the best and the most convincing work that I can write.”

Future historians may critique his version of the truth by “trying to show how limited my source base was, how biased I was, how I didn’t cover this and didn’t cover that,” Ploky said. “Because apart from real problems,” that is “how historiography works: You have to find a niche for yourself and then say something that others didn’t say. It’s almost guaranteed.”

—Julia M. Klein



## Back to the Office— but Make It Better

Research shows that the costs of remote work outweigh the benefits, but companies will have a hard time convincing workers.

**“The case for in-office work has never been stronger,”** write Wharton professor Peter Cappelli and HR strategist Ranya Nehmeh in their new book—titled, for good measure, *In Praise of the Office: The Limits to Hybrid and Remote Work* (Wharton School Press, 2025).

The argument gets more nuanced along the way, but Cappelli—a longtime skeptic on the subject [“Expert Opinion,” Nov|Dec 2021]—and his coauthor contend that early claims that the great experiment spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic had

proven that companies can do just fine with a workforce operating partly or completely away from the office, while affording employees greater freedom and flexibility, simply haven’t stood up to scrutiny. Drawing on a variety of research studies on job performance as well as interviews and focus groups involving 720 employees conducted by Cappelli, the George W. Taylor Professor of Management, and Jasmine Wu of the University of Texas, they offer numerous examples from a wide range of fields and office sizes documenting significant

losses stemming from the lack of in-person contact in areas ranging from brainstorming sessions to routine inter-office functions. “We assumed the office work got done the way it did because of the nature of the tasks being performed,” Cappelli and Nehmeh write. “We did not appreciate the role that physical proximity played because we had never seen office work without it.”

It turns out that much of companies’ ability to continue to operate effectively during the pandemic depended on essentially cannibalizing relationships that predated the shift to remote work. With the passage of time, and more and more employees knowing only remote or hybrid work, those relationships have dissipated, and the result has been losses in performance for organizations and diminished career prospects for employees, and especially for new hires.

Increasingly, companies are looking to bring people back to the office. But along with employees’ reluctance, one big constraint in many cases is that firms have reduced their office space. The pandemic accelerated this phenomenon, but companies had previously been experimenting with various office-sharing and “hoteling” schemes, and moving toward open offices, in search of real estate savings. “The lack of interest employees have in returning to the office is at least in part because the goal of using office space to increase productivity has given way to the goal of providing space as cheaply as possible,” they write.

They also fault firms for lax enforcement, which has led to practices like “coffee badging,” in which an employee comes into the office but stays only briefly. As a result, offices may be largely empty even on “in-person” days—and people end up sitting in their cubicles rather than at home for their Zoom meetings, defeating the purpose.

And most employers so far have done a “lousy job” of explaining why a return to the office is necessary, falling back on “general, culture-sounding appeals like ‘We all work better together;’” the authors write. But employees generally think things have been fine the past four years, and legitimately ask, if being in the office is so important, why wait all this time to say so? “Not to be too blunt about it, but the problem of getting employees back in the office is a management failure, one we could have well predicted.”

At this point, companies should admit that they were too slow to bring employees back—and make a clear case for why presence in the office matters. “What employees need in order to accept the change is evidence that there is an organizational need to come back and that it is not just because the leaders don’t trust other employees to work from home—which we hope is not the real reason for returning,” they write.

Cappelli and Nehmeh have developed a framework for accomplishing a successful return that they call *BOND*, which stands for: *Build the*

*case, Own the expectations, Normalize engagement, and Demonstrate inclusion.*

Companies need to show how being in the office strengthens employees’ own career opportunities and fosters stronger overall performance; they should also address employee hesitations head-on. Next, they must set clear guidelines for activities like team meetings, brainstorming sessions, and mentoring that benefit most from in-office participation—and leadership has to model these behaviors through their own presence and participation. Office attendance must become a “new cultural norm,” with social interactions and cross-functional collaborations built into the workflow. Finally, rather than “a rigid one-size-fits-all policy,” they write, “employees should feel valued and heard, with flexibility in how they engage.” To make “participation more organic and meaningful,” they recommend things like mentorship programs, knowledge-sharing lunches, and team-led social events.

“We have all loved the flexibility of remote work, but we have also missed the human connections. There is no going back,” Cappelli and Nehmeh conclude. “The real opportunity now is in reimagining what the future office should look like—and moving forward with purpose. Together, leaders and employees can help shape a future workplace with clear purpose and shared norms that is something better than what we had before.” —JP

## Rhythm of the City

A new course probes the connection between neighborhood sounds and identities.



**It’s the end of April but it feels like summer has suddenly arrived.** The

windows of a small conference room in the Jaffe History of Art Building at 34th and Walnut Streets are thrown open, inviting the sounds of the city to enter: the tentative honking of cars, the muffled chatter of campus passersby, the soft bounce of a plastic bottle being tossed into a bin. A chorus of bird calls and chirps floats through this appropriate soundtrack for an afternoon where about a dozen students are presenting summaries of the final projects they will be handing in to Stanley Collins for his course,

Listening to the City: Soundscapes, Music, and Place.

The Urban Studies course builds on research that Collins—a provost’s postdoctoral fellow in city and regional planning at the Weitzman School of Design—conducted while pursuing his PhD in sociology at Temple University. The Philadelphia native worked on a project related to gentrification while getting his master’s in sociology at Oklahoma State. After moving back home to pursue a doctorate, he began wondering if he could somehow bring his passion for music into his ethnographic studies. “I started going to concerts

and one night I ended up at the Fillmore in Fishtown,” he says. “I was sitting there, sort of drifting mentally and looking around the room, when I noticed a furnace in the corner.” That got him wondering about the building’s original purpose—and how it had come to be converted into a trendy music venue. His idle musings would provide the fodder for his dissertation.

Turns out, the structure had been built in the early 1900s, one of many warehouses and manufacturing plants that once called the area home. Along with unpacking its industrial bones, Collins learned that the white working-class neighborhood had acquired a reputation as being insular, racist, and hostile to outsiders. The advent of clubs and music venues in the last 20 years, though, has hastened gentrification while aiding the neighborhood’s recovery from its post-industrial doldrums.

In Collins’s class, that confluence of music, racial identity, and gentrification is the basis of listening to the city. One student, for example, examined changing neighborhood dynamics by capturing soundscapes in West Philly’s Cedar Park area and comparing them to recordings made by David Guinn and Aleks Martray in 2008 to accompany Guinn’s mural *The Heart of Baltimore Avenue*. Another combined interviews with her own experiences as a young line dancer to better understand how soul line dancing spaces contribute to community formation, particularly for aging Black women in the

city. Using yet another research method, an undergraduate analyzed news coverage and social media posts to dig into racialized and religious-based noise complaints made in Singapore about both mosques and the sounds of Hindu bellringing.

Collins says he designed his inaugural class to give students the sociological tools to analyze varied aspects of urban development. One of the first projects for the students was to create a “sound biography” from sourced audio and video clips that evoked their homes. Later, in an echo of the trajectory that brought Collins to teach this class, the students dug deeper into various public spaces by recording their acoustic environments and researching their histories. Another activity sent them off to parts of campus—the Franklin’s Table food court, the Inn at Penn, a local CVS—to examine the background music and consider why it had been chosen and who it was meant to attract.

Collins is teaching the course again this spring with additional readings planned and more activities outside the classroom, including visiting local music venues and speaking with the staffs there about their successes and challenges. “Too often, we privilege the visual over the auditory,” Collins says. “I certainly do because of my training and work. But this is a budding strain of research and I’m happy to be able to explore it with my students.”

—JoAnn Greco

## Honor

Former Penn President Gutmann, left, talks with Andrea Mitchell during a November “fireside chat.”



## Andrea Mitchell Receives Beacon Award

The trailblazing broadcaster was honored for “her leadership and contributions to journalism.”

**E**arly in their “fireside chat” following the Trustees’ Council of Penn Women (TCPW) having awarded legendary broadcast journalist Andrea Mitchell CW’67 Hon’18 its highest honor, the Beacon Award, former Penn President Amy Gutmann Hon’22 fondly complained that Mitchell kept turning questions about herself back to the reporting she’s done on others. “You see what Andrea does? She talks about Nancy Pelosi!” Gutmann said, when the question “When did you first realize the global importance of your role?” morphed into a preview of an interview with the former House Speaker about her decision not to run again for Congress in 2026.

But if Mitchell was reluctant to sing her own praises,

the ceremony itself and a video montage of well-wishers from Penn and colleagues and mentees at NBC supplied the deserved superlatives about her singular impact as a journalist and her devotion to her alma mater.

TCPW Chair Aliya Karmaly Sahai W’99 said that she felt as if Mitchell’s “insightful reporting” had been a presence all her life. “Andrea has held my hand through the notable and the notorious events of our times,” she said, and the journalist embodies the mission of TCPW to “support, foster, and promote advancement of women and women’s issues” at Penn since its founding some 40 years ago. “Andrea has consistently led the way in journalism, bringing clarity to defining moments of our

time,” Sahai added, as well as being “a steadfast supporter of her alma mater” and “a mentor and champion of women” whose leadership “inspires a new generation of women to pursue their dreams and to strive for positions of influence.”

Mitchell called the award the “capstone” of her long involvement with Penn, which—in addition to TCPW—has included volunteer service as a University trustee and a chair and member of the School of Arts & Sciences board of advisors, as well as financial support to establish the Andrea Mitchell Center for the Study of Democracy and to advance other Penn programs.

Mitchell harked back to the 2001 celebration of 125 Years of Women at Penn [“Gazetteer,” Jan/Feb 2002] as a highlight of her volunteer career, along with having been sent, after Penn President Judith Rodin CW’66 Hon’04 had announced she was leaving College Hall, to vet a potential successor—then-Princeton Provost Amy Gutmann. Gutmann, who is back on campus after serving as the US Ambassador to Germany from 2022 to 2024, said that Mitchell was the one “who convinced me that I really should want this job here.”

Mitchell got her start as program director at WXPB—then entirely student-run, she emphasized—and her first job was as a “copy boy” on the night shift at Philadelphia’s all-news radio station, owned by Westinghouse. (This was after failing to win the Thouron Award “that I had my heart

set on” closed off the prospect of an academic career, she noted.) “I worked there during the tumultuous ’60s and ’70s and that was the crucible,” she said. A storied career followed, with Mitchell first establishing herself on radio and TV in the Philadelphia market and then moving to NBC News, serving as the network’s chief Washington and foreign affairs correspondent, reporting from all over the world and interviewing figures from Ronald Reagan to Fidel Castro, and until recently hosting her own show *Andrea Mitchell Reports*.

Mitchell credited an early mentor, journalist Sid Davis, with helping raise her visibility when he was bureau chief in Philadelphia and then bringing her to NBC nationally. (Davis died in October at 97, but until about six months before had kept up a practice of messaging her after shows.) “There were no female mentors then,” Mitchell said, but she’s tried to be one in her own career. “When I had the ability to hire a producer, I would hire a woman, because there weren’t enough women,” she said. “And then when I had my own show, I would make sure that I put the researchers on the air and give them a shot, because I knew they were good reporters.”

She also commented on the ongoing transformation of the media environment—with cable companies plagued by cord-cutting, the economics of streaming services uncertain, and newspapers continuing their long decline—and what that might mean for young

HONOR

## Huntsman Senior Named Rhodes Scholar

The University announced in November that Florence Onyiuke has been awarded a prestigious Rhodes Scholarship for graduate study at the University of Oxford in England.



A senior pursuing a dual degree in international studies and business in the Huntsman Program, Onyiuke was among about 100 Rhodes Scholars to be selected worldwide and among 32 from the US out of thousands of applicants.

Her senior thesis focuses on the informal economy and socioeconomic mobility of West African street vendors in Barcelona. It’s based on research she undertook during a study abroad program in Spain last spring, which involved “conducting interviews with street vendors, engaging with local university faculty, speaking with officials at the Ajuntament de Barcelona, and connecting with labor syndicates,” she told the Penn Abroad website. “I initiated and pursued these efforts on my own, driven by my passion for international economic development and my goal of producing a thesis with real-world impact. This experience deepened my academic understanding while sharpening the research, language, and cross-cultural skills that will support my long-term ambition of working at the intersection of policy and global development.”

Onyiuke, who hails from Altamonte Springs, Florida, has also been a Frederick Douglass Global Fellow, a three-year Perry World House Student Fellow, a member of the Dean’s Advisory Board, and the executive director of Black Wharton Consulting, where she’s focused on using local data to improve business outcomes for Black-owned businesses and nonprofits in West Philadelphia.

With her Rhodes Scholarship, which funds tuition and a living stipend for two or three years of graduate study at Oxford, she plans to pursue a master’s degree in African Studies followed by one in Sustainability, Enterprise and the Environment, according to the Rhodes Trust.

people contemplating a career in journalism. “We have to figure out a way that people get their information not just from social media, and we’re in the middle of this right now, so I don’t know where it’s ending.” Future journalists will have career trajectories very different from hers, she added. “I would just say, ‘Study everything. Don’t specialize too early. Read everything. Don’t predict what you’re going to do.’ I came [to Penn] as a violinist. I was going to be an English professor. That didn’t happen. You don’t know where your heart and interests are going to take you.”

Mitchell did answer Gutmann’s question about her “global importance,” if in her own way. “I always felt like journalism is an obligation and a responsibility, a civic responsibility. You don’t always get it right, and it’s harder now in these days of social media, where anything you said can be taken—and now by AI taken completely—out of context and mischaracterized,” she said. “And so you never feel that you’re quite there. You always feel that you’re only as good as your last story.”

Which, in this case, happened to be about Nancy Pelosi. —JP

# Native North America Gallery Opens

With extensive input from Native American collaborators, the Penn Museum highlights Indigenous cultures from the continent's four corners.



**In November, the Penn Museum opened a new showcase** for its extensive and wide-ranging collection of Native American materials and launched the “great next chapter” in its collaboration with Native experts, communities, and artists to share stories of North America’s Indigenous cultures.

The 2,000-square-foot Native North America Gallery includes more than 250 items drawn from the museum’s collections, plus work by contemporary creators, representing regional cultures from the Northeast (Lenape/Delaware), Southeast (Eastern Band

Cherokee, Muscogee Creek), Southwest (Pueblo), and Northwest (Tlingit, Alutiiq). The oldest objects on view—spearpoints excavated from Clovis, New Mexico, in 1936—date from 9500 BCE, and the newest is “Parceled Space #2,” a woven sculptural work commissioned by the museum from Cherokee artist Brenda Mallory. Video and audio testimony, interactive touch screens, and opportunities to hear Native languages and try out traditional weaving techniques are also part of the gallery’s multisensory experience.

But the first thing visitors will encounter upon entering

is an empty display case, referencing issues of repatriation and the debate between Indigenous communities and museum institutions on what materials are appropriate for display. “In its absence, the object becomes an act of Indigenous sovereignty—an assertion of agency over the stewardship and future of cultural heritage,” explained Joseph Aguilar Gr’19, tribal historic preservation office board member of the San Ildefonso Pueblo, one of eight Indigenous consulting curators involved in shaping the display, in press materials for the show.

Interactive touch screens enrich visitors’ experience of the exhibition. Works by contemporary Native artists include “I’m More than Fluff” by Holly Wilson (top) and “Emerging from Raven” by Preston Singletary.



**“They’re not artifacts. They’re living items that have eons of knowledge contained within them.”**



The gallery is the successor to *Native American Voices: The People—Here and Now* [“Know That We Are Still Here,” Jul/Aug 2014]. The lead curator for

that show was Lucy Fowler Williams CGS'01 Gr'08, the Jeremy A. Sabloff Senior Keeper in the Museum's American Section, who is also cocurator of the Native North America Gallery with Megan Kassabaum, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Weingarten Associate Curator for North America. The earlier exhibition was originally intended to run for five years only, rather than the eventual decade it spanned. "It was time for that show to come down," Fowler Williams says.

Both exhibitions feature many "organic items that needed to be rotated every year. So even as we extended it to 10 years, we were rotating every corner of that show annually just to protect and take care of the items as stewards of the collections. That's just what we do," she adds. "So for that reason, really, we started this new initiative, and we worked really drawing from the strengths of our collection. In this iteration, we wanted to do a deeper dive into fewer regions, so that we could talk about the deep time through periods of rupture and conflict and then into the present." Such a focus was made possible by the breadth of the museum's holdings. "Not all museums can do that kind of story," she says. "But we're positioned to do that."

Collaboration with Native experts was a priority for both shows, but "it's a totally different group of people" this time around, Fowler Williams says. The earlier exhibition brought in four prominent Native women as consulting

colleagues, plus about another 80 "individuals whose voices were involved in the show, either through written text or their artwork." Rather than taking *Native American Voices'* thematic approach, the current show has a primarily geographic framework. "Here, we have eight consulting curators who are from the four regions, and 10 artists who contributed. So it's a large group again." But there are "certainly a lot of continuities" between the exhibitions, Fowler Williams says. "It's really interesting, because a lot of these important topics are kind of further developed in this show. So for me, it's a great next chapter."

A common theme in comments by the Indigenous guest curators at a preview event was that the objects displayed were signifiers of cultures that, though often exploited, remain vibrant and continue to develop. "This is one of the first collaborations that I've had with these types of institutions in which we were heard, in which we were consulted," said one of them, Jeremy Johnson, cultural education director of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, calling it "an important example" for other institutions going forward.

"We have been here for thousands and thousands of years, and this knowledge that we have is exhibited in these items. They're not artifacts. They're living items that have eons of knowledge contained within them, and to be able to express that in the way that we have here, I think it's been a blessing."—JP

## Gridiron Shakeup

After 39 years, Ray Priore departs Penn football; Rick Santos hired as new head coach.



Ray Priore watches Justin Watson, one of the best players he ever coached, run by during the 2016 season.

**A**fter the Penn football team concluded its 2025 season with a 17-6 win over Princeton on November 22, senior wide receiver Jared Richardson offered a heartfelt message to his coach Ray Priore.

Fresh off becoming the sixth player in program history to eclipse 1,000 receiving yards in a single season, Richardson called his college football finale "special" in large part because "Penn was the only Division I school to give me an offer." Then, turning toward Priore, the senior who concluded his college career ranked third all-time at Penn in receiving yards

(2,505), fourth in receptions (193) and tied for second in touchdowns (27), said:

"Thank you, Coach P—I appreciate the opportunity. Penn's going to hold a special place in my heart for the rest of my life."

It would be among the final warm moments between Penn's longtime coach and one of his players. Two days later, Priore announced he'd be stepping down from Penn after 39 years at the University.

"To say coaching at the University of Pennsylvania has been the honor of a lifetime is an understatement," Priore said in a statement. "Penn has been my second

## SPORTS

home for 39 years, the last 11 of which I have had the privilege of serving as the head football coach. The end of the season marked my final game, and closing this chapter with a win is something I will carry with me forever.”

On December 13, Penn filled its vacancy with the announcement that Rick Santos had been named the program’s next head coach. Santos arrives from the University of New Hampshire, which he guided to three NCAA FCS playoffs appearances in five seasons in charge. He previously served as an assistant coach and was a star quarterback at UNH, where in 2006 he won the Walter Payton Award, given to the nation’s top FCS offensive player. After graduating in 2008, he played four seasons in the Canadian Football League. He also had a brief stint as the quarterbacks coach at Columbia from 2016 to 2018 under former Penn head coach Al Bagnoli.

Priore first arrived at Penn in 1987 as an assistant linebackers coach and rose up the ranks to become the team’s defensive coordinator from 1999 to 2014, helping the Quakers capture 10 Ivy League titles in his 28 overall years as a defensive assistant. He served under three different head coaches and emerged as Bagnoli’s top deputy and handpicked successor when Bagnoli left the program following the 2014 season.

Priore had enormous success in his first two seasons, winning a share of the Ivy championship in 2015 and 2016 and leading Penn to a

big upset over fourth-ranked Villanova in just his second game in charge (the program’s first win over Villanova in more than 100 years). Another signature road win later that season snapped Harvard’s 22-game winning streak. Those teams were fueled by future NFL draft pick and Super Bowl winner Justin Watson W’18, one of 10 All-Americans during Priore’s tenure as head coach.

But the Quakers have not won a conference title since, usually finishing in the middle of the Ivy standings.

This year Penn finished 4–3 in the Ivies, suffering 22-point defeats to Cornell on Homecoming and to eventual joint champion Yale, as well as a wild 45–43 loss at Harvard,

the league’s other co-champion, in which the teams traded go-ahead field goals in the final 22 seconds.

Priore’s overall record as head coach was 58–42 and 37–32 in Ivy play.

Before the season, in an interview with the *Gazette*, Priore discussed some of the newer challenges of the transfer portal and NIL money [“Sports,” Sep/Oct 2025], and expressed dismay over friends and longtime fellow coaches Steve Donahue and Mike Murphy GEd’04 losing their jobs running Penn’s men’s basketball and men’s lacrosse teams, respectively. “You have to deal with these issues that come through,” Priore said at the time. “That’s our profession.”

Off the field, Priore partnered with the Friends of Jaclyn Foundation to welcome a young cancer patient named Whito DeCapria as the Penn football team’s honorary captain in 2015. DeCapria and his family remained close with the program over the past decade before DeCapria sadly passed away in September at the age of 14.

“In my tenure, I found the greatest joy in connecting with others and making a meaningful difference in their lives, and I look forward to continuing to pursue this passion, while also dedicating more time to my family,” Priore said. “At this time, I leave with a full heart and immense gratitude for what we accomplished together.”—DZ

## Forever Home at Franklin Field



**John Alexander C'87**, seen here on the microphone during Penn’s Homecoming game versus Cornell on November 8, completed his 15th year as the football team’s public address announcer. His father John “C.T.” Alexander W’56 had previously held the job for 50 years [“Sports,” Sep/Oct 2010], meaning the father-son pair have combined to announce Quaker football games for 65 consecutive years—exactly half of the existence of Franklin Field, which celebrated its 130th birthday in 2025. John had previously served as a longtime spotter for his dad, who was affectionately known as the “Voice of Franklin Field.”

# Full Circle

Over five decades and across five states, Fran McCaffery has been a winning college basketball coach. Now back at his alma mater, does the 66-year-old once known as “White Magic” have enough magic left to overcome significant NCAA obstacles and restore Penn to its former great heights?

By Dave Zeitlin

**It's** Homecoming weekend at Penn, and Fran McCaffery W'82 is home in so many ways.

Home in the city where he grew up, after coaching stops brought him to college towns in Indiana, North Carolina, New York, and Iowa.

Home on the sidelines of a basketball court, his fiery demeanor on display in the first game of Penn's 2025–26 men's hoops season.

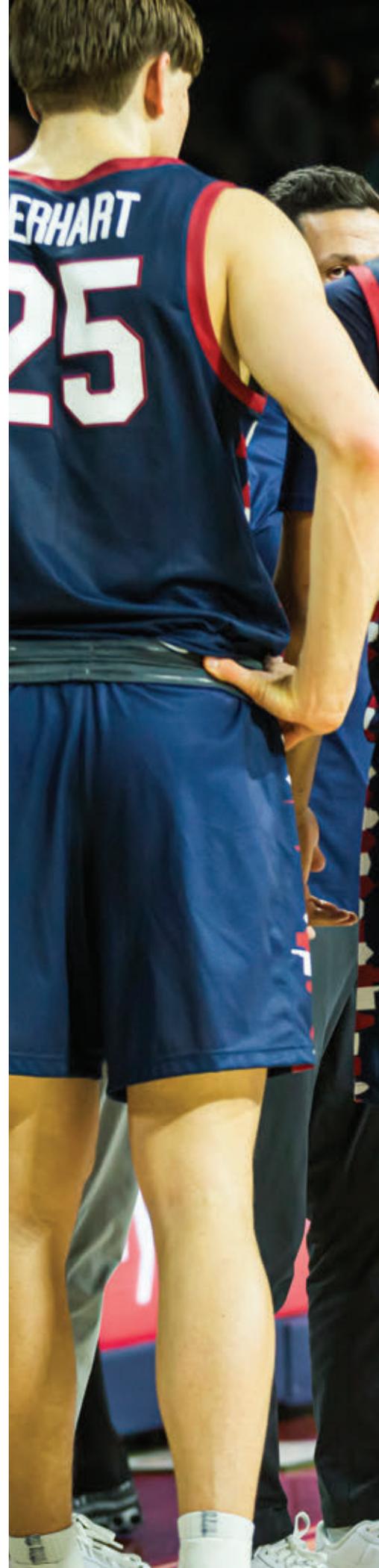
And home at his alma mater, inside the gym where he and his family used to watch Big 5 doubleheaders every Saturday and where he suited up as a crafty Quaker point guard in the early 1980s.

As he presides over the home bench for a November 7 matchup against Rowan University, McCaffery—who was hired by Penn in March, after 15 years at the University of Iowa [“Sports,” May/June 2025]—only needs to raise his head to see glimmers of his past lives all around the Palestra.

Seated eight rows above him is his older brother Jack, a longtime Philadelphia sportswriter recovering from a stroke that's left him in a wheelchair.

“It's been a hell of a journey to get here,” Jack says, pointing to the nearby section where he and Fran used to take in those Saturday Big 5 doubleheaders—across the gym from where their father, a Philadelphia cop, worked Palestra security. Jack predicts he'll see his brother lead Penn to a championship, just as he has at all his other coaching stops.

Sitting nearby, in Section 221, is Tom Crowley W'78, who drove in to catch Penn's season opener from the College of New Jersey, where he works as a basketball assistant coach. He recalls McCaffery's late parents (“Mr. and Mrs. Mac”) as fixtures at the Palestra, where the matriarch of the family usually joined her husband with a book in hand or something to knit. Crowley later grew close to Fran when both worked as assistant coaches at Penn during the 1982–83 season, after which he watched McCaffery climb up the coaching ladder from afar. Munching on popcorn, Crowley observes that McCaffery has calmed considerably over the last 10 years, although the Penn coach is still up on his feet for much





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of the game—yelling, scowling, cursing, gesticulating, encouraging. “Fran has just injected us with a huge surge of energy,” Crowley says. “I think we have a chance to get back into the thick of this thing.”

Across the gym is an era-spanning constellation of Quaker stalwarts whose paths have intersected with McCaffery in one way or another. There’s Tim Smith C’79, a starter on Penn’s famed Final Four team whose last year as a Penn student was McCaffery’s first. A few seats over on press row are former players and current broadcasters Vince Curran EAS’92 W’92 and Stan Pawlak C’66, who’ve known McCaffery for ages and, with the coaching change, are feeling their own surge of energy to provide color commentary for another season. Sitting a few rows up is Justin Windheim C’03, whose family has a multigenerational history of avid Penn fandom and who proudly possesses a vintage photo of himself as a baby, being held by McCaffery in the Penn locker room during the 1981–82 season. “This is what I’ve been waiting for,” says Windheim of the coaching change he hopes will reignite a program that had been drawing fan consternation for falling from its once-proud perch atop the Ivy League.

When the game ends in an easy 119–72 victory against the Division III opponent, McCaffery walks to the other side of the court to embrace some alumni and friends he’s known for decades, and then partakes in “The Red and Blue,” the swinging arm motions slowly coming back to him. After returning to the locker room, players spray him with water to mark his first Penn victory. Still drying off from his unexpected shower, his white hair slicked back, he makes his way to the press conference room, telling reporters he tried not to think about the emotional resonance of his debut as Penn’s head coach, instead putting “total focus on the game itself.” He says he’s proud of his players, 14 of whom scored as the Quakers set a program record for most points in a game. Though the competition will be stiffer from here on out, the head

coach had still come away impressed with the number of free throws Penn attempted (49) and how many more rebounds the Quakers had than Rowan (30). “This was a great game for us,” says McCaffery, whose notoriously fast-paced and exciting brand of hoops had already begun to give Penn fans reason to hope.

Ten days later, in front of an electric Palestra crowd featuring many more of his former teammates and his old coach Bob Weinhauer, that hope would be given a dose of rocket fuel with the kind of win over a city rival that resembled the glory days of old.

Scan the roster of Penn’s famed 1978–79 men’s basketball team and you won’t find Fran McCaffery’s name. But “he was still very much a part of that team,” says Tom Leifsen WEv’82, a freshman reserve on the squad that shocked the college basketball world by making it all the way to the NCAA Final Four [“The Outsiders,” Mar|Apr 2019].

McCaffery had transferred to Penn from Wake Forest, where he played as a freshman in 1977–78, and had to sit out due to NCAA rules at the time—though he still practiced with the Quakers, lived with other players, and helped them develop a “mental toughness” that would carry into March. “You don’t go into North Carolina in the NCAA tournament and beat North Carolina unless you have a certain mindset, and that’s what that team had,” says McCaffery, who traveled on his own to games that year, including riding a bus to Raleigh, North Carolina, with a future mayor and governor named Ed Rendell C’65 Hon’00 (who was honored at midcourt for his longtime devotion to Penn basketball before McCaffery’s second home game this season). While Penn’s second-round NCAA tournament win over North Carolina, in Raleigh, may have shocked almost everyone that day in 1979, McCaffery—who knew that Tar Heels team from having played them the prior season with Wake Forest—saw it coming. “That’s why you came here,”

McCaffery says, noting that he would have come to Penn right out of high school, where he starred for La Salle College High as an explosive point guard nicknamed “White Magic,” had freshmen been eligible to play varsity back then. (That Ivy League policy, ironically, was changed the following year). “You knew the Palestra was going to be full, you expected to compete for a Big 5 championship, you expected to win the Ivy League, you expected to beat anybody that was on your schedule. That was the mindset we had.”

McCaffery carried that attitude into his sophomore campaign, though it was quickly derailed when he tore his Achilles tendon, forcing him to sit out a majority of another season. But he returned from his injury the following year and “didn’t lose a step when he came back,” says Paul Little W’83, a former Quaker star who played alongside McCaffery. “I was always amazed by his speed on the court. He ran as fast dribbling the ball as anybody else would run without the ball.”

By his own admission, McCaffery “wasn’t the best scorer” in college, but he made up for it by getting Little and Penn’s other scorers the ball, while “playing defense and prioritizing winning.” As a result, McCaffery led the Ivy League in steals and assists as a senior. “The weakness in his game was probably his jump shot, and I think that was sort of the knock on him,” recalls Leifsen. “But he could certainly distribute and defend. I think he leaned into that. And he was kind of a gym rat, a scrappy kind of guy, with the talent to find people and make it look a little flashy too.”

As the only senior on the 1981–82 squad, McCaffery also leaned into his role as a leader and floor general, navigating the Quakers through what he calls “one of the most interesting seasons in Penn basketball history.” After winning three straight to start the season, including a win at Stanford, the team lost nine in a row, while traveling to far-flung stadiums in Albuquerque and Tokyo, before reeling off 14 consecu-

McCaffery led the Ivy League in steals and assists as a senior in 1981–82, guiding the Quakers to the NCAA tournament and a date with St. John’s.

tive victories to win the Ivy League and make the NCAA tournament.

“It was a great sense of accomplishment, because we never gave up on ourselves,” McCaffery says. “You know, you lose nine in a row, and there could be a lot of finger pointing and blaming. But we hung in there and battled and kept competing.”

Although Penn lost its 1982 NCAA tourney opener to St. John’s, it was a sweet moment for McCaffery, who had gone to the NIT the previous season (after Penn lost to Princeton in a one-game playoff) and had to watch Penn’s 1979 and 1980 NCAA tourney runs from the sidelines.

It would also be the first of many memorable March Madness moments for him.

**T**hroughout his time playing at Penn, McCaffery had no intention of getting into coaching, figuring he’d go to graduate school or use his Wharton degree to work on Wall Street. “It was just when it came to an end,” he says, “I didn’t want it to end.”

Others weren’t surprised that McCaffery immediately began coaching after graduating. “If you could be prophetic and say, ‘This guy is going to be a coach someday,’ you could say that about Fran,” says George May W’84, a former Penn teammate and fellow Philadelphian who knew McCaffery from their days playing in the city’s Sonny Hill League, where McCaffery earned his “White Magic” nickname. “He was very intellectual on the court.” Leifsen—who used to hang out with McCaffery in his highrise dorm, along with Fran’s brother Jack, and talk hoops over crappy late-night pizza—adds that “it was clear he was going to be somehow involved in the game, and he made that happen rather quickly.”

Weinhauer wasn’t surprised, either. McCaffery’s coach throughout his time at Penn and his biggest inspiration once told the *Gazette*, “He was always a student of the game. He was head and shoulders above other college kids in terms of thought process [“Profiles,” Jan/Feb 2011].” But Weinhauer left Penn for Arizona State



**“I was always amazed by his speed on the court. He ran as fast dribbling the ball as anybody else would run without the ball.”**

in 1982, ceding head coaching duties to Craig Littlepage W’73, who gave McCaffery his first job, alongside fellow assistant coaches Tom Schneider and Crowley.

It wasn’t exactly a glamorous foray into coaching for McCaffery. The third assistant was “a strict volunteer,” so he had to get another job on campus as a mail courier for the psychology department. “I basically worked with all the professors in the psychology department,” he recalls. “I’d get them all their mail and do favors for them. It was a lot of collating tests.”

Among his tasks on the court was coaching the junior varsity team, which came with the added responsibility of driving players to road games in a questionable van. “It wasn’t the safest vehicle,” McCaffery says. “The steering was a little off. It felt like I was driving a boat.” Other menial tasks included “picking up the

towels after practice, mopping the floor,” remembers Crowley. “That’s what you do if you want to try to get into coaching.”

But that 1982–83 season, Crowley adds, was a “good learning experience” for them both. And he could tell right away that “Fran had it—he had the gift.”

The next season, Schneider left Penn to become Lehigh’s head coach, taking McCaffery with him. Two years later, when Schneider returned to Penn, Lehigh offered McCaffery the head coaching job. The promotion made him, then only 26, the youngest Division I head coach in the nation, but “I felt like I was ready,” he says. That bore out on the court when, in McCaffery’s third season in charge, Lehigh won its conference to earn its second NCAA tournament berth in school history, the first having come three years earlier when Schneider and McCaffery were on the sideline together.

As a 16 seed matched up against top-seeded Temple in the first round of the 1988 NCAA tourney, Lehigh “went into the game feeling confident that we could beat them,” McCaffery says. “We had a lot of shooters and [Temple] Coach [John]

Chaney played zone.” Lehigh buried 10 three-pointers and hung with the Owls until the end before ultimately falling short in its major upset bid. “We had a confidence about us,” McCaffery says. “We weren’t intimidated at all, nor should we have been. We won our way there.”

That March mantra—and the expectation that his teams could beat anyone, no matter rankings or seeds—would continue for McCaffery over the next decade as an assistant coach for Notre Dame, which he helped transition into the mighty Big East while working under the tutelage of John MacLeod and Digger Phelps, one of the architects of Penn’s famed 1971 team [“Almost Perfect,” Mar|Apr 2011]. At his next stop, as the head coach of UNC Greensboro from 1999 to 2005, he again went into the NCAA tournament as a 16 seed, where his team in 2001 fell to a dominant Stanford squad. And then, as Siena’s head coach from 2005 to 2010, he broke through with the kind of March Madness success most mid-major coaches only dream of, guiding the little school from upstate New York to back-to-back first-round NCAA tourney upsets in 2008 and 2009 (though McCaffery doesn’t like the word “upset”). The first was a convincing demolition of fourth-seeded Vanderbilt, which Siena followed the next year with a dramatic comeback win over Ohio State, in the state of Ohio, after it had “looked like the game was over,” McCaffery says.

The star of that win was point guard Ronald Moore, who ascended into March Madness lore by drilling a game-tying three-pointer at the end of overtime and then the winning three in double overtime. Legendary announcer Bill Raftery boosted Moore’s fame by yelling his signature catchphrase for a clutch shot, “Onions!” after Moore’s first one and then “Onions! Double order!” after his second.

Now one of McCaffery’s assistants at Penn, fresh off a long professional career in Europe, Moore credits his Siena coach and current boss for preparing him for that moment. “He really gave me the ultimate confidence and just put the ball in my hand

and let me just be me,” Moore says. “You know, at a lot of other places that I played after that, it’s always been a struggle.”

Even though Penn’s players were too young to have watched Moore’s NCAA tournament heroics live, they often refer to him as “Onions.” Moore says the nickname serves to remind him of his goal to help those players create their own March memories and help McCaffery not only guide Penn to an Ivy League title but to the program’s first NCAA tourney win since 1994. (Once a perennial Ivy front-runner and mainstay of March Madness, with 22 NCAA tourney appearances between 1970 and 2007, the Quakers have only been there one time since, in 2018, having fallen behind other Ivy programs since former coach Fran Dunphy’s departure almost 20 years ago.)

“I’ve got two dreams,” Moore says. “One is just to be able to get to the Dance with this team, as a coach, so these kids can experience what I experienced—because I’m still close to that [Siena] group to this day. My second goal is to get to the Sweet 16. I want to do that for him as a coach, because I wasn’t able to do it for him as a player. It would be icing on the cake.”

**A**t the University of Iowa, which hired McCaffery in 2010 after his wildly successful stint at Siena, McCaffery continued to win a lot of games—297 to be exact. He became the Hawkeyes’ all-time winningest coach and one of just 14 Division I head coaches to take at least four different programs to the NCAA tournament, guiding Iowa there seven times with four tourney victories. He turned a program that had been sputtering before his arrival into one ranked as high as No. 3 nationally in multiple seasons and consistently ranked as the top scoring team in the Big Ten.

But McCaffery never managed to win a second-round NCAA tournament game and advance to the Sweet 16. And after back-to-back seasons in which Iowa missed the NCAA tourney, McCaffery was fired last March.

When Paul Little heard the news, he wasn’t sure if his old friend might want to take a break or retire after 43 years of coaching. Or if he’d even consider going from a prominent program that often plays on national television to one that’s won only one Ivy League championship in the last 18 years and plays in front of an increasingly apathetic student body. So he texted McCaffery to ask about the sudden vacancy at Penn after Steve Donahue had been let go four days earlier. “He sent me back a text immediately and said, ‘I am *very* interested,’” recalls Little, who swiftly began working his connections as a member of the Penn basketball board. Although Penn boasts other basketball alumni who are successful college coaches and would have been strong candidates, McCaffery quickly emerged as an easy and logical choice for athletic director Alanna Wren C’96 GED’99 GrD’15, who made the splashy hire before the end of March.

While it’s uncommon for a coach from a power conference team to move to the Ivy League (Tommy Amaker going from Michigan to Harvard in 2007 is one other prominent example), McCaffery has the energy for a new challenge and the enthusiasm to do it at his alma mater. “He’s still at a high level,” says Tristan Spurlock, a Penn assistant coach who came with McCaffery from Iowa. “From scouting to recruiting, he’s at a 10 out of 10 pace.” Adds Ben Luber, another one of McCaffery’s new assistant coaches, “He works, I’ll tell you that. He’s in early, he’s here late. He watches a ton of film, more film than I’ve ever watched. He’s got the energy to do a lot of things throughout the course of the day.”

Luber, who served the last five years as a high school head coach at George School after spending the previous decade as a Division I assistant coach, calls it a “dream come true” to work for McCaffery. Luber first met him when he was 10 at a Notre Dame basketball camp, was recruited by him out of high school when McCaffery was at UNC Greensboro (Luber

McCaffery talks to his team during an 83–74 win over St. Joe’s in November that had the Palestra crowd buzzing with excitement.



ended up playing for Penn State), and looked up to him as a mentor throughout his coaching career. “He’s the one guy I’ve really been waiting to work for.”

For Spurlock, too, it was an easy call to continue to work for McCaffery. “He’s not a micromanager,” Spurlock says. “From day one, he let me be myself, he let me push guys, he let me work guys out.” McCaffery has a similar relationship with his players, “allowing guys to be themselves every day,” Spurlock adds, “which is why he’s loved by every player.”

McCaffery has a reputation of being something of a hothead, but his assistants insist that’s mostly a misconception. Yes, he does scream at referees and sometimes picks up technical fouls. He is no stranger to ejection, including from his final game at Iowa. But that’s because he holds refs to a high standard, and “it’s ultimately about protecting his players,” says Moore. And in practice, “you can barely

### “From scouting to recruiting, he’s at a 10 out of 10 pace.”

hear him,” Spurlock notes. “He has his pet peeves, like every coach, but other than that, he’s not screaming, calling guys out. He’s not disrespecting kids.”

“He’s fiery, but at the same time he’s clear about what he wants from you, and there’s an expectation,” says Penn sophomore AJ Levine, who through the first part of the season has drawn the start at point guard—but also, at times, the ire of McCaffery, who’s been quick to yank him out of games. “He’ll never let someone guess what they’re supposed to be doing out there.”

For anyone who only sees the hot-tempered coach on TV, “the biggest thing people are surprised about is how many jokes he cracks, and how easy he is to talk to,” Spurlock says. Moore notes that Mc-

Caffery will often “crack a joke that’ll catch the players off guard,” and that although “he’s serious, he also keeps things light so that it doesn’t feel like his door is closed—his door is always open for any player.”

McCaffery can laugh about his referee battles, too. When Little would text him after one, “he’d tell me ‘Paul, they don’t know I’m from Philly!’” The day after McCaffery stared down a referee for an uncomfortably long time during a February 2023 comeback win over Michigan State, Spurlock recalls the head coach seeing the replay on ESPN and asking his assistant if it was going viral on social media, which is one place you won’t find McCaffery. “And I said, ‘Coach, it’s *everywhere*,’” Spurlock says. “And he busts out laughing and just goes back to work.”

There are other ways his in-game persona differs from his off-court one. Spurlock has “always admired” the kind of father McCaffery is, especially how he

McCaffery's intense and fiery coaching style has led to some confrontations with referees over the years.



balanced coaching and parenting with his sons Connor and Patrick, who played a combined 11 seasons for him at Iowa. He has two other children, son Jack and daughter Marit, with his wife Margaret, a former basketball player at Notre Dame. “It’s family before anything,” Moore says. “If we’re in a meeting and one of his kids calls or his wife calls, everything stops.”

The McCaffery clan is spread far and wide. Connor is an assistant coach at Butler, where Jack is a freshman forward. (Connor is also well known as the boyfriend of WNBA megastar Caitlin Clark, who he met at the University of Iowa.) Patrick currently plays professionally for a Romanian team—and during a recent interview his dad was glued to a TV in his Penn basketball office, questioning calls made by the FIBA Europe refs from 5,000 miles away. But everyone was at the Palestra for McCaffery’s introductory press conference last April—including his sportswriter brother Jack, with whom Fran is extremely close.

“It’s always family first,” Little says. “I’ve gotten a better appreciation for Fran as a husband and a dad. I love the fact that he has such a close-knit family.”

**I**t didn’t take long for McCaffery to make his first big splash with the Quakers. Five days after the coach’s introductory press conference, TJ Power announced that he’d be transferring to Penn after spending the prior two seasons at the University of Virginia and Duke. Coming out of high school in 2023, Power was among the top 20 recruits in the nation but had struggled to earn consistent playing time in the ACC. McCaffery, who had recruited Power to Iowa “as hard as I’ve ever recruited anybody” and calls him a “special” player, offered a soft landing spot for the 6-foot-9 forward to rediscover his mojo.

After shaking off some rust in his first couple games of the 2025–26 season, Power began to show why he was a former five-star recruit, boasting a skillset

you don’t often see in the Ivy League. In McCaffery’s second home game, the one that gave Penn fans and alumni that early jolt of energy, Power led the Quakers to an 83–74 win over Saint Joseph’s (now coached by Donahue) with 23 points, 15 rebounds, and several big plays down the stretch. Later in November, he carried the team on his back, scoring 29 points and burying some huge second-half three-pointers as Penn overcame a 15-point second-half deficit to beat another city rival in La Salle.

In that win, and in the previous day’s over Merrimack, McCaffery showed his coaching chops by making major second-half adjustments to galvanize his squad, which in both cases included subbing in another transfer he had brought to Penn, Lucas Lueth from Iowa’s Kirkwood Community College. Forward Dalton Scantlebury and guard Jay Jones, two key pieces of what McCaffery calls a “really good” freshman class that Donahue had recruited (all of whom honored their commitment after the coaching change), also made the most of their opportunities when called upon in those wins. (The Quakers ran out of gas playing their third game in as many days in the Cathedral Classic, their Thanksgiving weekend round-robin showcase at the Palestra, in a double-digit loss to Hofstra.) And through the first part of the season, Ethan Roberts—a 6-foot-5 forward who had transferred to Penn the prior year but whose offensive game has blossomed under McCaffery’s run-and-gun style—formed a dynamic 1–2 punch with Power. Roberts poured in 31 points against St. Joe’s and then 30 at Drexel four days later to lift Penn into the Big 5 championship game, though the senior suffered a concussion as Penn got routed by Villanova for the city crown.

While it will take time for McCaffery to build Penn’s roster in his mold, the arrival of Power combined with the development of Roberts gave fans an early glimpse of what the coach can do to turn around a struggling program—and offered hope that the Quakers, if healthy

when the league slate opens in January, can return to the four-team Ivy tournament after a two-year absence and perhaps even contend for a title.

“Franny is a tremendous coach but he is a piranha recruiter,” Crowley says. “He’s always had kids, at all his stops, where you’d scratch your head and say, ‘What’s he doing at Iowa?’ or ‘What’s he doing at Siena?’ And the second thing is he can see things that others miss. He takes a kid that doesn’t play as a freshman but he develops. He gets better, and by the time he’s a senior you say, ‘Man, what a player that kid is. How did Franny get that guy?’”

From Daren Queenan, who at Lehigh in the 1980s became one of the NCAA’s most prolific scorers, to Luke Garza, the 2021 National Player of the Year at Iowa, McCaffery indeed touts a long track record of high-level recruiting. He and his coaching staff immediately aimed to keep that going at Penn, and over the summer secured commitments from their five primary targets for next season’s freshman class, including two of the top-rated high school seniors in New Jersey, Isaiah Carroll and Ethan Lin. “It doesn’t always happen that way, but Fran’s an easy sell,” Luber says. “He’s taken four different teams to the NCAA tournament. He’s back at his alma mater. If you love the game of basketball, you’re going to love playing for him.”

Yet to continue recruiting at a higher level in the Ivies, McCaffery and his assistants know they’ll need to convince players to pass up not only full-ride scholarships but all the Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) money that’s now flooding college sports. “The money out there is fairly substantial these days, and that could be enough to get somebody to say yes to a particular place, but it’s not what the people that come here are overly concerned with,” McCaffery insists. The sell to teenagers and their families will continue to emphasize “the 40-year gameplan, not the four-year gameplan,” says Luber, who notes the importance of not only developing kids as basketball players

## **“Fran’s an easy sell. If you love the game of basketball, you’re going to love playing for him.”**

but also ensuring “they are preparing for what’s after basketball.”

While McCaffery is sympathetic to college athletes earning money, the new rule that allows them to transfer an unlimited number of times without sitting out a season “was a mistake, and I think [the NCAA] would probably admit that now,” McCaffery says bluntly, contending that the constant churn of players undermines the “camaraderie” that makes college sports special. The head coach is equally blunt when asked how he might stem the tide of Penn’s top players taking advantage of that by bolting after standout seasons, which has happened in each of the last three years—as it has throughout the Ivy League and other smaller conferences. “You have to coach them up correctly and provide a great experience,” he says. “And if you have a culture that works, then kids will stay. If somebody throws a bag of money at them, and they want to go, then go. We’ll get somebody else.”

McCaffery isn’t a stranger to being an underdog in recruiting wars. After finding and developing mid-major gems at Lehigh, UNC Greensboro, and Siena, McCaffery at Iowa was up against Big 10 powerhouses with way more money in their NIL coffers. “We were playing against teams where one guy had a million dollars,” says Spurlock, who praises McCaffery’s ability to develop undervalued recruits into core contributors, as he did with the Big 10 Freshman of the Year two seasons ago. Now that McCaffery’s at Penn, “he can show you the importance of a Wharton degree and what it did for him and his life,” Spurlock adds. “I think when you do that, man, that’s big time and it helps a lot.”

Although the Ivy League is clinging to its amateur model, having opted out of an NCAA revenue sharing settlement

that allows colleges to provide direct compensation to student-athletes, McCaffery exuded confidence on a recent Zoom event with Penn alumni that “we can make some noise in the NIL space.” As reported the next day by the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, McCaffery announced an alumni-driven collective that can raise money which “has to be dispersed for true NIL opportunities where someone is legitimately profiting from their name, image, and likeness.” An example might be a player being hired to represent a company through their social media presence, though the coach stressed it would be “fair market value” and with a far more modest price tag than at other schools—“\$2,000 deals here and there” to help defray college expenses. More importantly, McCaffery says, are paid internships that alumni can offer, providing student-athletes with “the opportunity to be mentored by some of the most successful people in business, in medicine, in education, in communications. There are still families and individuals that prioritize that.”

Pointing out that some college basketball players around the country are now making several million dollars per year, trying to win in a league that doesn’t even offer athletic scholarships “is complicated but it’s doable,” McCaffery says. “You just have to work that much harder.”

“It’s easy to look at why you can’t,” he adds, before chumming it up with former Penn players who once helped the program achieve national success and want to see a revival of its storied past. “I can go on and on about the world of NIL and pay-for-play, and we can debate if the Ivy League should have opted into revenue sharing. It doesn’t do us any good to debate it. We’ll deal with the rules we have in place.

“But we still have something special to sell on a number of different levels, not the least of which is what this place will do for you for the next 50 years.”

Like what it’s done for him.





# 2025 HOMECOMING

PHOTO BY TOMMY LEONARDI C'89

# MERIT AWARDS

## Faculty Award of Merit

### Herman Beavers, PhD, PAR'19



Herman, you have won wide renown in your field as a distinguished poet and teacher of 20th-century American and African American literature. At Penn, your scholarship has been recognized with your appointment to the Julie Beren Platt and Marc E. Platt President's Distinguished Professorship of English and Africana Studies. Just as important, you are well known on campus for your welcoming office, always open to students.

But your career is also notable for something equally important: your extraordinary commitment to extending education beyond the classroom, into the community.

"Literature belongs to everyone," you have said.

Fortunately for Penn alumni, you have been a leader in sharing your scholarship with Quakers on campus, online, and around the world.

Your commitment to using literature to build community was first evident in a distinctive program you designed and taught: an Academically Based Community Service course on August Wilson's plays, which connected West Philadelphia communities with Penn students through creative storytelling. It showed your distinctive ability to create collaborative, engaging educational experiences beyond the campus setting.

The course was rightly recognized with the first Community Engagement Award from the Netter Center for Community Partnerships—one of many honors recognizing your educational and civic contributions. You would later bring this program to Penn alumni by highlighting it at a Homecoming event.

You have also enriched the intellectual life of the Quaker community through the Penn Alumni Travel Program. You led two trips to Paris, which explored the experiences of African American expatriates, and one to Alabama, where you guided travelers through key sites of the Civil Rights Movement. Participants praised your ability to foster thoughtful conversations on often challenging topics, creating a safe space for candid dialogue and genuine connection.

But this was just one of many programs

you offered for Penn alumni. You led two online meetings of the Penn Alumni Reading Club—the first on James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* and the second on your own poetry chapbook, *Obsidian Blues*—giving participants a forum to think critically and engage deeply with significant literary works.

For the Inspiring Impact virtual series, you participated in a thought-provoking discussion on *The '60s at Sixty: Protest Poetry Takes Center Stage*, which offered a glimpse of the monumental role of Black artists in shaping art and culture in our country, then and now.

For Penn Alumni's Global Discovery Series, you marked the 50th anniversary of one of Toni Morrison's greatest works with a dynamic online lecture, *The Bluest Eye at 50: Reading Toni Morrison in the Age of Trump*. Afterwards, one participant commended you for a great presentation: "Herman Beavers has now made me want to read all of Toni's writings." That kind of transformative impact has been a hallmark of your interactions with Penn alumni.

Again and again, you have shown us that "literature is for everyone." You have been extraordinarily generous in sharing your time and expertise with Penn alumni, posing challenging questions, leading meaningful conversations, and encouraging alumni to read—and revisit—difficult texts, especially those addressing the African American experience.

In recognition of your commitment to using the study of literature to keep alumni engaged with their alma mater, promote lifelong learning, and build community, we are pleased to present you with the Faculty Award of Merit for 2025.

## Penn Alumni Social Impact Award

### Rev. Liz Theoharis, PhD, C'98



The National Civil Rights Museum presents The Freedom Award annually to honor or those who have made significant contributions in civil rights. In 2021, they chose to recognize *The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival*, which you revived with your Co-Chair, Rev. William J. Barber. As a widely recognized and celebrated minister, activist, and theologian, you have made a name for yourself over decades of activism and impassioned advocacy for the poor and disenfranchised, along with a range of other important social causes.

Your ministry is remarkable in its wide sweep. By drawing on theological scholar-

ship, a deep rooting in the struggles of the American Civil Rights Movement, and lived experience in political struggle, you use your voice to make connections between the past and the present to call for a better future. Of your public ministry, Franciscan Action Network's Executive Director Michele Dunne has said that you are an "incredibly important, inspiring, and challenging public speaker ... [speaking] with clarity, with conviction, and also with love."

Critical to your activism is the way you apply hard-won lessons to everyday life, including some learned during your time at Penn.

You came to Penn to pursue your degree in Urban Studies and Anthropology and quickly enmeshed yourself in the City of Philadelphia—embracing and advocating for its most vulnerable communities. You supported public school children by coaching sports teams and starting choir sessions, you joined grassroots organizations, and you began your involvement in anti-poverty activism through the National Union of the Homeless and the National Welfare Rights Union.

During this time, you protested funding cuts to low-income housing programs and deepened your faith and commitment to your values. This inspired you to further explore the theological grounding of your convictions, which ultimately led to you pursue a PhD at the Union Theological Seminary.

With such a long and dedicated history of activism, your reputation precedes you and has for some time. You are not the type to seek recognition or immediate gratification. Instead, you continue your life's purpose in service of making the world better and more just for all.

For your lifelong efforts to use your fearless voice on behalf of the poor and dispossessed, and for boldly speaking the truth with "clarity, conviction, and love," the Office of Social Equity and Community and Penn Alumni are proud to present you with the Social Impact Award for 2025.

## Creative Spirit Award

### Susan T. Marx, CW'66



In the realm of philosophy, the topic of creativity is a shape-shifter. Plato had Socrates say that when poets produce truly great poetry, they do it not through knowledge or mastery but through divine inspiration. Susanne Langer, the great 20th-century philosopher, argued that the creation of art is "expression," that is, the extrusion of an artist's knowledge of feeling.



We can bring no judgment on this count but would merely add that we know creativity when we see it. And it is because of your indefatigable spirit, Susan, that so many others can as well.

Perhaps the most recognizable example lies in your work with the Arthur Ross Gallery, where you serve as a valued member of its Alumni Advisory Board. Ever faithful to its mission to engage, educate, and inspire, the gallery has long been a welcoming forum for visitors to critically experience important art and artifacts across time periods, media, and cultures.

Because your Penn experience was shaped by the accessibility of the arts on campus, you knew the Arthur Ross Gallery would be a natural fit for a lecture series extending a similar opportunity to today's students. This lecture series launched in 2016 with the work of Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, and it was such a success that in 2021, you endowed the program. Now called the Susan T. Marx Distinguished Lecture Series, the Marx lectures feature significant art leaders and artists who address timely issues. You have continued to work energetically and enthusiastically, and the speaker list has grown commensurately to include luminaries such as David C. Driskell, Jaume Plensa, William Kentridge, and Elizabeth Turk.

Susan, you are committed to expanding creative opportunities and exposure to the arts wherever you go, and we count ourselves lucky that, often, "wherever" happens to be at Penn. Notably, you serve on the Director's Council of the Penn Museum—the same place where you took art history courses as an undergraduate and where your lifelong passion for stone carving was ignited. Then a consistent face among the classical Greek sculptures, you now return regularly for Council meetings and events. Your always-close relationship with these spaces only deepened after a Penn Alumni trip to Egypt in 2023, and your characteristic curiosity and engagement continue to enliven the Museum's historic renovations of its Egyptian Galleries.

In addition to your work with the Penn Museum and Arthur Ross Gallery, you have also served on the Advisory Board of the Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice and Research; are active with the Penn Club of New York, serving as President for three consecutive terms; are Co-Chair of the Trustees' Council of Penn Women Emerita Committee and former chair of the Grants Committee, whose funding has

supported the Penn Art Collection and its searchable archives.

Susan, much like the powerful carvings you display at the Century Association, your impact is set in stone: Because of your efforts—and the example of your own appreciation—the creative arts at Penn will continue to be displayed, debated, and delighted in for generations to come.

For your spirit of inquiry and commitment to creative opportunities, Penn Alumni is pleased to present you with the 2025 Creative Spirit Award.

#### *Young Alumni Award*

#### **Jodi L. Miller, PhD, C'14, GED'15**



People in your vicinity should be forewarned: at any moment, a shout may go up of "Ms. Miller!" That call—one of joy, excitement, and gratitude—inevitably means that one of your former students has spotted you.

Of course, you are no longer Ms. Miller, biology teacher in the Philadelphia School District. You are now Dr. Miller, with a PhD from the Johns Hopkins School of Education, specializing in how stress impacts the working memory and other cognitive abilities in children.

The path you took at Penn prepared you to become a teacher and a leader in the field of education. Your degree from the College in the biological basis of behavior provided you with a unique combination of skills: a strong foundation in biology that enabled you to effectively teach science to students and an understanding of neuroscience to better understand how they learned. Later, your degrees in secondary education and educational policy from the Graduate School of Education prepared you to put your knowledge to work for the benefit of your students.

As a Philadelphia public school teacher, you cared deeply about your students and their education. The job was rewarding but challenging, and you sought out other young teachers with whom to share your experiences and resources. You also knew that you could help even more students by working to improve the education system, leading you to pursue your PhD.

Your experience in the classroom helped you understand how difficult it is to know when students need additional support. You saw first-hand how hard it is for students to ask for help, and how challenging it is for teachers to gauge who needs it most. With that in mind, you founded WellCheq, an on-

line resource to improve emotional wellbeing and academic outcomes. That simple tool, which makes it easier for students to reach out and share how they are feeling, has been used by 15,000 students and counting.

Through all these experiences, your connection to Penn has stayed strong. The involvement and leadership that began with your election as vice president of your class as a first-year student has continued to this day. Now, you serve as co-president of your alumni class and helped plan and implement last year's 10th reunion. It is not just your own affinity that remains strong—you help others maintain their connection to Penn as well. Your listserv for those who have served on class boards has become a vital source of community and connection and currently includes nearly 30 years' worth of Penn alumni.

It has been said, time and time again, that you show up for Penn. From your work with your class, to your service on the Penn Alumni Board of Directors, to your role on the planning committee of the Penn Jewish Alumni Network, you get things done and connect others in service of the Penn community. Your view of leadership has always been one that emphasizes inclusion. You are a leader for all Penn alumni—from every background and lived experience. From your days as a student, to your time as a teacher, to your work as an alumni leader: your commitment lifts everyone.

For your ability to improve every space you occupy, your dedication to improving the education system for all, your commitment to strengthening the Penn alumni community, and for being the kind of teacher that students remember for years after they have graduated, we are honored to present you with the Young Alumni Award for 2025.

#### *Young Alumni Award*

#### **Ian A. Seltzer, C'09**



Ian, you are no stranger to history. Your family exposed you to the Red and the Blue early in life and taught you the longstanding traditions of Penn.

You made early visits to the Egyptian Galleries at the Penn Museum, visits which, you have written, were pivotal experiences for you. Surely, it is no coincidence, then, that you set Penn in your sights and graduated with a bachelor's degree in 2009—in history.

In an area of study that is built on records and derived from actions, yours reveal two things: First, your unique ability to make

personal connections wherever you go, whatever the project. And second, the significance of Penn in your life. In the years following graduation, you have remained an integral part of this university, and your warmth, curiosity, and “wonderful, encouraging outlook” have touched every initiative you have been a part of.

To say there are many would be an understatement: the Class of 2009 Reunion Giving Committee, which you co-chaired on the occasion of your 15th reunion; the Penn Libraries Orrery Society Council; the Penn Performing Arts Regional Council of New York; and the Penn Museum Young Alumni Council, on which you currently serve as Chair.

For more than a decade, you have served on the Penn Libraries Seltzer Family Digital Media Awards Selection Committee; you are also a judge of the Milken Penn Graduate School of Engineering Business Plan Competition. You regularly attend events and often help host them—over a dozen, in fact, since 2011, spanning everything from Homecoming to Engaging Minds.

You give generously of your time, resources, and perhaps most strikingly, of yourself. When friends, colleagues, and fellow volunteers learned of your nomination for the Young Alumni Award, letters of support flooded in.

The quantity and the letters themselves speak volumes: in the words of Vincent Maron, W’09, “Ian is a great ambassador for the Penn Libraries and the Penn community at large. He has always been willing to lend his keen and constructive opinions to develop causes and is a great friend.” Dorcas Lee Colas, C’84, wrote stirringly that you are not just accomplished but “thoughtful, dedicated, kind” and “all-embracing.” Michael Baker commented that you perhaps stand out to him most for your empathy and the respect you show others and Penn as an institution. Lisa Katz, LPS’21, wrote with conviction that you are “the epitome of the quincennial Quaker—a natural leader who has passionately advocated for and supported many schools and centers at Penn.”

More than anything, however, these letters unerringly quoted what seems to be your catchphrase: “Anything I can do to help.”

We are grateful to be able to respond, “We know.”

Ian, for nurturing a history that is both personal and institutional, and for your steady leadership across so many areas of this university, we are pleased to present you with the Young Alumni Award for 2025.

#### *Alumni Award of Merit*

#### **Jackie Einstein Astrof, C’93, PAR’25**



Service runs deep in Penn’s DNA. Our founder, Benjamin Franklin, saw “an inclination joined with an ability to serve humankind” as “the great aim and end of all learning”—a tenet that has been part of the University’s values ever since. Jackie, you clearly took this message to heart.

After graduating from the College in 1993, you continued your education at New York University’s Stern School of Business, where you earned an MBA. From there, you put your education to work in the nonprofit world, first at the Weill Cornell Physician Organization, and later at New York Road Runners.

Working in New York City during the late 2000s, you saw how the nationwide financial crisis affected the nonprofit sector. In that challenge, you saw an opportunity to bring the expertise of Penn alumni to nonprofits in need. With your can-do attitude and commitment to solving problems, you worked tirelessly to bring that vision to life.

The result was PennPAC, a nonprofit organization that brings alumni volunteers—across majors and careers, from recent graduates to retirees—together in teams to provide pro bono consulting services to nonprofits. But the nonprofits are not the only beneficiaries. Volunteers develop their own skills while gaining valuable exposure to the nonprofit world, connecting with fellow Quakers, and giving back to their communities.

Last spring, as PennPAC celebrated its 15th anniversary, its impact was undeniable: 300+ nonprofits served; 1,110 volunteers; 60,000 hours of volunteer service; and more than \$12 million in pro bono consulting. Your enduring legacy in PennPAC, was created out of *your* commitment to serve and continues to exist as a vibrant service that helps nonprofits thrive.

Even more impressive: PennPAC’s impact on lives and communities has been remarkable, serving organizations including the Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger; Kristi Yamaguchi’s Always Dream, an early literacy organization; and Philadelphia’s Friends of the Wissahickon, to name only a few.

While building PennPAC, you served your alma mater in additional ways, as vice president and a dedicated reunion volunteer for the Class of 1993, a member of the Penn Alumni Board of Directors, Penn Hillel Board Chair, and a longtime member of the Trustees’ Council of Penn Women (TCPW).

As the co-chair of TCPW’s Student Life Committee, you focused on student wellness and mental health, working to help Penn’s first-generation, lower-income students during the critical pandemic years. Under your leadership, the Committee organized a coat drive for students, delivered care packages during finals, and hosted a virtual leadership series, giving students an opportunity to learn new skills and socialize at a time of limited in-person contact.

Your friend and 2010 Alumni Award of Merit winner, Susan Molofsky Todres, CW’75, WG’77, summed up your contribution: “Jackie’s zest and spirit shines through in PennPAC’s diversity of volunteers, board members, donors, and clients. What a fabulous ambassador she is for Penn, what extraordinary connections she has created among Penn alumni, and what phenomenal goodwill she has spread among communities in Philadelphia, New York, and San Francisco.”

We couldn’t agree more. In recognition of your extraordinary commitment to volunteer service and your inspired vision in founding and building PennPAC, we are pleased to present you with the Penn Alumni Award of Merit for 2025.

#### *Alumni Award of Merit*

#### **Calvin Bland, W’72**



When you came to Penn with your idea for the Calvin Bland Fellowship Program, you saw it as a way to help ensure that young men of color would have opportunities to lead “productive and rewarding lives.” Your choice of words speaks volumes, embodying the remarkable humility and graciousness that have defined your life and career.

Calvin, yours is a story of patience and dedication. It takes a great deal of faith and resilience to not only weather the changes you have seen, but to thrive through them and inspire others. Your experience attending Penn was unconventional but formative. As an older, married commuter student, you did not partake in the University’s typical social life, mingling instead with transfer and graduate students.

It is not *in spite of* but probably because of this less typical student experience that you developed the relationship you have with Penn. Without the usual guideposts, you had to blaze your own trail, but you quickly discovered Penn’s values and fully committed yourself to the transformative possibilities of your education.

## Class and Club Awards

### Alumni Club Award of Merit | Penn Club of Los Angeles

Not only have you successfully connected the alumni in your area—an achievement on its own—you have built a thriving community that is always ready to show up for Penn and for each other. ... You work hard to organize events in different neighborhoods, so everyone has a chance to attend, no matter where they live. ... [Y]ou have shown incredible support for the city and surrounding areas through Penn Serves LA. Since 2012, the initiative has organized over 50 service projects, with Penn alumni, parents, family, and friends contributing thousands of hours of community service through projects such as delivering food boxes to those experiencing food insecurity, installing smoke alarms in low-income homes through the Red Cross, and throwing a holiday ice cream party for hospitalized children. And, during the recent wildfires, your members reached out to provide support to fellow alumni who lost their homes during the tragedy. ... For fostering service to causes that help those in need, as well as providing support to each other during extremely difficult times, Penn Alumni is proud to present you with the Alumni Club Award of Merit for 2025.

### Innovation Award | Penn Club of France

### Engagement Award | Penn Club of Nashville, and Penn & Wharton Club of The Netherlands

### Community Service Award | Penn Club of Metro New Jersey

### Class Award of Merit | Class of 1995

Just as I-95 connects 15 states (and the District of Columbia), your class leadership worked diligently to connect with far-flung classmates and build on-ramps for their engagement. In fact, you enthusiastically leaned into the concept and iconography throughout your planning. ... When your milestone 25th reunion celebration was cancelled with the arrival of COVID-19, your class re-routed effectively, turning toward an even more spirited social media strategy to encourage community-building and engagement. Clear communication is where the rubber meets the road, and you made an amazing journey of staying in touch as your 30th reunion approached. Themed posts like Pennsive Moments and #WinningWednesday became class favorites, garnering lively responses to nostalgia-piquing questions. ... Beyond exchanges on social media platforms, your digital reunion book gave classmates more opportunities to express themselves, resulting in submissions from over 300 classmates—a 25% participation rate! ... In a show of spirit and community, you chose to endow a scholarship, opening doors for future students (putting \$3.5 million into the Class of 1995 Endowed Scholarship!).

### Class Award of Merit | Class of 2000

To celebrate your 25th reunion, you—Penn's Class of 2000—took your classmates back in time to when they were still bright-eyed students on Locust Walk and when their future careers, travels, and achievements were all still to come. Nostalgic. Throwback. Vintage. ... You spent months connecting and reconnecting with friends and classmates, including a significant push in the weeks leading up to reunion. That pavement-pounding, shoe-leather effort led to an incredible turnout on Alumni Weekend. ... Your class showed up and brought their infectious positive energy to campus with 514 alumni and guests in attendance and 475 profiles on your digital reunion yearbook. ... You also showed your class's true character through thoughtful and impactful giving, which was recognized with the Class of 1917 Award for embodying the philanthropic spirit of Penn. You raised \$5.8 million from over 380 classmates (this year's highest participation rate of all reunion classes), supporting The Penn Fund, the Class of 2000 Endowed Scholarship Fund, and Penn First Plus New Student Orientation—and your university-wide giving totaled \$16.7 million from 460 donors.

### David N. Tyre Award for Excellence in Class Communications | Class of 2005

What is the winning formula for planning a successful 20th reunion when your 15th reunion had been cancelled and many classmates had not seen each other in a decade? ... Your monthly class newsletter was central, offering important updates and spotlighting members of the committee. Classmate profiles were especially popular, generating responses like: "I saw you in the newsletter! I'm definitely going back for our 20th reunion if you are!" ... Another avenue, your digital reunion yearbook, became a place to connect with classmates, share updates, and add photos—past and present—to create a snapshot of your 20th reunion. ... Pre-reunion events—held in Amsterdam, Atlanta, Philadelphia, and New York—helped generate excitement, and virtual wellness events—via Cycling and Peloton Yoga—provided another opportunity to connect. #Penn05, anyone? Creativity was encouraged! One memorable effort: A classmate piloted a class sweatshirt pop-up shop, with an '05 emblem to promote class pride. In the end, your hard work and persistence paid off. Attendance exceeded expectations, with 416 total registrations and 406 profiles on your digital reunion yearbook.

Your enterprising spirit revealed itself early on when you became a research assistant to Dr. William Hamilton. This was just the beginning of your storied career at Penn, and an early sign of your enthusiasm for learning and personal growth.

You came to see Penn as a locus of change and opportunity that could make the world a better place for people of color. You committed yourself to stewarding this promise of possibility, and you sought to make an impact in ways both big and small.

The big: You are a true leader, as evidenced by your extensive resume of responsibilities including your role on the School of Social Policy & Practice's Board of Advisors, where you quickly gained renown for your steadfast commitment to the School's mission, and your active leadership in the James Brister Society, where you have gained a reputation for being one of the most thoughtful people in the room.

The small: You are deeply invested in community, and you make a point of intentionally being present so that students and alumni can see your continued leadership, especially in difficult times. Your peers describe you as a quiet and focused leader whose serious, soft-spoken nature brings people together and stills a room. These traits require self-possession and confidence, and a sharp, strategic mind in times of stress.

These personal qualities are even more powerful when paired with your sense of service. Your impressive career included serving as President of St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, after which you served as Chief of Staff and Special Advisor to the President of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and taught at Rutgers University. Your tenure at RWJF was so distinguished that they decided to honor you by endowing the Calvin Bland Fellowships at Penn. You went on to do even more—turning your success as a healthcare executive into a boon for students of color at Penn, establishing the W. E. B. DuBois College House Endowed Scholarship and a fellowship in your name at SP2. But your generosity extends beyond your own name. You recently created an endowed scholarship named in memory of your close friend and collaborator Claire Lomax, C'84, one of the first Black members of Penn's Board of Trustees and a longtime member of the SP2 Board of Advisors. Claire often spoke about your mentorship and how you always stood in solidarity to combat racism and injustice. This latter gift underscores your ser-

vice to a higher cause and your sincere dedication to improving Penn for students of all backgrounds.

Calvin, you are an integral part of Penn's history and a paragon of leadership that is not about ego but is about helping others lead "productive and rewarding lives." For your efforts to expand inclusivity, possibility, and justice across the University, we are honored to present you with the Penn Alumni Award of Merit for 2025.

#### *Alumni Award of Merit*

#### **Denis Elton Cochran-Fikes, C'74, WG'79**



Elton: in March of 1970, you wrote the following to an associate editor of *Sport Magazine* at the time, "I have decided to attend the University

of Pennsylvania next fall. My main reason for attending Penn, besides its academic ranking, location, facilities, and my track future, is contained in an article I wrote for my school paper."

The article was entitled *My Profile in Black*, and in it, you astutely observed the importance of Black inspiration in long-distance running. You hoped to be the first Black American runner to break four minutes in the mile, and to give young Black distance runners an example to look up to. You chose Penn as the place where you would build that running career.

Four years later, you famously ran a 3:55.0 mile, the first by a Penn and Ivy League runner. It was the best performance by a Black American athlete in the U.S. at the time and one which ranked 15th on the all-time world list. A senior captain of the cross country and track and field teams, you remain an alumni member of the Friars Senior Society and the Onyx Senior Honor Society.

Fifty-five years later, you have built more than a career at Penn: you have built a legacy.

In 1986, you returned to Penn with your wife Doris—a fellow alumna—to serve as Associate Athletic Director and brought with you a clear vision of work ethic and academic excellence. Over the course of your long administrative career, culminating in athletics compliance, you shared these traits with countless student-athletes with wisdom and good humor.

Ever-present trackside, you are an integral part of the team. You have supported generations of Penn athletes in their quest for greatness, from the Heptagonal Championships, to the Penn Relays, to the Olympics. You steward student-athletes like yourself—

sharing what you learned. That achievement involves time, love, teammates, sweat, and tears. That *true* achievement is more than setting records and topping leaderboards: it is accomplishing both, then uplifting others to one day exceed them.

You have led this philosophy by example: After you yourself were inducted as part of the third class of the Penn Athletics Hall of Fame, you made sure that Willis N. Cummings, D'1919, was inducted five classes later. Not only was this a great athlete's rightful due, but it unequivocally recognized the power of legacy for athletes in need of someone to look up to.

It has been said that long distance runners "build themselves up day by day, week by week, month upon month, and year after year." We would extend this to say that the best build others up as well.

Elton, we are grateful for your legacy and the many ways you have built up generations of Penn athletes day by day, week by week, month upon month, and year after year. On behalf of the university you call home, we are proud to present you with the 2025 Penn Alumni Award of Merit.

#### *Alumni Award of Merit*

#### **James (Jamie) H. Greene, Jr., W'72, PAR'05, '08, '10**



A philosophy book from the 1980s called *Finite and Infinite Games* has recently made its way back into the public consciousness. It argued that for finite games, such as a single game of football, the aim was to win. But for infinite games, such as the sport of football itself, the aim was not to win, but to keep the game going for as long as possible.

Jamie, as a Penn lacrosse and football player, you won your share of finite games. But it could be argued that those victories pale in comparison to the infinite game you have been playing for the past four decades: using your volunteer leadership to ensure that Penn's student athletes continue to play—and thrive—far into the future.

After graduating from the Wharton School, you began a highly successful career in banking and joined KohIberg Kravis Roberts & Co., spending 18 years as a partner before becoming founding partner and chair of True Wind Capital Management.

You joined the Athletics Board of Advisors in 1991 and have served as Vice Chair and now Chair. You brought that same vision and strategic thinking to the Athletics

Board, partnering with the Athletic Director to rethink the Annual Fund for Athletics, helping create both short-term and long-term financial stability for the University's varsity sports.

In addition, you led the effort to create an unrestricted fund for Athletics, much like the Dean's discretionary funds at Penn's twelve schools, to solve problems and support initiatives that do not currently have a continuing source of funding. And, vitally, you have been a trusted counselor to the Athletic Director, offering valuable insights as Penn Athletics helps student-athletes thrive on and off the field. You have also co-chaired the Lacrosse Board, leading the effort to restructure its composition and finances, providing more stability and increasing participation. That restructuring later became the model for every athletic program's board.

Beyond your work with Penn Athletics, you have played a key role in advancing the educational and research mission of the University. You were named a Trustee in 2010, and served on the Executive, Budget and Finance, and Development Committees, and as Chair of the Facilities and Campus Planning Committee. In 2020, you received Trustee Emeritus status in recognition of your exceptional service. In addition, you continue to be an active and engaged member of the Penn Medicine Board, sharing your advice and counsel.

Not only have you dedicated your time and talent to the University, but you have also given generously to important institutional priorities, including Penn Athletics, numerous individual sports, and significant support for women's athletics. You have made impactful gifts to Penn Medicine to support cancer research, the emergency response to COVID-19, and other vital initiatives.

And the commitment that you have fostered with Penn over so many years, you have passed to the next generation: to your three alumni children, Lindsay Ramsay, C'05; James Greene III, C'08; and Charles Greene, C'10; and to countless student-athletes who follow your example.

Jamie, you have been described as a "pure leader." Someone intelligent, calm and measured who has a remarkable ability to inspire others to see his vision. And you have shared that leadership and vision with Penn. For your efforts to guarantee that Penn's future remains infinite, we are honored to present you with the Penn Alumni Award of Merit for 2025.

# Historian of the “Taken-for- Granted”

Whether probing the concept of common sense, mulling the role of expertise in a democracy, or examining how choice intersects with freedom, Sophia Rosenfeld is carving out new realms of cultural and intellectual history.

By Julia M. Klein

The Good Karma Café menu poses no challenge at all to Sophia Rosenfeld, the Walter H. Annenberg Professor of History at Penn. No fancy drinks for her, no tortured indecision. She simply inquires politely about the availability of “black tea,” and that is that.

It might have made a better story had Rosenfeld undergone a more convoluted decision process, like the ones that regularly bedevil contemporary consumers, voters, and individuals in search of romance. But the 59-year-old historian, considerate enough to email an apology when she is running four minutes late, is either a creature of habit—or has done the hard work of making up her mind in advance.

The concept of choice—in particular, of choosing from a menu of options—has been a decade-long research focus for Rosenfeld, who was topic director, in 2020–

21, of the Wolf Humanities Center Forum on Choice. Trained at Princeton and Harvard as a scholar of 18th-century French intellectual history, Rosenfeld has pursued a far wider range of interests since, including the history of common sense, the debate over free speech, and the problem of ascertaining truth in democracies.

In *The Age of Choice: A History of Freedom in Modern Life* (Princeton University Press, 2025), Rosenfeld has taken on her most ambitious project yet. The book, which was a finalist for the Cundill History Prize, associates choice with both modernity and freedom and traces its application in different realms, from the marketplace to the ballroom. But Rosenfeld also lays out its limits and disadvantages, touching on the 20th-century disciplines, such as psychoanalysis and behavioral economics, that have highlighted the irrationality of choice.

Rosenfeld pays special attention to how women, whose options traditionally have been more circumscribed, have pressed for greater freedom.

“Women, Rosenfeld argues, drove the shift that established the equation between freedom and choice, and they drew condemnation in the process,” David A. Bell, the Sidney and Ruth Lapidus Professor in Princeton’s Department of History, wrote in a mostly laudatory *New York Review of Books* essay. “She wants not simply to illuminate the history of the equation between freedom and choice but to use that history to offer arguments about the nature of freedom today and women’s relation to it. More specifically, she wants to question whether the association of freedom with value-neutral choice-making has been a good thing—for people in general and for women in particular.”



But Rosenfeld's overall aims are broader still. In *The Age of Choice*, she describes herself as "a historian of the taken-for-granted." She seeks to surface and historicize ideas so mundane that we barely conceive of them as having a history. Her use of evidence is equally inventive, going beyond the "great man" texts that comprise the traditional sinews of intellectual history (though, to be fair, Rosenfeld can quote Mill or Locke with the best of them). *The Age of Choice* is anchored in material ephemera: auction catalogs, menus, dance cards, commonplace books, election ballots. And Rosenfeld uses fiction, especially early realist novels, to probe the psychology behind those objects and the practices they represent.

"Sophie has carved out a highly distinctive way of studying ideas," says Benjamin Nathans, director of Penn's Robert K. Johnson Integrated Studies Program and the Alan Charles Kors Endowed Term Professor in Penn's Department of History. Nathans won the 2025 Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction for his book *To the Success of Our Hopeless Cause: The Many Lives of the Soviet Dissident Movement* ["Gazetteer," Jul|Aug 2025].

"Rather than focus on prominent thinkers and famous texts," Nathans says, Rosenfeld "explores the stories behind our self-evident truths, which is to say, common assumptions about our society and ourselves, stripping them of their self-evidence, holding them up for inspection, explaining how they have changed over time. She is curious not just about concepts, but about how concepts become embedded in everyday practices and assumptions, how they become taken-for-granted and therefore invisible."

Rosenfeld grew up in Leonia, New Jersey, near New York City, in a family with literary and artistic inclinations. Her father was a professional cellist; her mother wrote and edited art and travel books. She has two sisters, a novelist and a sound artist. "I'm the one with the boring job," she jokes.

She credits her academic path to being "in college at the right time and the right place, at Princeton in the '80s, which had one of the great history departments in the world." She cites such mentors as Philip G. Nord, Rosengarten Professor of Modern and Contemporary History, Emeritus; the late Anthony Vidler, former director of Princeton's Program in European Cultural Studies; and Robert Darnton, a longtime French cultural historian at Princeton who is now the Harvard University Librarian, Emeritus.

"Princeton really was the place where the so-called new cultural history was taking off, and I was lucky to coincide with its big moment," Rosenfeld says. "So, I had some legendary classes, and I was exposed to a lot of the most cutting-edge work of that era. And, in fact, a lot of the most cutting-edge work was being done in French history."

One influence, she says, was the Annales School, which embraced the "history of mentalities"—"not just how did great thinkers think, what did Descartes say, but the history of how people saw the world around them." The interests of its practitioners—including Roger Chartier, Annenberg Visiting Professor of History at Penn—lay "between social history and intellectual history," Rosenfeld says, a rich vein that she has continued to mine. (Chartier, now a colleague, praises her for challenging "traditional divisions...between intellectual history and cultural history, between the written words and the languages of signs, between ideas and practices.")

Rosenfeld graduated *summa cum laude* from Princeton and won a prize for her senior thesis, on the politics of the early critical response to Cubism in France. Encouraged by her teachers to apply to graduate school, she received a Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities that covered tuition. "So, it seemed like it would be crazy not to do this," she says. After a year working in public policy, another of her interests, she matriculated at Harvard. "I went to graduate school thinking

I would do the 20th century," Rosenfeld says, "but I discovered the 18th century, and that's really been my home. I've sort of gone backwards from that, and forwards from that, ever since." In particular, she became "interested in how this study of culture and mentalities could illuminate political history."

Rosenfeld's first post-graduate job, in 1995, was at a "dream location," the University of Virginia, where the influence of Thomas Jefferson, its founder, loomed large. "It's a very beautiful place to be an 18th-century-ist. And I got more interested in American subjects by being there," she says. She stayed in Charlottesville for almost two decades, working her way up the academic ladder.

Her reasons for leaving were personal and practical: In 2013, her husband, Matthew Affron, an art historian and curator, landed a plum job as the Muriel and Philip Berman Curator of Modern Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The couple, who have two children, moved to Philadelphia, and Rosenfeld started looking for geographically closer employment.

After stints at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study and Yale, she landed at Penn in 2017. "Why Penn? One, I already lived in Philadelphia," she says. "Two, it's an amazing institution. It was an appealing place to teach—and it's walking distance from my house." She soon discovered other pluses: "It's exciting to be at an urban school. An incredible number of people come through the city, come through Penn. There's an energy to the place."

"Penn was extraordinarily lucky to lure Sophie away from Yale," says Nathans. "In the decade since, she has brought a trifecta of talent to the Department of History: as one of the leading cultural historians of Europe and the Atlantic world; as a hugely successful teacher of both undergraduates and graduates, offering courses on the Enlightenment, free speech, modern Europe, and much else; and most recently, as chair of the department, where she applied her trademark

Rosenfeld “discovered the 18th century” in graduate school “and that’s really been my home,” she says. In *The Age of Choice* and other recent works, she aims to become “part of a broader conversation” extending beyond history to contemporary politics.



elegance, diplomacy, and wit.” (Rosenfeld, who is on sabbatical for the 2025–26 academic year, stepped down from the department chairmanship in July.)

There are plenty of indices of Rosenfeld’s scholarly bona fides. Here is a highly condensed list: From 2013 to 2017, she coedited the journal *Modern Intellectual History*. She was co-general editor (with Penn classicist Peter Struck, the Stephen A. Levin Family Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences) of the six-volume *A Cultural History of Ideas* (Bloomsbury, 2022), winner of the Association of American Publishers’ award for best reference work in the humanities. From 2018 to 2021, she was vice president of the American Historical Association. In 2022, she held the Kluge Chair in Countries and Cultures of the

North at the Library of Congress. And this year she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

But the arc of Rosenfeld’s career bends—quite deliberately—toward greater accessibility and recognition as a public intellectual. Her goal, she says, is to become “part of a broader conversation” extending beyond history to contemporary politics.

That evolution has been marked by articles in outlets such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Nation*, and the *Guardian*, interviews in European and Latin American media, and appearances on numerous podcasts—at least 20 for the *Age of Choice* book alone. In one *Times* essay, written in 2023 amid campus protests over Gaza, she celebrated the civility of her students in a course she teaches on free speech. The piece received a strong response, Rosenfeld says. “We’re in

a moment in which the boundaries of academic freedom and also student voice are really being challenged,” she says, and it’s a topic that preoccupies her.

Rosenfeld’s first book, *A Revolution in Language: The Problem of Signs in Late Eighteenth-Century France* (Stanford University Press, 2001), was, as is typical, a reworking of her doctoral dissertation. “It’s dense,” she says. (No argument there.) With your first book, “you’re proving yourself to your profession. And I wrote it hoping that scholars within my field would be interested and think that I had something new to say. I didn’t really write it thinking, ‘Gosh, I really hope this gets me on TV.’”

*A Revolution in Language* covers such seemingly disparate topics as pantomime, ideographic sign systems, and a conception of the Terror as “rendered possible by deception and division stem-

ming from the abuse of words.” It’s an idiosyncratic amalgam. “I’ve always been interested in dance, and I got interested in this idea of a system of communication that came out of bodily movement or gesture,” she says. “I also wanted to respond to a lot of new scholarship on the French Revolution that really made the language of politics a subject of concern.”

The book earned her tenure and set her current intellectual course. “It was the beginning of my interest in trying to understand how people thought in different periods about things that are so ubiquitous that you don’t notice them, like how a language works,” she explains. “I’m interested in what you might call tacit ideas or taken-for-granted ideas or even common-sense ideas. Which is how I got to the next project.”

That was a deep dive into the evolving notion of common sense itself. Titled *Common Sense: A Political History* (Harvard University Press, 2011), the book, a decade in the making, was a way of challenging herself: “Could I write a history of something that sounds as ahistorical as common sense?” It required her to develop a method for writing about an idea and “how it moves through time and space,” using texts but also putting them in context.

*Common Sense* won the Mark Lynton History Prize, awarded by the Columbia School of Journalism and the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard, and the SHEAR Book Prize, from the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic. It also got Rosenfeld noticed outside the profession, in part because “it coincided with a moment in which right-wing populists in the US and elsewhere were starting to talk about a politics of common sense.” (Of course, liberals, too, use the term, as in “common sense gun reform.”)

In fact, common sense is often associated with controversial policies. That turns out to have been the case historically as well.

Rosenfeld started the book with the loosest of hypotheses—that common sense

does indeed have a history, and that it’s been “caught up in both the making of and challenges to democracy.” But she didn’t realize at first that the book would focus so strongly on the roots of populism.

“There has to be some place for being surprised by the evidence. And usually when you find something surprising, it means you’re onto something interesting. To find that Tom Paine,” who authored the celebrated 1776 revolutionary pamphlet *Common Sense*, “was influential is not a great find,” she says. “To find that Tom Paine was hardly articulating the common sense of his moment”—that his ideas were radical and ahead of popular opinion “is a more interesting discovery.”

Rosenfeld prefers to focus on what she calls “bedrock ideas of modern democracy” rather than more contentious, hot-button issues. “So that makes me a little bit of a weird intellectual historian,” she says. “I’m often interested in figuring out the low-level consensus points that shape all of our politics”—and how that consensus both emerges and dissolves.

Some of these ideas came into play in *Democracy and Truth: A Short History* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019). The book was solicited by the Penn Press based on Rosenfeld’s writings, and it was inspired in part by debates about “fake news” and conspiracy theories early in President Donald Trump’s first term.

That project relied less on archival research than on argument, she says. “And the argument is that truth is essential to democracy, but not in the way that we expect—in part, because there’s no one locus of truth in a democracy and in part because it depends on a delicate balance between popular knowledge and expert knowledge.”

Since the book’s publication, Rosenfeld says, the situation she outlines has grown more dire. The disconnect between experts and the general public has increased, with mounting post-pandemic skepticism about vaccines and science in general, as well as “the dismantling of data” about subjects such as climate change and the economy. In her view,

“democracy requires a meeting place between expert knowledge and non-expert knowledge.” When those bodies of knowledge are distinct, as they now seem, Rosenfeld says, “it’s quite dangerous.”

**So,** just how did Rosenfeld choose choice as a topic?

“This is a good example of something where the idea comes to you, say, in the shower, and it sounds kind of cool, but how to do it is the big problem,” she says. “The trick of some kinds of history writing is sometimes to find the smaller thing that lets you talk about the bigger thing.”

The subject of choice interested her for two reasons. First of all, it seemed to fit her larger intellectual project. “To me,” she says, “it seemed totally unexplored and fascinating, one of these taken-for-granted ideas. And I was particularly interested in the fact that it seemed to be the meeting point of our economic lives and our political lives. It’s also everywhere in political discourse, on the right and on the left, from school choice to reproductive choice.”

Then there was the personal angle. “Like many people,” she says, “I often have trouble making up my mind, and I don’t like to go to a place with a menu with 150 items on it or look online on Amazon.com and find that there are 500 toasters—when you just need one at a good price that works. And I don’t think that’s such an uncommon feeling.”

In other words, choice, so often ballyhooed in advertising and popular culture, did not strike her as an unalloyed good. “I was interested in the tension between this idea that what democracy and capitalism give us that’s so great is this freedom of choice, and the fact that choice is often so stressful,” she says. Too much choice can be paralyzing, while in other cases, people have only limited choices—and get blamed for making bad ones. Some of the downsides to choice have been explored in the social sciences. But no one, it seemed to her, had put all these pieces together.

## “I was interested in the tension between this idea that what democracy and capitalism give us that’s so great is this freedom of choice, and the fact that choice is often so stressful.”

Rosenfeld ended up looking at how “choice practices,” like ordering from a menu or using a secret ballot, developed and operated. Her chapters explore shopping (“Choice in Things”), belief systems (“Choice in Ideas”), finding a partner (“Romantic Choice”), voting (“Political Choice”), and what she calls “The Sciences of Choice.” An epilogue deals with the history and future prospects of what has become known as the “right to choose.”

Each chapter is built around artifacts, as she explained in a September talk at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts. In fact, stumbling on a rare early menu—from a French restaurant, circa 1800—in a display of new acquisitions at the Kislak was one of her inspirations. “A lot of research is serendipity always,” she said.

“This was a new technology,” she told the hybrid audience of about 75 Penn faculty, students, and others. “And what’s so interesting about this menu is that it’s both an advertisement for the plentiful choices on offer and a kind of finding aid. It’s a way to actualize a choice. Some of the early menus come with a pencil, and you put a little check to indicate what you’ve selected. And the menu exists along with this new institution, the restaurant, to make this feasible.” Since then, she noted, the opportunities for choice and the quantity of options have expanded “not only in sheer numbers, but across so many of the different domains of our lives.”

To write the book, Rosenfeld says, she had to break with chronology, to “violate some of the rules” by “jumping around in time a bit, letting the past illuminate the present, the present illuminate the past.”

A second decision was “to think about the people left out of this paradigm as much as the people who were at the center of it. Because sometimes the view from the margins helps you see what’s hard other-

wise to see.” She considered focusing on children or on “slavery and abolitionism and the changing understandings of freedom that came with that.” She settled instead on using the experience of women as a lens. Despite their historically restricted options, women, as shoppers and consumers, are “the paradigmatic first modern choosers,” she argues.

Finally, Rosenfeld realized, the great texts “couldn’t really explain how conceptions of freedom became so different and so widespread over such a long period of time.” So, she landed on the idea of examining “social practices with ideological effects.” She perused archival images and read widely: newspapers, how-to manuals, diaries, sermons, works of philosophy, and, importantly, novels.

“The novel emerges as a commercial entity in just the period we’re talking about, the 17th to 18th centuries,” she says. “And soon there’s all kinds of choice technology associated with it: library catalogs, booksellers, listings, lending libraries.” But that’s not all. The novel, she says, “actually is the genre *about* choice.”

The protagonist—often female—is generally torn between her desires and obligations to family or society, Rosenfeld says. “And the reader can watch somebody grappling with how to make the choice, what the right choice is, debating the pros and cons of different pathways. And then the reader has the satisfaction of seeing the consequences, both psychological and material, that result from the choice.” So literary fiction, Rosenfeld says, “gave me a way into the psychology of choosing as it emerged.”

More clues came from all those artifacts, some of them purchased on eBay: auction catalogs, fabric sample books, dance cards, election ballots, ballot postcards with multiple-choice options (“Weather very pleasant,” “I think of you

often,” “Be good and you will be happy”). “In addition to the choosers,” Rosenfeld says, “there were choice architects,” who “designed the menus, the rules, the options, how to actualize them. They’re both part of the story and a source for reconstructing the history of choice.”

**T**he *Age of Choice* is at times a celebration of choice, but it also sounds some (epigrammatic) cautionary notes:

“The sum of our choices might well be a world no one would actually choose.”

“Choice, whether about babies or bables or beliefs, *should* be a means, not an end unto itself.”

Though choice is associated with freedom, Rosenfeld grapples with the paradox that “there is no such thing as really free choice.” Choice is always “bounded”—think of those election ballots, and our perennial complaint about having to pick “the lesser of two evils.” Even the old-fashioned dance card had only so many slots.

Choices are made “within frames of social norms, family expectations, economic needs,” and other constraints, Rosenfeld says. “Sometimes those structures are deeply limiting. And sometimes those structures actually are necessary to make it possible for us to move in the world.”

Both the complexity of the concept and Rosenfeld’s own ambivalence are clear. But what, in practical terms, would she like readers to take away from *The Age of Choice*?

“A lot of people have asked that question,” she says. But the book isn’t, in the end, a self-help volume. “My entire goal is to challenge all sets of ideas,” Rosenfeld says. “I don’t take anything to be an orthodoxy. Intellectuals are generally pretty useless in most practical ways. The only thing I think they can do is sometimes offer new ways of seeing old problems.”

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Julia M. Klein, a frequent contributor to the *Gazette*, has written for the *Atlantic*, the *Nation*, *Mother Jones*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and other publications.

# WHO WILL OWN YOUR DIGITAL TWIN?

Law professor Jennifer Rothman is an expert in “the ways intellectual property law is employed to turn people into a form of property.” As we enter an era of deepfake videos, voice clones, and digital replicas of human beings, she worries that the United States Congress is on the cusp of a horrible mistake.

By Trey Popp

There were so many things I wanted to ask Jennifer Rothman, but first she had some questions for me. The Nicholas F. Gallicchio Professor of Law is an international authority on the right of publicity, a legal framework designed to protect individuals against the commercial misappropriation of their name, likeness, or other recognizable aspects of their persona. The word *publicity* can give a misleading impression, because the right in question is a bulwark of personal privacy in the United States. Along with copyright law, it offers a primary means of defense against the exploitation or abuse of someone’s personal identity. And that was why Rothman wanted answers from me before our Google Meet video call could really get going.

As required by Pennsylvania law, I had started our conversation by requesting her permission to record it. I do this every time I want to tape a call, and 95 percent of the time the answer is a perfunctory *yes*. Not Rothman. “Is the recording for your personal use?” she asked. Well, I planned to use an AI voice transcriber tool to create a Q&A transcript, I said. “I’m not saying it would be secret,” she replied. “But you’re not going to post it anywhere?” No, I assured her—the actual recording would rest only with me.

Everyone should ask that question, but almost no one does. “Given my background in filmmaking and the film industry,” Rothman wrote to me later, “I have been aware for decades of how footage can be reused and misleadingly edited. Given my focus on intellectual property laws, I have also long been attentive to how someone might use my copyrighted material or use my name or likeness.” But in the last several years, technological advances in AI-generated voice clones and deepfake videos have upped the stakes. “Everyone should be paying greater attention to what steps they can take to limit exposure,” Rothman said. “I was recently advised, for example, to remove outgoing voicemail messages that use your own voice.”

Rothman has lately turned her scholarly attention to “the ways intellectual property law is employed to turn people into a form of property.” In November 2024, she delivered a prestigious lecture hosted by the Copyright Society titled *Copyrighting People*. “Many of you may be on the verge of jumping out of your seats to proclaim, ‘You can’t copyright people!’” she began. “And at one level this is true—people, in and of ourselves, as human beings, are not copyrightable subject matter. But the interplay between copyright law and people is far more complicated than this truism reveals.” As AI tools supercharge the creation of deepfake imagery and audio, laws addressing digital replicas of human beings are on a “collision course with publicity and privacy rights.”

A seminal skirmish on this emerging battlefield took place in April 2023, when a song titled “Heart on My Sleeve” went viral on streaming services including Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube. Featuring vocals that sounded just like the megastar singers Drake and the Weeknd, the track had actually been created with AI tools by a TikTok user known as Ghostwriter977. “I was a ghostwriter for years and got paid close to nothing just for major labels to profit,” this person (or entity) proclaimed on the social media platform X, later declaring themselves “open for business” to create AI records for the likes of rapper Travis Scott, 21 Savage, or any other artist interested in earning royalties “without lifting a finger.”

Universal Music Group swung their lawyers into action, and recording industry lobbyists descended on Capitol Hill, where two bills were soon introduced into Congress. In February 2024 Rothman testified before the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet, where she took aim at both bills for failing to prevent what she considered the existential imperative in this dawning era of digital deepfakes. “No one should own another person,” she emphasized, using boldface in the written copy of her remarks. “Unfortunately, each of the two draft bills to address the problems of AI and performance rights essentially do exactly this—they allow another person, or most likely a company, to own or control another person’s name, voice, and likeness forever and in any context.” Permitting such ownership “in perpetuity,” she added, “violates our fundamental and constitutional right to liberty and should be prohibited.”



Rothman has continued to be outspoken on this issue. This past August she authored a commentary in *The Regulatory Review* arguing that a revised draft of Congress's NO FAKES Act retains some of the most "chilling" implications of the original version. "A person's replica could appear," she observed, "in pornographic contexts and doing things that the person had no real awareness were authorized"—all with the blessing of a legal licensing regime. "Such an outcome would work against the bill's stated objectives of protecting individuals from being exploited by AI technology and would worsen the deception of the public."

In November she talked with me about the perilous waters our society is entering and how the law can best help us navigate them.

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**In September OpenAI released Sora 2, a text-to-video model and social media app that allows users to upload their own likeness and create AI-generated videos incorporating their own face and voice—and grant other users the ability to create videos featuring them. So, have you uploaded your face yet?**

Definitely not.

**Why not? OpenAI declared that users will have "end-to-end" control over these synthetic likenesses—including the ability to view, remove, or revoke access to any drafts of videos that contain them. What's to worry about?**

I don't have the highest confidence that these will be able to be locked down. One of the videos that I've shown in recent lectures is a Sora 2 creation where the actress Jenna Ortega is replicated as her Wednesday character in conversation with an animated character from *Family Guy*, with a pretty close voice rendition of her in addition to her likeness. I'm sure she didn't give permission for that. And then it's posted by someone else who then could create their own. So I wouldn't personally upload myself.

**I have it on good authority that there are Philadelphia area students who have surreptitiously uploaded pictures of their teachers to Sora 2 to create mocking videos that the teachers would not like at all, if they discovered them. What legal recourse does such a teacher have? And would it only be against a minor child, or would there be an actionable claim against OpenAI itself?**

Good questions. There are a variety of laws, and they differ from state to state. Pennsylvania has a statutory right of publicity, which is a right that limits unauthorized uses of a person's identity. It may be somewhat limited to people with commercial value, or uses in a commercial context. But Pennsylvania also has what's called a common law right, which is not as bounded as the statute, that might well apply here: We have an unauthorized use of a person's identity—maybe their name, likeness, or voice—and it's for the defendant's advantage. It doesn't have to be a commercial advantage; the student could be getting, you know, "cred," or followers online. So there might be an actionable claim there, and it's not a separate law if a minor does it. Obviously, if it had sexual content, there are whole other laws that would also apply. It also could rise to the level of intentional infliction of emotional distress. It could potentially be defamatory. So there are a lot of laws that could potentially apply.

The more difficult question is: How do you get it taken down? Are the teachers going to actually sue the students, and go through litigation, and hire a lawyer? There's some friction in the process. So it's not just about law.

Regarding OpenAI and its liability, OpenAI is not hosting things—it is helping people create things. So their argument is: *We're not the bad actor here. Somebody else is.* That's their defense in defamation claims. It's early days for this litigation. There are some negligence claims against OpenAI which are interesting, for ChatGPT creating defamatory

speech and even fake documents about people, and whether OpenAI can be liable for that—whether we count them as a speaker in that instance, and if they could have any knowledge that their platform created something that was defamatory. There also may be some negligence claims that the whole system is negligently designed not to protect against defamation, not to protect against the use of people's identities without permission.

**When Sora 2 went live, OpenAI announced that users would be able to create videos featuring copyrighted characters unless rights holders explicitly opted out. Three days later, the company backtracked, announcing an opt-in model where rightsholders would have to grant permission first before characters could be used in these videos—which sounds similar to how they treat ordinary users who upload their faces. But even after the switch to an opt-in framework, some Sora 2 users were nevertheless able to prompt the tool into reproducing copyrighted characters on which it had been trained—like the Wednesday example you mentioned. What's going on here? Is there a single legal framework that's well suited to address this bundle of issues, or does it really depend on the circumstance—like whether we're talking about a commercially valuable persona versus an ordinary person?**

Some of the laws appear to limit claims to those who are commercially valuable—or limit it to claims involving uses in merchandise, or advertising, or products. But in most jurisdictions, there are other laws that would apply. It's obviously easier to make a claim if you're a famous person who regularly licenses your identity for a lot of money. But that's not necessarily because of the law so much as economics. It's very worthwhile for you to pay a lawyer to sue—and you'll recover. Whereas many of these laws have no statutory damages, and even the ones that do may not have enough to make it worthwhile to bring claims.

Then, of course, you have the whack-a-mole problem: one person posts it, then someone reposts it. So in a scenario where you have students who are putting up mocking videos of their teachers, the teacher may even succeed in getting it down from one location—but then it will appear in a whole bunch of other locations. So then you have to have partnerships with the platforms, who may not want to take things down, or may not have an automated system. There's also some uncertainty in the law about whether there's liability for those third-party posts on various platforms.

**The line between likeness and character can be murky. James Bond is a character embodied by particular actors. If the rights holder to the Bond franchise wants to permit AI videos modeled on the character, but the Bond-portraying actor Daniel Craig doesn't, who gets to decide?**

That's a very complicated issue, and it's actually been litigated not in the context of AI, but in the context of other uses of actors' identities. There's a conflict between state publicity rights that the actor has to control their identity, and the copyright holder's copyright to be able to reuse the work it owns. One of the most famous cases involves the actors from the *Cheers* sitcom. George Wendt and John Ratzenberger sued Paramount and the airport company Host International, which set up *Cheers* bars in airports, that had animatronic robots of the characters Norm and Cliff. The actors sued, saying these robots were based on them, even though they were manifestations of characters that could be owned and licensed by the copyright holders of *Cheers*.

The district court said these robots—which were initially called Norm and Cliff but then changed to Hank and Bob—looked nothing like George Wendt and John Ratzenberger. I actually have a picture of them in my book, and they really do not look like the actors—but they evoke the characters. So the audience would be

## This law would create a huge market in digital replicas, including ones that aren't specifically authorized by those depicted.

like, *That reminds me of Norm and Cliff*, and then they might conjure up the image of the actors. But the Ninth Circuit reversed the district court and said, *Whether the robots look like them or not is a matter for a jury to decide—you can't decide as a matter of law*. It said that the actors' right of publicity claims were not preempted by copyright law, because the objection was not to the use of the copyrighted work, but the use of their faces—their likenesses—and so if the robots looked like them, [which was for a jury to determine], it would be a right of publicity claim.

**Let's back up a little. Flesh-and-blood human beings are not copyrightable. Why not?**

That's right. The starting point is that things that are protected by copyright need to be in a "fixed form," and we are not fixed. And copyrightable material needs to be authored—and although we think of ourselves as authoring our own lives, that's not what is meant. It's supposed to be about human external creations. Those are the sorts of things that we consider to be copyrightable.

**But you write that "there is rising pressure to copyright the attributes of people, including the code for our digital selves." And you also write that "copyright plays a much larger role in propertizing and controlling people than is often thought, and this function is likely to grow in the era of AI." What's a recent example of the pressure to copyright attributes of people?**

So, isolated attributes are not going to be copyrightable in the same way that people are not. But if someone's voice is captured in a recording, if your image is captured in a photograph, or in a motion picture video, all of that is copyrightable.

And copyright law says you can reuse this copyrighted footage. So if you have one photograph of someone, and you're the copyright holder, you should be able to make copies of that photo. And you should also be able to make a derivative work from that photo—so, use the photo in a new context, or alter it in some way. That means that the copyright holder can wield some control over how the person initially captured in the photo appears in the world.

As we get more sophisticated with our technology, you could create a voice clone or a digital replica of someone. Is that copyrightable? This is an open question right now, but if that is copyrightable, or the computer code that creates the digital replica is, then under copyright law that copyrighted work could be reproduced many different times in different contexts, without the underlying person really having a say in how that copyrighted work is used. These are emerging questions, and there are also new laws that are addressing digital replicas, some of which are modeled on how we understand copyright law—which may not be the right way we want to think about property rights in a human being.

**In a recent paper you wrote that the visual effects house Metaphysic has proposed registering digital replicas of its clients, which include Tom Hanks, with the US Copyright Office to protect against others using or creating digital replicas of them. If you were Tom Hanks and a company was proposing to copyright attributes indelibly connected to your persona as a performer, what worries would you have about the ways that might backfire on you?**

I would be very worried. Metaphysic is so far claiming that they'll only allow

the actual person depicted to seek registration. So they're trying to be a good actor in this space. And obviously this is something the US Copyright Office will decide. But I would worry very much about the Tom Hankses of the world signing over the rights to their digital replica to a studio as a condition of being in a movie—or perhaps to a manager or an agent—because then that person would have the rights to the performers' digital selves, and given technology, could replicate their performances in ways that they wouldn't be able to control. And if it were you, you might be deeply troubled by what your digital replica is shown saying and doing.

**If you were a young actor who aspired to the kind of success Tom Hanks has achieved, what worries would you have about some company copyrighting Tom Hanks' digital clone?**

So I would be worried as a young performer that all of these replicated performances by already established people will disrupt access to new jobs. There are also efforts to create new performances by famous dead people, both in stadium tours and in movies. ElevenLabs has apparently gotten the rights to a host of famous dead people to be voice clones. And even the [digital] de-aging of Tom Hanks means that rather than casting a new actor to play a younger version of that character, you could just have one performer de-aged to play themselves over time. So that's disruptive of potential jobs. Beyond that, there's going to be pressure that, to get a job, you'll be asked to sign away rights to your voice and your likeness and performance, unless there's much more robust legal protection.

**Do you mean in the way that we all sort of agree to fine print that we don't read whenever we click on an online service?**

Very much so. Even companies like X and Instagram, if you look at their terms of service, they say anything you upload to the site, we have a non-exclusive li-

## Companies like X and Instagram could actually create digital replicas of you, and you've agreed to that in writing.

cense to use in any way we want. So they could actually create digital replicas of you, and you've agreed to that in writing by agreeing to the terms of service. That's also very troubling.

I think actors have a little bit of protection from their union, SAG-AFTRA, to the extent that they're engaging in union work; the movie studios and producers have agreed not to use digital replicas of people without permission. But that's not true in other spheres. So I'm particularly worried where people don't have those sorts of union protections, or if before they ever get to the union they've already signed their rights away. I think there's particular pressure on student-athletes, who now are able to commercialize their identities. And this starts all the way in middle school, with kids being recruited as minors; their parents could sign away the rights to an agent who comes knocking for what seems like a lot of money at the time, but then would give this other person perpetual rights over this child's likeness and voice and name, even when they're grown.

**When someone produces a video by prompting a generative-AI tool, who owns the copyright to that creation? Under US law, if I take a photograph, or record a video with a video camera, a copyright vests in me as the human author immediately upon the creation of that work. Does that change if I produce an image or video by typing some textual prompts into a chatbot interface?**

This is another cutting-edge question that's currently being litigated. The Copyright Office is taking the position, and I think it's an appropriate one, that we need to have human authorship for copyright protection. But that doesn't mean you can't have an AI assist. For instance, the movie industry has been using AI in visual effects

for decades, and you still get a copyright in your movie. So the sorts of questions that the Copyright Office is engaging with, and courts are just starting to tease out, involve how much contribution to the AI output the human has to give. So, how much did you put in your prompt? How much did you adjust the output? They're really difficult issues to tease out. So I think the line that requires human authorship is going to remain, but there's going to be allowance of some copyright protection for AI contributions that are shaped by human beings. But where we'll draw the line on that is still a moving target.

**Photographers control the copyright to images they've taken of another person who has given their consent to be photographed. Are there aspects of AI-powered digital replicas that call out to be treated differently from the way we've treated photography?**

With digital replicas, the impact on the person who's captured—if we say that that's a copyrightable work—is so much greater than just a still image that I think we need to treat it differently.

**Do you think digital replicas and voice clones should be considered copyrightable subject matter?**

I do not think copyright as we currently understand it in the United States is a good fit for rights over a person's identity. And if we use this framework, we need some special rules to protect both the people depicted and the public.

Because of uncertainty around this question, some states have already passed digital replica rights, and Congress has also proposed a new digital replica right. This has led, in a broader sense, to what I call the "identity thicket," where we have a whole bunch of laws that extend rights

over the same attributes of the same person. Some of them stay with the person. Some of them appear to be capable of being owned or controlled by others. And this creates legal chaos, market chaos, and also jeopardizes a person's ability to control their own identity.

I think that whether we fold digital replicas and voice clones into the copyright system, or we create a separate statutory regime that is like copyright for digital replicas and voice clones, either way we need to have some special rules. And the reason we need special rules is to protect the underlying person who can then be reanimated, seemingly doing and saying things they didn't do. This is both to protect the person who's being depicted, but also to protect the public—who may not be able to discern whether it's an authentic performance by the person, or whether the person authorized it, or even whether it's AI-generated or not. And I think that is a very, very dangerous world for us to be living in, in which people can't distinguish between authentic recordings and fake ones.

**You just touched on an issue you've also written a lot about: the transferability of rights over a person's identity—the ability of somebody to transfer ownership of a person's name, likeness, or voice from one party to another. Tell me why that's such a critical issue in this context.**

Normally we're not very concerned about transfers in copyright. If you write a book, and someone wants to buy it from you and distribute it, you would transfer the copyright to them and then they could make copies of it, sell it, market it. You'd be thrilled. If someone wants to make a movie out of your book, you can transfer the rights and they can do that. But it's very different when you're dealing with digital replicas or voice clones. Because if you transfer those rights, then someone else, the copyright holder or digital replica holder, could now be legally entitled to reproduce your digital replica. And

that's a very different matter. The same question arises in state publicity rights, which is whether we want to allow them to be transferable or not. I have strongly advocated that when it comes to a living person's name, likeness, or voice, that we need to keep those rights vested in the person themselves, and that no one else should be able to own someone's likeness or voice.

**So you think that should be an inalienable right—one that we simply don't allow someone to sell or give away, even if they want to.**

Exactly. The counterargument is, *But if someone wants to sell their voice or their likeness and they get money for it, why wouldn't we let them? I mean, it may not be very smart, but if they want to do that, shouldn't they get to do that?* And the answer is that we actually don't let people do anything they want. We don't let people sell their votes. We don't let people sell themselves into slavery, or commit to permanent servitude, even if somebody was giving them a lot of money. And we also sometimes prohibit things that are detrimental to society—and we're all harmed when all of a sudden people don't own their own likenesses or voices and are being replicated with no one having ongoing control over their identity.

**Congress introduced a bill called the NO FAKES Act in 2023, which was re-introduced this year in a revised version. With 10 cosponsors split evenly between Democratic and Republican senators, its stated aim is to establish nationwide protections for artists, public figures, and private individuals against unauthorized use of their likenesses or voices in deepfakes and other synthetic media. But you've argued that the bill risks making "things worse than the status quo by erecting a federal law that would legitimize deceptive uses of digital replicas rather than appropriately regulate them." In your view, where does this bill go wrong?**

I will say that this version of the bill is much better than prior versions. And it's better than the No AI Fraud bill, which allowed absolute transfers of digital replica rights. Here there is a licensing regime—but it's 10 years in duration. And there are some protections for minors, which is good. But ultimately it fails on the two most important metrics that we should be thinking about for regulating digital replicas and deepfakes.

The first is: Is the particular manifestation of the digital replica authorized by the person depicted? NO FAKES fails in that regard, because it allows for these long-term licenses without the person necessarily approving what's done with the digital replicas during that duration. And once that license expires, it's not clear that the digital replica couldn't continue to be used thereafter, because they have rights to anything created during the licensing period! The law also allows authorized representatives to enter these contracts without any supervision by the depicted individual. So that's the first metric: The bill allows digital replicas and voice clones to be made without the *specific* authorization of the person depicted—what I call "deceptive authorization."

The second problem is that this law doesn't address whether they're deceptive uses. So even if you consider an authorized use of a voice clone or digital replica by the person depicted, it could still deceive the public into thinking it's an authentic performance. And that's something as a society we should be very concerned about, both for protecting against disruption in elections or political discourse, but also so that people can knowingly have a sense of what really happened and what didn't.

Essentially, this law would create a huge market in digital replicas, including ones that aren't specifically authorized by those depicted—also including creating a federal right in digital replicas for dead people—and without having any protections for the public from being deceived. So it

could actually turbocharge the creation of this very high-value federal IP right to generate more digital replicas, rather than be mitigating that concern.

**So if this bill fails so comprehensively on these metrics, what do you think is the better course: declining to pass new legislation, and instead just relying on existing law and the courts to work out some of the thorny issues? Or making specific changes to the NO FAKES bill?**

There is a lot of law already on the books. And we have recent litigation in New York involving voice clones of actors. Two voice actors brought a suit under New York's right of publicity and privacy laws, and they succeeded at the initial stage of the litigation. I think they will ultimately prevail. So there's a lot of law that applies.

I very much start with the principle "do no harm." So if a federal law would make it worse, we shouldn't pass it. Now, there are reasons why we might want some clarity with federal law. It's very difficult to navigate the hundreds of different state laws that have been passed in this area. But another challenge is that the NO FAKES bill, as written, has a very complicated preemption provision that leaves in place many of these state laws. So it doesn't really solve the problem of not having one clear standard across the country, and instead creates a new layer of conflicting rights. That is not ideal, and if we're going to go down that path, we should at least be focused on the key things with the legislation, which is that the person depicted has actually meaningfully authorized the use, and not just in a bit of legal hocus pocus; and second, that we're targeting concerns over deceiving the public.

**We've mostly talked about the interest the people have in controlling their likeness amid an increasingly fraught technological context. But there are other concerns too. US law contains provisions that can weaken people's ability to**

**lodge copyright claims, or privacy or right of publicity claims—and the First Amendment is one. So I wonder: How much does the First Amendment itself threaten our ability to control our own likenesses in this era of AI deepfakes, and how much control do you think we should be willing to give up in order to preserve values like freedom of speech?**

I'm really happy you raised that. Because there's a countervailing interest here that we can lose sight of. We're talking about questions like: *Should someone who wants to make money off of some other human being get to control that other person's identity?* But then, of course, there's our ability to comment on people around us, and to use their image in doing so. If we make more robust a system of protecting people's identities, you can imagine politicians who don't like a recording of something, or police who have engaged in some potential misconduct and were recorded, saying, "That's a fake. Take it down." And if that's our starting point, well, for the private platforms controlling these choices, it's much easier for them to just take stuff down. And even authentic recordings could also fall into the bucket of being taken down automatically.

So if we set up legal regimes that make that the pressure point—just take it down and fight about it later—then we have some real First Amendment concerns: it could prevent commentary, particularly on public figures including politicians, that would be robustly protected by the First Amendment.

We need to make sure that in highlighting the importance of being able to control your own identity from exploitation, we not forget that we also want breathing room for creative caricature of public figures and politicians, and for commentary. So we can't forget the potential dark side of overzealous enforcement of identity rights, which is them being weaponized to shut down very important public conversations and documentation of real world events.

**We've discussed some pretty thorny challenges. How sanguine are you about our ability as a society, circa 2025, to work our way through them?**

I guess I'm somewhat hopeful, but it is a daunting path we're on. I think we're going to have to work in partnership with technology companies to develop tools to help detect when things are AI-generated. But there's a bit of an arms race there. I think, hopefully, we can develop tools of authentication, as well as certification that something is not AI-generated. But it's just much too early to tell what tools are going to work—and also what the marketplace is going to want.

I have hopes that maybe this will lead to a resurgence in live theater—that people will be, like, *You know, the way you know it's really happening is that we're in the room.* Or that people will want to hear more live music.

But at the same time, I think we need to recognize that some people may be perfectly happy with AI-generated background music on Spotify that helps them focus and is cheaper for everyone, even though maybe not so great for the ecosystem of recording artists. And the acting community may need to tolerate some AI-generated performances in the same way that they tolerate reality shows and animated series that also replace work for actors. So I think it's still too early to know what the public's preferences are going to be. And the technology is still evolving in terms of what tools we're going to have that will help us navigate this space.

So I think the law needs to focus on making it better and not worse. And I think the key metrics, which are often lost in legislation, are again that people have knowingly agreed to be depicted in the exact way in which they are; and that the public is not intentionally deceived. And if we keep our eye on that ball—rather than just figuring out how can we harness a lot of market value from this moment—we will be on a better path.



## Calendar

### Annenberg Center

pennlivearts.org

**Jan. 17–19** Dance Theatre of Harlem

**Jan. 23** Alcoléa & cie

**Jan. 24** Isaiah Collier & Keyon Harrold

**Jan. 29** Ruckus with Davóne Tines

**Feb. 1** Loudon Wainwright III  
& Chris Smither

**Feb. 4–7** Blind Summit Theatre

**Feb. 6** Tyshawn Sorey

**Feb. 14** Cirque Mechanics

**Feb. 14–15** Johnny Gandelsman

**Feb. 20–21** Compagnie  
Virginie Brunelle

### Arthur Ross Gallery

arthurrossgallery.org

**Collecting the New Irascibles:**

**Art in the 1980s**

Jan. 23–Apr. 12

### ICA

icaphila.org

**A World in the Making:  
The Shakers**

Jan. 31–Aug. 9

### Kelly Writers House

writing.upenn.edu/wh/

**Jan. 22** Mind of Winter

**Jan. 26** Live at the Writers House  
with WXPN

**Jan. 27** New Poems for the New Year

**Jan. 29** Al Filreis: The Classroom  
and the Crowd

**Feb. 5** Chili Cook-Off

**Feb. 16** Live at the Writers House  
with WXPN

**Feb. 23** Elizabeth Willis: reading

**Feb. 24** Elizabeth Willis: conversation

### Morris Arboretum and Gardens

morrisarboretum.org

open daily

### Penn Libraries

library.upenn.edu

**Reinventing Aristotle**

Through Jan. 16

**Nursing the Revolution**

Opening Jan. 14

**Penn in the Field: Student**

**Fieldwork Photography**

Through Aug. 30

### Penn Museum

penn.museum

Open Tuesday–Sunday

**Jan. 6, 13, 20, & 27** Power and  
Propaganda in Ancient Rome (online)

**Jan. 10 & 11** Ancient Alcohol:

A Taste of Bygone Booze

**Jan. 31** CultureFest! Lunar New Year

**Feb. 4** Reimagining Life in Lagash (online)

# Rui Rui

**C**an a monumental sculpture exist in only two-and-a-half dimensions? That question might have occurred to more than a few pedestrians passing by Jaume Plensa's *Rui Rui*, whose mirage-like contours have been prompting doubletakes since its November installation in Harrison Garden, between the Penn Museum and the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

Rising 23 feet from the ground, the 19,608-pound cast-iron bust was modeled after the Spanish sculptor's daughter-in-law. But there's a trompe l'oeil element to its awe-inspiring scale that tugs viewers to regard it from many angles, registering the uncanny shifts in their own perception of depth and mass. It is a gift from Glenn Fuhrman W'87 WG'88 and Amanda Fuhrman C'95, longstanding patrons of the arts who also brought Simone Leigh's monumental sculpture *Brick House* to Penn's campus on extended loan in 2020 ["Arts, Jan|Feb 2021]. Both sculptures debuted in Venice Biennales, and *Rui Rui* is the first public work by Plensa in Philadelphia.

"When we first saw *Rui Rui* in Venice, we were immediately impressed by how the sculpture embodied both gravity and transcendence," said Amanda Fuhrman. "We are so excited to share this great work with the Penn students and the city of Philadelphia." —TP



# Art Stewards



**AS** the fall semester got under way in early September, flyers went up around campus alerting students to an unusual opportunity. “Borrow an original artwork for your dorm!” they proclaimed. Images of prints by Madeline Adams C’00, Lee Arnold GFA’00, and Kazuhiro Koshio GFA’00 accompanied a QR code inviting undergraduates to view more—and enter a lottery for a chance to hang one on their own wall for the year. The word also went out in weekly email newsletters distributed by Penn Residential Services: a collection of 37 artworks would be displayed in the Annenberg Center’s Arts Lounge for a week under the aegis of the Penn Art Collection, which would then match interested parties with the pieces they favored.

According to Penn Art Collection director Lynn Smith Dolby, the “First Annual Art Match” melded a longtime

“Living with the artwork is a totally different experience than gazing at it in a gallery.”

aspiration with a fortuitous fluke. The University Archives and Records Center—with whom she shares a suite—had come across a portfolio of original art created for an MFA exhibition in 1999. “They brought it over to me and said, ‘This doesn’t really fit into our collecting scope. Do you want it?’” she recalls. It didn’t really fit into the Penn Art Collection’s mission, either—but Dolby felt like there must be some way to find a home for it. Or homes. The University of Chicago and Oberlin College have student-oriented art-lending programs. Maybe

this unexpected collection could provide a low-risk way to try it out at Penn.

For a \$20 rental fee used to offset framing and installation costs, students could select a preferred work (or a “surprise me” option) to hang in campus housing. Bathrooms and kitchens were out-of-bounds, and borrowers were instructed to find a spot shielded from direct sunlight. Although all 37 works in the portfolio attracted interest, the Penn Art Collection ultimately arranged 23 loans. (Not every pair of roommates turned out to have compatible aesthetic sensibilities.) “It was a nice way to kind of put this artwork back into the arts ecosystem here at Penn by connecting current students with alumni—some of whom have gone on to have successful careers as working artists,” Dolby said.

George Chang, a sophomore double-majoring in Philosophy, Politics & Economics and Art History, chose *Prodigal*

*Son* by Matthew Gebhardt GFA’00.

“I was struck by its vivid colors and impressionistic portraiture—as well as its titular allegorical theme—and how they all work together to create a sense of dimensionality to the piece,” he reflected in November. “Living with the artwork is a totally different experience than gazing at it in a gallery setting, and it has made my room a more cozy and intimate space. I am excited to participate in Art Match again next year, and the program has inspired me to start collecting other prints and pieces.”—*TP*

# Essayist Uncaged

The many voices of John Edgar Wideman.

Review by Julia M. Klein

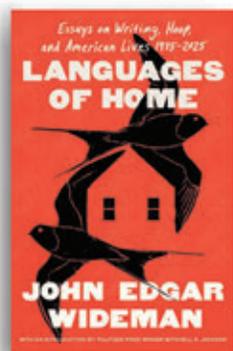
**W**orks by John Edgar Wideman C'63 Hon'86 crowd my shelves: *The Homewood Trilogy, Philadelphia Fire, Two Cities, Hoop Roots, God's Gym*. But the book that remains indelible for me is his 1984 memoir *Brothers and Keepers*, which Wideman described in an author's note as a "mix of memory, imagination, feeling and fact."

Wideman wrote that book in two voices: his own and his youngest brother's. Robby, involved in a botched robbery that led to a death, was convicted in 1976 of felony murder and sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. By then, Wideman had earned a Rhodes Scholarship, become a novelist and English professor, and served as founding director, in the early 1970s, of Penn's Afro-American Studies Program (now the Department of Africana Studies). *Brothers and Keepers* gained Wideman critical acclaim and a larger audience, further accentuating the contrast between his fate and his brother's. (Robby's sentence was commuted in 2019 after he had served 43 years in prison.)

But even as Wideman continued to write, teach, and earn literary prizes—including two PEN/Faulkner Awards and, in 1993, a coveted MacArthur Fellowship—another murder was haunting him and his family. In 1986, at age 16, his son Jacob Wideman fatally stabbed a summer camp roommate, Eric Kane, for no apparent reason. Jacob confessed, accepted a plea deal, and was sentenced to 25 years to life. Paroled in 2016, he stayed on home arrest for less than a year before

being reincarcerated on a technical violation. His legal battle continues.

The best account of that tragedy is probably the 2023 podcast *Violation*, from WBUR and the Marshall Project, to which the elder Wideman, as well as Jacob and other family members, contributed. But there are scattered references to the catastrophe and its aftermath in Wideman's new nonfiction anthology, *Languages of Home*, and they comprise some of his most searing writing.



**Languages of Home:**  
Essays on Writing, Hoop, and  
American Lives 1975–2025  
By John Edgar Wideman  
Scribner, 400 pages, \$29

The collection as a whole is a deliberately mixed bag. It contains political and literary essays, reviews, profiles, and other pieces published between 1971 and 2025—more than a half-century of industry—in an array of outlets, including *Esquire*, *Harper's*, the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times*. Some pieces are introductions to books by or about other Black writers. What is most striking is the range of styles, voices, and poses Wideman adopts, sometimes within the same piece—more varied even than his subject matter. In his use of inventive structures and stream-of-consciousness prose, Wideman illustrates one of his own favorite dicta: that the line between fiction and nonfiction is often blurry at best.

For both aficionados and readers new to him, *Languages of Home* offers a cogent summary of the writer's overlapping preoccupations. These include African American literature and music, his beloved sport of basketball, and the ways in which the American struggle around race has shaped his literary forebears, his Pittsburgh neighborhood of

Homewood, and his own identity. "History is a cage, a conundrum we must escape or resolve before our art can go freely about its business," he writes in a 1990 preface to *Breaking Ice*, an anthology of African American fiction. At the same time, Wideman, who is both the product and progenitor of mixed-race families, critiques the idea of the Black-white binary and insists that Black history cannot be separated from the larger American story.

*Languages of Home* is a testament to Wideman's heroes. His own modest celebrity has helped him score incisive interviews with the actor Denzel Washington, the filmmaker Spike Lee, and the basketball star Michael Jordan. He has admired and decoded the writings of Charles W. Chesnutt, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Zora Neale Hurston. He has pondered the meaning of Malcolm X's many incarnations and various attempts to interpret Malcolm's legacy. And he has mourned both the lynching of Emmett Till and the execution of his estranged father, Louis Till, a World War II soldier convicted of rape and murder in a court-martial that may have been marred by racial bias.

If Wideman appears bitter at times, history, he tells us, is to blame. With Du Bois, he argues that the American Dream has been undercut by the persistence of "the race problem." In a 1990 introduction to *The Souls of Black Folk*, he credits Du Bois with making him realize that it "wasn't simply my personality, my overwrought imagination that created the alienation and ambivalence dogging me, my seesawing emotions as I negotiated the unspoken, unwritten iron rules of racial etiquette with their violent sanctions always simmering just below the surface."

Wideman's 1985 title essay, "The Language of Home," for the *New York Times Book Review*, is similarly a comment on the wages of racial bias: "One of the earliest lessons I learned as a child was that if you looked away from something, it might

not be there when you looked back. ... Being black and poor reinforced the wisdom of a tentative purchase on experience.” But he adds: “Writing forces me to risk ignoring the logic of this lesson.”

A student of voice and dialect in African American literature, Wideman himself assumes different personae. In the 1977 essay “Defining the Black Voice in Fiction,” he bemoans the “emasculatation of oral culture” in which “Black speech was reduced in print to the arbitrary shorthand of Negro dialect.” One of his aims is to wed a Black vernacular with the European literary tradition—to take his legacy seriously while being taken seriously himself.

## “The gods amuse themselves by snatching away our certainties.”

The task, he suggests, isn’t easy. “To protect ourselves as critics and artists, we are forced to jump back and forth, measure ourselves against an imaginary mainstream, define what we are doing in somebody else’s terms,” Wideman declares in “The Black Writer and the Magic of the Word,” a 1988 *New York Times Book Review* essay. “One thing for sure: it is a terrible bind.”

Some of Wideman’s best work has appeared in magazines such as *Esquire* and the *New Yorker*. “Michael Jordan Leaps the Great Divide,” a 1990 *Esquire* feature, conveys Wideman’s passion for the sport. (He captained Penn’s basketball team, was an all-Ivy and all-Big 5 player, and continued to play recreationally for decades afterward.) “A great artist transforms the world,” Wideman writes, touting Jordan’s artistry. But the *Esquire* story is also about race in America, and what it might take to transcend it.

The tragedy of Wideman’s son Jacob informs a 1994 *New Yorker* piece, “Father

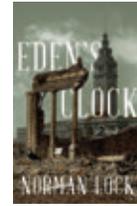
Stories,” an elliptically written meditation on fathers and sons. Wideman refers elegiacally to “the summer you left and never returned.” After “we’d lost you,” he writes to his imprisoned son, the family “had then begun to understand that answers were not around us, not in the air, and not exclusively in you, but inside us all.” He adds: “I hope you can muster peace within yourself and deal with memories, the horrors of the past eight years.” He recalls praying to take his son’s place, to suffer in his stead. His anguish is at once veiled and unvarnished.

In 1995, introducing the Death Row memoir of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Black journalist convicted of killing a Philadelphia policeman, Wideman seems also to be writing about his brother and his son, as well as other family members ensnared in violence and the US legal system. Two years later, in “Justice: A Perspective,” he manages to be more direct. The unprovoked stabbing of Eric Kane occurred because “my son lost control of the howling chaos inside him,” Wideman writes. After that, he became “a caged beast, hunted, baited, condemned,” someone who “needed help not punishment.” The courts disagreed.

In the 2005 essay “Looking at Emmett Till,” Wideman identifies with the martyred, mutilated teenager—who was born the same year as the author, though never permitted to grow old. Till, visiting Mississippi from Chicago, violated Southern norms in his interaction with a white woman, though just how is still contested. The 14-year-old paid with his life, and his killers, who confessed to *Life* magazine after being acquitted, escaped justice.

For Wideman, Till’s shattered face represents an unhealed historical wound. He likens it to terrifying, mask-like West African sculptures, which “reveal the chaos always lurking within the ordinary, remind us the gods amuse themselves by snatching away our certainties”—a recurrent motif of both Wideman’s life and his work.

## Briefly Noted



### EDEN'S CLOCK

by Norman Lock C'72  
(Bellevue Literary Press, 2025, \$17.99.) In this 12th and final stand-alone book in Lock’s series of historical novels, a disabled Civil War veteran makes an epic,

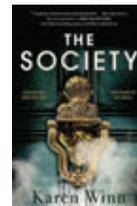
westward journey toward a fateful encounter with author Jack London, only hours before the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. It calls into question the American belief in individualism to shape our destiny when confronted with irrepressible, chaotic forces.



### REINVENTING PROTESTANT GERMANY: Religious Nationalists and the Contest for Post-Nazi Democracy

by Brandon Bloch C'11  
(Harvard University Press, 2025, \$49.95.) A history professor who focuses on the politics of memory provides a revealing account of how German Protestant leaders embraced democratic ideals after World War II, while firmly and consequentially refusing to account for their earlier complicity with Nazism.

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### THE SOCIETY

by Karen Winn Nu'00 (Penguin Random House, 2026, \$19.00.) This twisty, suspenseful novel follows two women whose lives become tangled with a notorious secret society in the heart of Boston. While some believe it is merely an elite social club, others are convinced it hides something more sinister.

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### THE COMPOSER EMBALMED: Relic Culture from Piety to Kitsch

by Abigail Fine C'10  
(University of Chicago Press, 2025, \$35.00.)

A professor of musicology documents the eccentric ways that composers have been remembered—from relics to rituals to pilgrimage, and even exhumation and embalming—during the 19th century when composers’ devotees longed for a way to preserve, touch, and embrace the residues of their dead icons.

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Visit [thepenngazette.com](http://thepenngazette.com) for more *Briefly Noted*.



## Bird's Eye View

This avian ecologist has uncovered her “secret world.” ▶

**To have a bird brain, as Sonia Kleindorfer C'88 might see it, would be a compliment, not an insult.**

For more than 25 years, this avian ecologist has studied the surprising linguistic abilities and behaviors of birds, often with startling results.

Until she began wiring the nests of superb fairywrens with microphones and cameras, ornithologists believed songbird hatchlings learned songs from their fathers and that males were mostly the ones who sang. They thought females stayed mum, so to speak, to keep nest locations secret.

What these European scientists decades ago failed to consider, according to Kleindorfer, was that the objects of their studies had migrated there from Asia. “Now, after a 6,000-kilometer journey, the first thing on a female’s mind is not ‘Let me sing,’ it’s ‘Let me eat to produce eggs,’” she says. It turns out that females are more likely to sing in non-breeding grounds.

To her surprise, Kleindorfer recently discovered that mothers, each with their own unique “speech” pattern, vocally tutor embryos in their jellybean-sized eggs. When chicks hatched, she found that nestmates made a begging cry distinct from offspring of other mothers, a discovery that has been confirmed in other species.

Songbirds, she says, “have incredibly complex communication, and we’re just beginning to tap into it, because we’re finally shedding

our biased view that only humans should have that trait.”

Kleindorfer is a migratory flier in her own right. She spends three months each year in the Galapagos Islands (where she has conducted research for 25 years), three months in Australia teaching at Flinders University, and the remaining time as director of the Konrad Lorenz Research Center for Behavior and Cognition at the University of Vienna in Austria.

“Sonia is a powerhouse,” says her University of Vienna colleague Tecumseh Fitch, a professor of cognitive biology. “She doesn’t seem to have a pause or stop button.”

Growing up in West Philadelphia, the furthest thing from Kleindorfer’s mind was a career studying animal behavior. “I felt sorry for people who studied birds. I was sure they didn’t have any friends. My association was people sitting on park benches looking rather forlorn and feeding pigeons.” With a chuckle, she adds, “Now, mind you, since then I’ve realized that pigeons are fascinating.”

A key aspect of Kleindorfer’s work is community involvement, not research in isolation. It’s a strategy she learned in 1989 from the late primatologist Jane Goodall when she was a grad student studying baboons in Tanzania. (Fascinated by evolutionary biology, Kleindorfer switched her focus from primates to birds because their evolutionary changes can be easier to see since they often reproduce once a year and have shorter lifespans.)

Today she is helping to lead a massive ecological restoration alongside residents and partner organizations on the Galápagos island of Floreana. Invasive rats and cats had decimated native species including the Darwin’s tree finch, Galápagos dove, and dark-billed cuckoo. Predator mammals have now been largely removed. So far 12 locally extinct species have been reintroduced from other islands. This year giant land tortoises are being relocated to Floreana.

**“Remove the predation risk, and the cost of taking risks decreases.”**

“Jane taught me that humans are part of nature, and we have to work in partnership—that our mental health, our physical health, our economic prospects are enhanced when we are in partnership with nature and community oriented,” Kleindorfer says. “Partnership is a life-enhancing underpinning that taps into the indomitable human spirit.”

When predators ran wild on Floreana, few Darwin finch fledglings survived to adulthood. Now the endangered birds are experiencing huge reproductive success, a development that has dramatically changed the way young birds talk and behave.

“In the absence of predators we have a massive shift toward more exploratory, risk-taking individuals,” says Kleindorfer, whose behavioral experiments measure the finches’ boldness, aggressiveness, sociability, activity, and exploration. “It’s probably reasonable,” she speculates, “that you would innovate when there is no cost to explore. Remove the predation risk, and the cost of taking risks decreases. You’re not going to get killed if you venture to the periphery.”

Meanwhile, fledglings have simultaneously had a linguistic “innovation explosion.” Before predators were removed, the more aggressive male birds only sang a song designed to drive off intruders. Now young birds are using new syllables and combinations of syllables she and her team had never heard in the previous 20 years.

“Teenage hangouts” of mixed species are popping up. “Maybe they’re more open to learning from each other. If you’re more open to novelty, you’re more likely to copy and innovate song syllable types. Whatever the mechanism is, we will be studying these novel song types,” she says. As in human society, partnerships among animal species, according to Kleindorfer, can amplify each participant’s potential.

The new era of birding, in which hundreds of thousands of people can upload sightings and sounds to the wildly popular app eBird, excites Kleindorfer. “This information can be used in so many ways we

have yet to imagine," she says. "At a deep level, when we look at birds, we know that when there are lots of species, the ecosystem is intact, and we're going to be OK, too."

She credits her mathematician father Paul Kleindorfer, the Anheuser-Busch Professor Emeritus of Management Science at Wharton ["Obituaries," Jan|Feb 2013], and actress mother Stephanie with shaping her scholarly nature. "I'm a synthesis of my mother's quest for understanding emotional depth and my father's fondness for rigor, systematic inquiry, and data analysis."

Her Penn professors left lasting impressions, too, especially Alan Mann, professor emeritus of anthropology. "He would reenact the evolution of life by crawling on the floor and ultimately standing up," recalls Kleindorfer.

During her senior year at Penn, she fell in love with doing field work while on a study program under conservation biologist and Penn biology professor Daniel Janzen in Costa Rica. "I climbed a mountain, and I remember exactly where I was standing, looking at both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The turtles were coming to shore, nesting. The grass was blowing. The wild horses were roaming, and I looked out and thought, 'Oh, my God, you mean I could do this for the rest of my life?' And that was it. No turning back. It was the feeling of walking through a door into a secret world that you did not know existed before, and, to me, that secret world was nature."

—George Spencer



## The Reel Deal

How a longtime movie buff has bolstered the Philadelphia Film Society.

**While other teenagers growing up in the mid-'90s may have covered their bedroom walls with images of sports stars or grunge rockers, J. Andrew Greenblatt WG'23 wallpapered his domain in the Philadelphia suburbs with movie posters.** "There was a new generation of independent filmmakers coming along," the 45-year-old says. "Quentin Tarantino, Steven Soderbergh, Kevin Smith. I was all in. I remember at Germantown Academy really looking forward to getting into a van with my classmates and our Latin teacher who took us into town every week to

watch a movie. And I remember my dad bringing me to the Ritz Five to see Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*—we got the last two seats. A four-hour independent film selling out in the middle of the afternoon? It was mind-blowing."

These days Greenblatt is living the cinephile's dream as the CEO and executive director of the nonprofit Philadelphia Film Society (PFS), which celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2026. And its signature event, the Philadelphia Film Festival (PFF), turns 35 this year—and keeps setting new attendance records.

Despite being a rabid film buff, Greenblatt never want-

ed to make his own movies. Instead, looking for something industry-adjacent, he landed on entertainment law. After obtaining bachelor's and master's degrees in political science at George Washington University, he stayed in Washington, DC, to go to law school at American University. He had a brief stint as a law clerk at an old-school firm, then clerked for a superior court judge. Those experiences "made me realize that I wasn't interested in the practice of law," Greenblatt says. "I was interested in learning how to think, write, and make arguments."

When a friend asked him to head up business and legal affairs for a film production company he was starting, something clicked for the young lawyer. His three years there set the stage for a move to the Philadelphia Film Society in 2008. When he arrived, he found a small operation with just two full-time staffers, a budget of \$350,000, and 300 members.

One of his first tasks was tinkering with the Philadelphia Film Festival's timing. "It had become obvious that we needed to move the festival from April to later in the year because we were missing out on presenting new movies," he says. "They had either started their national runs after debuting at SXSW or were waiting to premiere at Tribeca." Moving it to the fall, at the start of awards season, "makes for a much stronger film festival," Greenblatt notes, with more than 30,000 filmgoers attending in 2024.

“We don’t strive to be the kind of festival that demands North American or international premieres but we do strive to put together the best programming possible and to show quality films that have not yet been distributed in Philadelphia or online.”

Highlights of the 2025 festival included regional premieres of *Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery*, with director Rian Johnson in attendance, and *Sentimental Value*, the Grand Prix winner at the Cannes Film Festival. Also noteworthy were screenings of *Rosemead*, followed by a Q&A session with the movie’s writer Marilyn Fu C’99 and star Lucy Liu, who received the festival’s artistic achievement award; and Gus Van Sant’s *Dead Man Wire*, starring two-time Oscar-nominee and Philadelphia native Colman Domingo, who accepted this year’s Lumière Award, given to recognize those whose cinematic achievements reflect their connection to the city.

The festival also saw record badge sales, which cost up to \$500 and give holders access to all showings. “We’ve worked hard to gain the trust that we will live up to our promise and deliver something incredible,” Greenblatt says.

Along the way, PFS has become about much more than the festival. In 2024, for example, some 200,000 people came to its first-run and curated screenings. Most of those attendees belonged to the 18- to 44-year-old cohort, proof for Greenblatt that the idea of young people not

## From Off-Campus Cooking to a Michelin Star



“Last night was the surprise of a century,” Amanda Shulman C’15 posted on Instagram the week before Thanksgiving. “Cannot say this was on my bingo card!”

The Philadelphia chef was referring to the bestowal of a Michelin star upon her first restaurant, Her Place Supper Club. In a ceremony held at the Kimmel Center for Performing Arts, Her Place was named among the first three restaurants in the city ever to receive that coveted honor. Shulman, who gained a certain fame as an undergraduate for hosting pop-up dinners in off-campus apartments, was the subject of a *Gazette* cover story in 2023 [“Fake Simple,” Nov/Dec 2023].

“Shulman’s cozy little spot was born out of her love for cooking for friends and has that warm and welcoming supper club vibe,” the Michelin citation declared. “Diners may get their own table but there’s a real communal feel at play.” Shulman’s second restaurant, My Loup (a collaboration with her husband Alex Kemp), was among 21 Philadelphia restaurants to receive Michelin’s “Recommended” status. The couple opened a third city restaurant, Pine Street Grill, in December. —TP

wanting to get off their sofas is a “flawed scenario,” he says. “They *do* want to be with each other and feel a shared emotion—whether of laughter, tears or horror—and to put away their phones.” Plus, more attendees than ever—nearly 5,000 at last count—have shown their commitment by purchasing annual membership plans. “When we increased our programming beyond the festival, it really fueled membership growth,” Greenblatt says.

Today, its Curated Film Series at its recently renovated main venue, the Film Society Center (formerly the Prince

Theater) near Broad and Chestnut Streets, spotlights arthouse favorites like David Lynch and allows viewers to bone up on cinema history by revisiting treasures from all eras, such as *Barry Lyndon* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Meanwhile, its two Old City movie theaters continue a full schedule of first-run offerings. Showings at the three theaters—which collectively offer nine screens—are just part of Greenblatt’s vision of PFS as a central clearinghouse for film in Philadelphia. Its full slate now includes community outreach efforts like a school program that invites nearly 1,000

children into town for free movies; a selection of free community screenings during the film festival; and the summertime “Movies on the Block” program, free pop-up showings throughout city neighborhoods. PFS also presents a mini-festival in April and for the last dozen years has hosted a red-carpet Oscars Night Party fundraiser.

That Greenblatt returned to school for a Wharton Executive MBA in 2021 after 13 years at the organization seems typical of his determination not to stand still. “It was something I had been kicking around for a while and the pandemic offered an opportunity,” he says. “Our organization had grown so much, and I felt I should fill in some personal gaps, like strategic planning and managing a bigger staff and budget [now at about 20 full-timers and \$5 million, respectively]. Our board loved the program and really encouraged me.”

As he continues to push PFS to be bigger and better, he balances the achievable with the aspirational. “The thing I want most—to complete Phase III of our renovation plans at the Film Society Center with a rooftop bar and screening room—is furthest away,” he says. “But day to day, I want to make film more accessible for everyone and I want to build and encourage our local movie-making community. Film can do so much—it can inspire and engage and unite and entertain. My biggest accomplishment so far is to help make that contribution to Philadelphia.”

—JoAnn Greco

# DOMESTIC

## ALABAMA

Marta Self, WG'03  
marta.self@gmail.com

## ARIZONA

**Phoenix**  
Christopher Kaup, L'91  
president@pennclubaz.org

## CALIFORNIA

**Los Angeles**  
Mason Bryant, C'17  
pennclubla@gmail.com

### Orange County

Jeannie Quan Hogue, C'88  
penncluboc@gmail.com

### San Francisco

Susan Louie Shinoff, G'06, WG'06  
president@sfpennclub.com

Pratik Shah, C'05  
pratik.h.shah@gmail.com

### San Diego

Guatam Rajpal, C'01  
pennclubsd@gmail.com

### Silicon Valley

Harper Cheng WG'22  
svpennclub@gmail.com

## COLORADO

Alyssa Anne Sholette, SW'99  
daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## CONNECTICUT

**Fairfield County**  
Candice Moore Babiarz, C'88  
Sara Nelson Goertel, C'98  
fairfieldpenn@gmail.com

### Hartford

Denise Winokur, WG'73, GR'81  
d.winokur@comcast.net

### New Haven

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## DELAWARE

Linda Farquhar, WG'93  
pennclubdelaware@gmail.com

## FLORIDA

**Boca Raton/Ft Lauderdale**  
**Palm Beach**  
Pamela Harpaz, ENG'94  
penngoldcoastalumni@gmail.com

### Central Florida

Rachel Scheinberg, C'98  
rachel494@yahoo.com

### NE Florida/Jacksonville

Jeffrey E. Bernardo, W'92  
jeffreybernardo@yahoo.com

### Miami

Gracie Kaplan-Stein, C'08  
miamipennclub@gmail.com  
Melissa Pierre Kelly, C'01  
melissamiamirealtor@gmail.com  
Astrid Rondeau, C'16  
astridrondeau@gmail.com

### Sarasota & Manatee Counties

Emil Efthimides, C'75  
pennclubsarasota@gmail.com

## Southwest Florida

Jodi Grosflam, C'83  
jodigrosflam@gmail.com

### Tampa

Arianna Beetz, C'16, GRW'22  
connect@beetzbydrari.com

## GEORGIA

**Atlanta**  
Kate Armstrong Lee, C'80  
katealee@alumni.upenn.edu

## HAWAII

**Honolulu**  
Raj George C'95  
rajgeorge@gmail.com

## ILLINOIS

**Chicago**  
Neal Jain, ENG'99, W'99, WG'06  
president@pennclubchicago.com

## INDIANA

daralumni@dev.upenn.edu

## IOWA

daralumni@dev.upenn.edu

## KENTUCKY

**Louisville/Lexington**  
Oliver Ardery, WG'10  
oliver.ardery@gmail.com

## LOUISIANA

**New Orleans**  
Lydia Cutrer, WG'06  
Rebecca Sha, C'10  
penncluboflouisiana@gmail.com

## MARYLAND

**Baltimore**  
Jameira Johnson, C'19  
pennclubbalt@gmail.com

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Boston**  
Heena Lee, C'95  
info@pennclubofboston.org

### Worcester

Margaret Saito, W'94  
Tony Saito, D'95  
drtonysaito@alumni.upenn.edu

## MICHIGAN

Kapil Kedia, ENG'00  
president@pennclubbmi.org

## MINNESOTA

**Minneapolis**  
Dan Rutman C'86  
dan\_rutman@alumni.upenn.edu

## MISSISSIPPI

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## MISSOURI

**Kansas City**  
Keith Copaken, C'86  
kcopaken@copaken-brooks.com

### St. Louis

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## MONTANA

Jay Weiner, C'92  
pennclubbmt@protonmail.com

## NEVADA

**Las Vegas**  
Seth Schorr, C'99  
vegasquakers@gmail.com

## NEW JERSEY

**Central New Jersey**  
daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

### Metro New Jersey

Liz Camp, C'98  
lizcampfla@gmail.com

## NEW MEXICO

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## NEW YORK

**Central New York**  
daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

### Long Island

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

### New York City

Laura Loewenthal, C'88  
president@penn.nyc

### Rochester

Robert Fox, W'87  
rafox4455@gmail.com

### Westchester/Rockland Counties

David Blatte W'86  
Robyn Shapiro C'01  
president@pennclubwestrock.org

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Charlotte**  
James Powell, C'76  
jagp1954@gmail.com

### The Triangle

Steve Strickman, ENG'85, WG'92  
steveofthetriangle@gmail.com

## OHIO

**Cleveland**  
Mary Ellen Huesken, C'86  
maryellenhuesken@gmail.com

### Southwest Ohio

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## OKLAHOMA

**Tulsa**  
Nikki Sack, C'03  
tulsapennclub@protonmail.com

## OREGON

**Portland**  
Amy Remick, C'00  
amyremick@gmail.com

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Bucks County**  
Susan Vescera, GE'd'92  
pennbucksalumni@gmail.com

**Central Pennsylvania**  
daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

### Lehigh Valley

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

### Northeastern Pennsylvania

Anthony T.P. Brooks, C'89  
tonybrookswb@gmail.com

### Philadelphia

Michael Krone, C'19, L'24, WG'24  
info.pennclubphilly@gmail.com

## Western Pennsylvania

Donald Bonk, C'92  
donald.m.bonk.c92@alumni.upenn.edu

## PUERTO RICO

Arianna Galan, C'12  
arianna.galan@gmail.com

Daniel de Jesus Garcia, W'11  
danieldejg@gmail.com

## RHODE ISLAND

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## SOUTH CAROLINA

Emily Chubb, W'06  
epchubb@gmail.com

## TENNESSEE

**Memphis**  
Sally D. Feinup C'06  
sallyfienupp@gmail.com

Chris Przybyszewski C'98 CGS'00  
przybyszewski1@gmail.com

### Nashville

J.J. Anthony, C'09, GED'14  
pennclubofnashville@gmail.com

## TEXAS

**Austin**  
Catherine Tien, C'12  
tiencatherine@gmail.com

### Dallas/Ft. Worth

Laura Lai, ENG'02  
Thomas Trujillo, W'98  
dfwpenn@gmail.com

### Houston

Kazi Indakwa, W'89  
pennhoustonalum@gmail.com

### San Antonio

Kyle Jones, GRD'16  
sapennclub@gmail.com

## UTAH

Art Warsoff, W'83  
adwarsoff@comcast.net

## VIRGINIA

**Hampton Roads**  
daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

### Central Virginia

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## WASHINGTON

**Seattle**  
Belinda Buscher, C'92  
Jim Chen, SEAS'07  
pennclubseattle@gmail.com

## WASHINGTON D.C.

Vivian Ramirez, C'96  
pennclubofdc@gmail.com

## WISCONSIN

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

# INTERNATIONAL

## AFGHANISTAN

Sanzar Kakar, ENG'05  
sanzar@alumni.upenn.edu

## AUSTRALIA

Kyle Farley, G'01, GR'06  
Julie Ballard C'89  
daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## BERMUDA

Julia Henderson, WG'09  
pennbermuda@gmail.com

## BRAZIL

Annie Kim Podlubny, WG'03  
annie.kim.wg03@wharton.upenn.edu

## BULGARIA

Rado Lambev, C'01  
radi123@yahoo.com

## CANADA

**Toronto**  
Christian Kellett, G'09, WG'09  
Daniel Yeh, ENG'99, GEN'03  
presidents@pennwhartontoronto.com

## Vancouver

Lucy Cook, C'95  
daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## CHILE

Danielle Gilson, C'86  
danielle.gilson@gmail.com

## CHINA

**Beijing**  
Bailin Li, GED'14  
president@pennclubbeijing.com

## Shanghai

Renee Shi, GED'11  
renee.shi@tcgcapitalpartners.com

## Shenzhen

Bailu Zhong GL'14  
egretlulu@hotmail.com

## Guangzhou

Gene Kim, W'92  
gene@pennclubgz.com

## COLOMBIA

Daniel Vasquez W'90  
Daniel Willis, GR'17  
daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## DENMARK

Alexander Kalum GL'22  
alexander.kalum@andersenkaer.com

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Gisselle Rohmer, WG'09  
grohmer@ifc.com

## ECUADOR

Juan Carlos Salame, W'03  
juan.c.salame@gmail.com

## EGYPT

Mariam Georges, ENG'10, GEN'11  
mariam@challengeforxng.com

## FRANCE

**Paris**  
Jackson Gu, C'17  
jacksongu@alumni.upenn.edu

## GERMANY

Maliha Shah, C'06, GEN'06  
malihashah@gmail.com

## GREECE

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## GUAM

Patrick Wolff, Esq., C'70, GED'71, G'74  
atty.patrick.wolff@gmail.com

## GUATEMALA

Sofia Zaror, W'13  
sofia.zaror.wh13@wharton.upenn.edu

## HONG KONG

Dina Shin, W'10, GEN'25  
Kevin Lo, W'07  
pennclubhk@gmail.com

## HUNGARY

Istvan Szucs, C'95, ENG'95  
istvan@pobox.com

## INDIA

**Bangalore**  
Ravi Gururaj, ENG'89, W'89  
rgururaj@mba1999.hbs.edu

## Delhi

Priyanka Agarwal, W'97  
priyanka@tcil.com

## Kolkata

Anil Vaswani, ENG'97  
anil.vaswani@wesman.com

## Mumbai

Sneha Nagvekar, GL'17  
snehanag@pennlaw.upenn.edu

Arti Sanganeria C'08, ENG'08  
arti@alumni.upenn.edu

## INDONESIA

Nicole Jizhar, W'16  
pennwhartonindo@gmail.com

## IRELAND

Alicia McConnell, C'85  
ajm4071@gmail.com

## ITALY

**Milan**  
Monica Buzzai, CGS'01 GR'07  
pennclubmilan@gmail.com

## JAMAICA

Deika Morrison, ENG'94, W'94, WG'08  
deika@alumni.upenn.edu

## JAPAN

Raymond Wong, C'90, W'90  
pennclubjapan@googlegroups.com

## KAZAKHSTAN

Maksutbek Aitmaganbet, GED'18  
maksutbekaitmaganbet@alumni.upenn.edu

## KENYA

Kisimbi Kyumwa Thomas, NU'02, W'02  
thomaski@stwing.upenn.edu

## KOREA

Ilho Yoo, SAS'87  
info@pennclubkorea.org

## KUWAIT

Majed Alsarheed, GEN'01  
malsarheed@yahoo.com

## MALAYSIA

Chin San Goh, C'15  
gohchinsan10@gmail.com

## MEXICO

Luis E. Izaza, GL'12 WEV'12  
lizaza@izaza.com.mx

## NETHERLANDS

John Terwilliger, W'83, C'83  
pennwhartonclubnetherlands@gmail.com

## NICARAGUA

Alberto Chamorro, W'78  
ecisa@aol.com

## PANAMA

Gina Faarup de Cochez, W'01  
gfaarup@cochezycia.com

## PHILIPPINES

Marco Antonio, W'95, WG'04  
daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## ROMANIA

Victor V. Constantinescu  
vconstantinescu@birisgoran.ro

## SINGAPORE

Jing Zhang, WG'09  
pennwhartonsg@gmail.com

## SOUTH AFRICA

Cynthia Ntini, C'06  
daralumniclub@upenn.edu

## SWITZERLAND

Emma James, C'14  
connectemma@gmail.com

## TAIWAN

Andrea Chen C'94  
andreachen71@gmail.com  
Wellington Chow, WG'89, G'89  
wellington.chow@gmail.com

## THAILAND

Sally Jutabha, WG'90  
upennthailand@gmail.com

## TURKEY

Kerem Kepkep, EE'96, GEN'97  
kkepkep@yahoo.com  
Sami Habbab, W'98  
shabbab@deltastar.com.tr

## UAE

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## UNITED KINGDOM

daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu

## VIETNAM

Linh Thai, WG'06  
linhthai@gmail.com



# PennAlumni Regional Clubs

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email: [daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu](mailto:daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu)

“For many years I have been surprising celebrity artists with their caricatures.”

— Robert Carley C’82

**Celebrate Your Reunion, May 15–18, 2026!**

## 1956

**Mark C. Jacobs C’56**, a resident of Rancho Mirage, California, hosted his 90th birthday party for family and friends in September at Spencer’s Restaurant in Palm Springs, California. Attendees included both locals and those from as far away as Montreal, Northern Virginia, and Miami Beach and Boca Raton, Florida. Among those present was **Michael Feinberg C’91**, of The Woodlands, Texas, with his wife Colleen.

## 1959

**Paul Muldawer GAR’59** was featured this summer in an article in the *Fulton Neighbor* for connecting with younger generations through TikTok. To date, the 92-year-old retired architect from Atlanta has gained about 600,000 followers and has 13 million likes on his page, @PaultheATLartist, where he shares his artwork and everyday moments from life with his wife, Carol. The article can be read at [tinyurl.com/Muldawer](https://tinyurl.com/Muldawer).

**Gerald “Jerry” Rosenthal C’59** and **Lloyd Zane Remick C’59** were featured last summer on a Philadelphia 6abc *Action News* segment on “The Art of Aging” for their 80-plus-year friendship. The two men met at Ellwood Elementary School, attended Central High School together, and graduated from Penn in the same class. Their bond was further solidified as military veterans. Jerry went on to become an accountant, while Lloyd became an attorney. The segment can be viewed online at [tinyurl.com/rosenremick](https://tinyurl.com/rosenremick).

## 1960

**Peter Buck Feller C’60** is the author of *The Last Gasp of William Schwarzfeller: Soviet Espionage and the Cruelties of Stalin’s Gu-*

*lags*. From the publisher, Bloomsbury: “Part memoir, part detective story, part spy story, this nail-biting family saga journeys into the world of Soviet espionage and the cruelties of Stalin’s gulag archipelago.” It tells the story of Peter’s father, who disappeared in Moscow in 1938, when Peter was just six months old. Decades later, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Peter embarks on a search to reclaim the father he never knew.

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## 1961

**Robert A. Gleason Jr. W’61**, a former University Trustee, has been appointed by the White House to serve as director of Amtrak’s board of directors. He was confirmed in September for a five-year term. Bob is a US Air Force veteran and reservist, and a consultant for the government relations firm Cassidy & Associates. He previously spent five decades in the insurance industry. From 2006 to 2017, he served as chair of the Republican Party of Pennsylvania, and he has been involved in pushing for increased Amtrak service.

## 1963

**Dr. Richard W. Chaikin D’63**, a retired periodontist and former teacher at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine as well as the Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry, was recently awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the American College of Dentistry at the group’s annual meeting in Bethesda, Maryland. The award included a bronze medal. Richard had also been granted a bronze medal from the US Army Dental Corps, as well as two other bronze medals from the American Rhododendron Society, a group that promotes interest in rhododendrons and azaleas.

## We Want to Hear from You

**EMAIL** [gazette@ben.dev.upenn.edu](mailto:gazette@ben.dev.upenn.edu)

Please include your school and year, along with your address and a daytime telephone number. We include email addresses only when requested or obviously implied.

**ALUMNI NOTE DEADLINES** 7/15 for the Sep/Oct issue; 9/15 for Nov/Dec; 11/15 for Jan/Feb; 1/15 for Mar/Apr; 3/15 for May/Jun; and 5/15 for Jul/Aug.

## Events

### PENN CLUB OF JAPAN

Join us for an unforgettable evening that blends global perspective, community impact, and festive spirit—all with a special emphasis on Japan and the power of our Penn alumni network. Join the Penn Club of Japan in a vibrant celebration of our Penn journey, 6-8 p.m., January 28, at the Tokyo American Club (2 Chome-1-2 Azabudai, Minato City, Tokyo 106-8649, Japan). Email [daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu](mailto:daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu) for more information.

### PENN CLUB OF TAIWAN

Join fellow Penn alumni on January 25 as we celebrate Ben’s Birthday Bash! From 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., at the American Club (No. 47, Beian Rd, Zhongshan District, Taipei City, Taiwan 10462), the evening will include finger foods and beverages, and special guests from Penn: Hoopes Wampler GrEd’13, Senior Associate Vice President, Alumni Relations; Kathe Archibald, Director, Penn Alumni Regional Clubs; and Monica Stepanow LPS’19, Director, Penn Alumni Ambassador Program. Email [daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu](mailto:daralumniclub@dev.upenn.edu) for more information.

## 1964

**Stuart Resor C’64** writes, “What was your first memory? Our class were mostly born in 1942 or close to that. World War II was in full swing and our mothers were pregnant during the bombing of Pearl Harbor ... quite a burden on them at that time! I was about two and a half when I remember my mom standing over me at the kitchen table and big tears were coming down. My dad joined the Navy and was far away at sea for a long time. Hitler ruled the earth in those days, and the news was not always good. Mom began saving *Life* magazines

for him and he would eventually return and see those. My dad had a big map of the Pacific on his office wall for me. Sadly, I don't have that map any more. Also, Pop would decline to discuss the subject."

**Dr. Edward Rossomando D'64** was a recent guest on the podcast *Dentaltown*, produced and hosted by Howard Farran. Ed writes, "The podcast focused on the threat and opportunities presented to the dental profession by artificial intelligence. Biodontics, the dental specialty that will lead dentistry out of the 20th century and into the 21st century was showcased and discussed." The podcast can be viewed on YouTube at [youtu.be/JsEM6oYvcb4](https://youtu.be/JsEM6oYvcb4), and more information about Ed is available at [guides.library.upenn.edu/edward-rossomando](https://guides.library.upenn.edu/edward-rossomando).

## 1965

**Ellen Stekert Gr'65**, a folklorist and singer, has released her latest single, "The Ballad of Frankie Silver," described in the press materials as "a riveting contribution to the rich lineage of American murder ballads and traditional storytelling." It's available on all streaming platforms, as well as her website, [ellenstekert.com](https://ellenstekert.com).

*Celebrate Your Reunion, May 15-18, 2026!*

## 1966

**Adele Sandberg CW'66**, founder of the educational nonprofit Ear Peace Save Your Hearing Foundation, has published *HearO Saves the Day*, an adventure book that teaches young children how to protect their hearing from loud sound. Adele writes, "With one in five US teenagers already suffering permanent hearing loss from noise by the age of 19, it is essential that we teach children (and adults) four basic ways to protect their hearing." The book is available on Amazon and through donations at [earpeacefoundation.org](https://earpeacefoundation.org). All proceeds from book sales go toward hearing-safety education.

## 1967

**Alan Reinhardt C'67** has published a poetry collection, called *A Landscape of Suitable Distance*. Alan explains, "It is a kind of meditation on the passage of time and the importance of human connection." He shares that he enjoyed a lengthy career in higher education. The last 32 years were

spent at Nichols College in Massachusetts, first as professor of English, then as provost.

**Alan Rosen C'67** recently published *Tales of Old Zen: From New Jersey to Japan*. It is a collection of stories that explores life as an American in Kumamoto, Japan. Alan has spent the entirety of his career as a professor and scholar at Kumamoto University. The focus of his scholarship has been the life and legacy of Lafcadio Hearn. When Alan was a student at Penn, he was a member of Tau Epsilon Phi fraternity.

## 1970

**Michael C. Lester C'70** writes, "As a journalist, I wrote a weekly Substack column called *The Meaning of Death* for more than a year. I reported on suicide, near-death experiences, Pascal's gambit, necrophilia, COVID-19, palliative care, and other controversial but important topics. In the late spring, these columns were put into a book, *The Meaning of Death*, joining on Amazon my various travelogues, novels, and the peculiar *How to Have Fun with Your Body* (Houghton Mifflin)."

*Celebrate Your Reunion, May 15-18, 2026!*

## 1971

**Karl Schonborn Gr'71**, a criminologist and author, examines the life of **Ira Einhorn C'61**, known as the "Unicorn Killer," in his true-crime book *Privileged Killers*. In the book, Karl also examines two other murderers who killed in Portland, Oregon, and San Francisco. Karl writes, "Despite the heinous nature of their crimes and their deception and deviousness, the justice system discriminated in favor of these men because of their various charisma, talent, or wealth, rather than against them as it often does with underprivileged criminals." Karl is also the author of a memoir, *Cleft Heart*, which was reissued in 2024. It tells the story of his childhood with a cleft palate, his experience with bullies, his dream of becoming a debate star, and his determination to attend an Ivy League school. Both books are available on Amazon.

## 1972

**Hon. Blaine G. Gibson C'72** has been named Trial Judge of the Year by the Washington State Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA). ABOTA is an

association of trial attorneys and judges who are dedicated to promoting civility and professionalism within the legal profession, improving civics education within schools and the community, and preserving and protecting Americans' Seventh Amendment right to a civil trial by jury, which includes supporting judicial independence and ensuring safe courthouse ingress and egress for jurists, jurors, and the public.

**Hon. Gary E. Jackson W'72** has been elected as a judge in the Atlanta Municipal Court. He began his eighth term in office on January 5. He writes, "I currently preside over traffic cases (over 21,760 through election day) in the busiest court in the State of Georgia. My family says it's time to retire, but I enjoy working every day towards making our roads and streets safer for everyone."

**Norman Lock C'72** completed "The American Novels" series in July, a cycle of 12 standalone books begun in 2012 and published annually by Bellevue Literary Press. Author Joyce Carol Oates wrote of it: "Norman Lock has created a memorable portrait gallery of American subjects in a succession of audaciously imagined, wonderfully original, and beautifully written novels unlike anything in our literature." At Penn, Norman was a student of Philip Roth Hon'03, Daniel Hoffman, Jerre Mangione Hon'80, **Loren Eiseley G'35 Gr'37**, and, he says, "an associate professor named Judith, whose face [I] can see clearly, but whose surname [I] cannot recall." Still, he wishes to acknowledge her, "whose assessment of the nation's most seminal writers sparked the writing of [this] series."

**Deborah R. Willig CW'72**, managing partner at Willig, Williams & Davidson, has been named to the 2025 Lawdragon 500 Leading Civil Rights & Plaintiff Employment Lawyers guide. Attorneys featured in this guide are deemed by the publication *Lawdragon* as the most noteworthy advocates for civil rights and workers in the country.

## 1973

**Gayle Feldman CW'73** is the author of a new biography of the founder of Random House, *Nothing Random: Bennett Cerf and the Publishing House He Built*. The book draws upon extensive interviews, previously unavailable private letters, and deeply researched archival material. Gayle

writes, “I interviewed more than 200 people—from Toni Morrison, Cormac McCarthy, William Styron, and *Rosemary’s Baby* author Ira Levin, to Barbara Walters, Henry Kissinger, Tina Sinatra, and Mel Brooks. I did research at archival libraries across the country—including at Penn—and was even able to contribute new papers to a collection at Penn’s Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, because one of my interviewees knew of a family member who had them.”

**Hazel Ann Lee CW’73** see **Cynthia Cozette Lee G’77**.

**Arnold Rochvarg C’73**, a legal scholar and law professor emeritus at the University of Baltimore, is author of *No One Ever Asked: The Untold Story of a Civil Rights Worker*. His book presents a narrative history of the mid-1960s civil rights movement centered around the experiences of a white woman from Philadelphia who quit college to join the movement—she was also Arnold’s cousin Iris. For over 50 years, Arnold had been intrigued by the mystery surrounding the seven-year disappearance of Iris during the 1960s. Once he finally approached her about her rumored involvement in the civil rights movement, she generously shared her experiences with him and arranged for him to meet others with whom she had worked.

**Robert M. Steeg C’73 ASC’75**, managing partner of Steeg Law Firm in New Orleans, has been included in *New Orleans Magazine’s* Top Lawyers 2025 for Real Estate Law. Steeg Law also received the following rankings in the 2026 edition of *Best Law Firms*: Regional Tier 1 (New Orleans) for Banking and Finance Law, Commercial Transactions / UCC Law, Litigation–Real Estate, Real Estate Law; Regional Tier 2 (New Orleans) for Commercial Finance Law, Commercial Litigation, Corporate Law; and Regional Tier 3 (New Orleans) for Bet-the-Company Litigation, Litigation–Bankruptcy.

## 1975

**Dr. Edward C. Halperin W’75** has published the eighth edition of his two-volume textbook. It has been renamed *Perez, Brady, Halperin, and Wazer’s Principles and Practice of Radiation Oncology* in recognition of the decades of work he and his coeditors have contributed to the book. Edward is the chancellor/CEO of

New York Medical College (NYMC). Founded in 1860, NYMC has schools of medicine, dentistry, podiatry, graduate studies, and health professions.

**Diane McKinney-Whetstone CW’75** has published her eighth novel, *Family Spirit*, about the Maces, a vibrant family of Philadelphia clairvoyants with issues. *Kirkus Reviews* wrote, “Sparkles with authenticity ... a vibrant look into the power and spirituality of a multigenerational Black family.” More information can be found on her website, [mckinney-whetstone.com](http://mckinney-whetstone.com).

## 1977

**David Gaddis C’77** and Martin Rudow are coauthors of a new book, *One Last Turn: Personal Memories of the Can-Am Era’s Greatest Mechanics, Tuners, and Crew*. David says this is the first book to focus on the racing team crews and technicians of the old Canadian-American Challenge Cup car races. The book was covered by the PBS television show *MotorWeek* during an episode in October (viewable at [youtu.be/cAoyQdzfkM0](http://youtu.be/cAoyQdzfkM0)).

**Cynthia Cozette Lee G’77**, a flutist, pianist, and award-winning contemporary African American woman composer, recently presented a number of pieces at the National Flute Association Convention in Atlanta. Two of her flute quartet transcriptions of J. S. Bach’s music were selected and performed in an open reading by the Umoja Flute Institute. In addition, Cynthia premiered her piece “Nigerian Treasures in 3 Movements for Unaccompanied Flute” at the event. Cynthia’s sister **Hazel Ann Lee CW’73** was proudly in attendance. Cynthia shares that her Bach transcriptions premiered when she was a graduate student at Penn. She was the first woman and first Black American to graduate from Penn with a master of arts degree in music composition.

## 1978

**Dr. Bill Edkin C’78 V’84** see **Dr. Jim Lunig V’84**.

## 1979

**Neil S. Plakcy C’79** has published *After the Party: A Jewish Teen’s Guide to Finding Your Path*, a nonfiction book inspired by what he calls a “Queen Esther moment” while listening to the podcast *Being Jewish with Jonah Platt [C’08]*. Known for his mystery and

romance novels, Neil felt compelled to explore Jewish identity after the events of October 7, 2023, reconnecting with his faith through research, podcasts, and online services. “Writing this book became my tether to Judaism,” he writes. He’s now promoting *After the Party* through talks at synagogues and Jewish Community Centers. The book can be purchased on Amazon at [amzn.to/43aFiDX](http://amzn.to/43aFiDX), and more information about Neil can be found at [plakcy.substack.com](http://plakcy.substack.com).

**Dr. Jack Sinnigen C’79 V’84** see **Dr. Jim Lunig V’84**.

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## 1981

**Mike Bellissimo C’81** has joined the faculty of the International Maritime Business School at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy as a professor of management.

**Bill Cotter W’81** writes, “I retired a few years ago, after enjoying many years as a senior executive in commercial real estate at Wells Fargo. Over the years I’ve maintained connections to Penn and my old AEPi brothers and former Penn football teammates. In the past few years, I have been pursuing my interest in writing. In October 2025, my son Mike and I published *Salt, Sweat and Sailcloth: Working-Class Sailors and the Rise of American Naval Power*. It explores the role of the US Navy in the economic growth of the early United States, and its intersection with the lives and families of working-class sailors. I have previously authored two books: *Wendover Stories*, a memoir about life in the Uphams Corner section of Boston in the 1960s and 1970s, and *Marty, Me and the A.T.*, an Appalachian Trail hiking memoir. My wife Susan and I enjoy our family time with our children (**Dr. Gina Cotter Russell W’12 M’23** and Michael F. Cotter, Harvard AB’14 and Yale JD’17) and their families, split between Massachusetts and North Carolina.”

**Phil de Picciotto L’81**, founder and president of the talent agency Octagon, was featured in *The Hollywood Reporter* last summer in an article titled “These 33 Sports Super-Lawyers Will Slam-Dunk Your Deals.” From the article: “de Picciotto oversees a client portfolio of more than 1,000 of the most high-profile athletes and broadcasters and was the driving force behind removing

tobacco sponsorship from pro tennis. He also oversaw Amazon's groundbreaking *Thursday Night Football* streaming package." View it online at [tinyurl.com/depicciotto](https://tinyurl.com/depicciotto).

**Dr. Chai Wool Kim EE'81 GEE'86 GrE'95** is proud to announce that his son, William S. Kim, has started at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine (Class of 2029). Chai writes, "If you are looking for a good dentist in 2029, look William up!"

**Mimi Preiser Zukoff C'81**, chair of the City of Summit (NJ)'s Recycling Advisory Committee, was honored by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection with its Volunteer Citizen Award. Mimi was recognized for her efforts in developing and implementing waste reduction plans throughout Summit, such as a partnership with BookSmiles to keep used books out of the waste stream. Mimi writes, "As of the end of August 2025, we were able to divert approximately 48,000 pounds of books from the waste stream in our partnership with BookSmiles, which is based in South Jersey and supplies books to New Jersey and Philly-area schools and organizations that support underserved communities of children. My love for books, nurtured as an English major at Penn, and my passion for sustainability were merged in this partnership."

## 1982

**Robert Carley C'82** exhibited his caricatures of famous artists at Central Connecticut State University last fall, coinciding with International Artists Day on October 25. The show, "ART STARS: Caricatures from Rembrandt to Warhol," featured 160 drawings of well-known artists surrounded by quotations of their wit and wisdom. For the month of December, these caricatures were also on exhibit at Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York, and then later at the Slater Memorial Museum in Norwich, Connecticut, and also Boston College. "For many years I have been surprising celebrity artists with their caricatures, [such as] Peter Max and Leroy Neiman," writes Robert. The *New Britain Herald* covered Robert's exhibit in its October 13 issue ([tinyurl.com/carleyart](https://tinyurl.com/carleyart)). Robert also shares that he published a book that was three years in the making, *Making the Ultimate Sacrifice: Real-Life Heroes & Heroines from History and Today*, a coffee table book containing over 370 photos and illustrations.

## 1984

**Dr. Jim Lunig V'84** writes, "Another year passing and being another year older did not stop our group of mostly retired veterinarians from completing 350 miles of the Great Allegheny Passage and C&O [Chesapeake and Ohio] Canal Path on a bike ride from Pittsburgh to DC this past fall. It was a bittersweet ride following the untimely passing of fellow rider **Dr. Craig Holbrook V'84**. Once again, we had the usual suspects, **Drs. Dennis Burkett V'84, Bill Edkin C'78 V'84, Andy Nebzydoski V'84**, and Alex Monger (Nichols College '79). The group increased in size, adding **Drs. Joe Glennon V'84 and Jack Sinnigen C'79 V'84**. Perfect weather and zero mechanical issues made it an outstanding trip. Looking forward to riding across Missouri next fall on the Katy Trail. Hoping that we can add fellow alums to our ride."

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## 1986

**Seth M. Barsky C'86 L'90** has joined Bracewell, a government relations firm. As a partner in the environment, lands, and resources department, he works out of the firm's Washington, DC, office. Prior to this appointment, Seth worked for more than three decades at the US Department of Justice.

## 1987

**Dr. Howard Riina EAS'87 GM'00** has been named director of clinical innovation at NYU Langone Health. In addition to this appointment, Howard is retaining his roles as the Lucius N. Littauer Professor of Neurosurgery and vice chair of clinical affairs in the department of neurosurgery, professor in the department of neurology, and professor in the department of radiology at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. In 2024, he received the NYU Langone Master Clinician Award.

## 1988

**AKaiser C'88** has published her first book of literary translation, *Unnameable*, with Zephyr Press. She writes, "A 2022 NEA-supported translation of Catalan poet Anna Gual's work, this is the first time a collection of Gual's prolific, well-read, and well-liked oeuvre has been published in English." Look for AKaiser's poems, translations, and pho-

tos in *Allium, Amsterdam Quarterly, Four Way Review, Harvard Review, Hyperion, Modern Poetry in Translation, Pen + Brush In Print, Poetry, Poetry International, and World Literature Today*, among others. More information and links to this work, other work, and events can be found on her website, [akaiser.org](https://akaiser.org).

## 1989

**Carolyn Behrman G'89 Gr'97**, professor emerita of anthropology at the University of Akron, has edited a new book with Tim Matney, *What Remains: Infirmary Burials, Memory, and Community in the Rubber City*. From the book's press materials: "What is now a suburban park where people play soccer and flag football in the city of Akron, Ohio, was once a Progressive-era county infirmary's burial ground for people who were poor, infirm, troubled, immigrant, injured, alcoholic, elderly, or otherwise deemed 'unemployable' during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Through community-engaged scholarship, this book uses legal, historical, archaeological, and anthropological lenses to consider what is above and below the grass."

**Laura Von Rosk GFA'89's** exhibitions in 2025 included a two-person show with mixed media artist Betsy Brandt at LARAC in Glens Falls, New York, and group exhibitions at the "Great Lakes Invitational Art Fair" in Ke-waunee, Wisconsin; "Pushing Boundaries" at Artisan Lofts + Garvey|Simon Art Projects in Tribeca, New York City; "Forest Bathing" at Opus 40 in Saugerties, New York; "Site Specific," at the Pine Hills branch of the Albany Public Library in New York; and "It's in Our Nature" at the Lake George Arts Project in Lake George, New York. Awards in 2025 included an Individual Artist Grant from Statewide Community Re-grants, offered through the New York State Council on the Arts; and international artist residencies at Arte Studio Ginestrelle in Assisi, Italy, and Annaghmakerrig House at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Ireland. You can view her paintings at [lauravonrosk.com](https://lauravonrosk.com).

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## 1991

**Michael Feinberg C'91** see **Mark C. Jacobs C'56**.

**Andrew Silverman EAS'91** shares that he has retired from his “first post-Penn job (34 years at Microsoft)” and is planning a new career doing his “other favorite thing from Penn, being a stage lighting technician.”

**Elisa Sickmen Zied C'91** shares that she “recently made a career pivot.” After 22 years as a registered dietitian nutritionist, four-time author, freelance writer, and national media spokesperson, she recently earned a certificate in editing from the University of Chicago, and an MFA in writing for children and young adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. She now spends her professional time freelance editing and writing children’s books. Her current work in progress is a contemporary middle-grade novel that honors her late mother and their love of musical theater. Elisa also shares that she “remains very happily married (for 32 years!) to **Brian Zied W'91**, the chief financial officer of Zeta Charter Schools.”

## 1993

**Jackie Einstein Astrof C'93** received the 2025 Alumni Award of Merit [“Homecoming 2025,” this issue]. Jackie founded PennPAC (Pro bono Alumni Consulting) in 2011 as a means for Penn alumni across ages and professional backgrounds to volunteer their time to support nonprofits with their business challenges through team-based strategic consulting projects. Since that time, PennPAC has engaged 1,200 alumni to assist 350 nonprofits, dedicating over 65,000 hours of consulting time. Jackie has also served as Student Life Chair for the Trustees Council of Penn Women and as Chair of the Board of Penn Hillel.

**Jennie Hirsh C'93 G'98 G'00** and **Marisa Newman C'95** have launched Aesthetic Adventurer (aestheticadventurer.com), a travel company focused on creating intimate and bespoke experiences. To date, they have organized and led small groups to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Philadelphia; and they will be expanding to the Venice Biennale cultural exhibition in Italy in late May 2026. Jennie writes, “Back in 1991, Marisa and I became fast friends as language-learning partners in Italian 110 taught by **Umberto Taccheri Gr'00**. Not only did that course forge a lifelong friendship between two ambitious young women, but it also launched our mutual love of art, travel, and other forms of cultural adventure.

**Peter J. Tantala CE'93**, a partner with the architectural and engineering firm Tantala Associates LLC, has been appointed to the board of trustees for Holy Family University in Philadelphia. He was also appointed to the Middletown Township, Bucks County, Planning Commission.

## 1992

**Sherwin Gluck EAS'92** is proud to announce the release of *As I Remember...*, the third book in the Gluck Family Legacy Series. Written by his aunt Maria Gluck, and edited by Sherwin, *As I Remember...* is a powerful, new Holocaust memoir. Sherwin writes, “It preserves the voice of a survivor who came to America in 1940— escaping the destruction of her family and community in rural Czechoslovakia. Written in her 90s to help her youngest brother remember, [Maria’s] reflections span prewar Jewish life, wartime trauma, immigration, and postwar resilience.” The Gluck Collection is housed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which preserves the family’s letters, documents, and memorabilia.

## 1995

**Dr. Melanie Jay C'95**, a professor of medicine and population health at New York University, recently presented a TEDx talk, which was subsequently named an Editor’s Pick by TEDx Talks. She writes, “In the talk, I explore how a question posed to me by Oprah Winfrey sparked a reflection of my 20 years as a physician–scientist specializing in obesity. I share stories to illustrate both the perils and the promise of the new obesity care medications and reflect on where we’ve been and where we still need to go to transform obesity care. I talk about the new GLP-1 medications, as well as: how my understanding of obesity changed as my career evolved; my experience being on *Oprah*; my patient who almost died due to obesity stigma; and my little sister’s struggles with medication-induced weight gain. I did this talk because there is so much that the public needs to understand about obesity and what we need to do to improve healthcare for the over 42 percent of Americans with obesity.” Titled “What is the future of obesity care?” her talk can be viewed at [youtu.be/4gdWNPQszsM](https://youtu.be/4gdWNPQszsM).

**Marisa Newman C'95** see **Jennie Hirsh C'93 G'98 G'00**.

**Lisa María Burgess Noudéhou Gr'95** is now hand-stitching quilt art for her multilingual children’s picture books. Her *Snow-Pal Soccer / Les copains de neige jouent au foot* is forthcoming in February with Catalyst Press, and the artwork itself will be on show at various locations in the Northeast. Photos of her work and process can be viewed on her website, [lisamariaburgess.com](http://lisamariaburgess.com).

## 1997

**Stephanie Clintonia Boddie SW'97 SWP'02** has been appointed the Fuller Family Endowed Chair for Social Justice at Baylor University. She joined the Baylor faculty in 2017 and her research centers on food insecurity, poverty and social services, and how churches meet the needs of those around them.

**Mehul Vora W'97** is cofounder and CEO of Chordia (chordia.ai), a startup that uses artificial intelligence to improve call center operations. He writes, “Unlike the five major startups that have raised over \$3 billion in venture capital funding, we do not promote firing human reps only to replace them with AI agents. Instead, we take a different tact: empower human agents with the best knowledge; unlock the voice of the customer—sample 100% of interactions, not 1-2% (the industry average); and democratize evaluations—use software to fairly, timely, and consistently offer performance reviews and training opportunities to human agents. Our solutions are powered by AI and we are at an early stage with two customers and several pilots underway. We have evaluated 40,000+ calls so far.” Mehul lives in Arlington, Virginia, with his wife, two teenagers, and their dog.

## 1998

**Ashley Wren Collins C'98** see **Jordan Rockwell C'00**.

**Anthony B. Crawford EAS'98 L'12** has joined Olshan Frome Wolosky LLP as chair of the Insurance Coverage Law Practice. With over 13 years of experience managing high-profile insurance cases, Anthony has secured more than \$100 million in settlements and judgments. Prior to his legal career, he served as an officer in the US Marine Corps for almost 12 years as a helicopter pilot and held several positions specializing in project management and operations training.

## 1999

**Marilyn Fu C'99** wrote the screenplay for a new film, *Rosemead*. Inspired by true events and starring Lucy Liu (who also produced the film), it tells the story of a terminally ill Chinese immigrant who, after discovering her teenage son's violent obsessions, must go to great lengths to protect him. The film made its Philadelphia debut at the Philadelphia Film Festival in October ["Profiles," this issue], where Liu received the Artistic Achievement Award. It opened in theaters in December.

**Gary Kalbaugh GL'99** is a partner at Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP and chair of the law firm's Commodities, Futures, and Derivatives practice. He writes, "My wife and I have eight children, one dog, two goats, and too many chickens to count."

## 2000

**Jordan Rockwell C'00** writes, "My short film/cinematic prayer for peace, *Traitor*, has won several film festival awards, and last weekend, I won Best Director for a Short Film at the Silicon Beach Film Festival. The more eyeballs, the better! In addition, my writing partner **Ashley Wren Collins C'98** and I are happy to announce that our romantic comedy novel, *She Wrote/He Wrote: A New York Love Story*, releases worldwide in May 2026! We can't wait to join the 'Penn Authors' section of the bookstore! Hurrah Hurrah!"

**Umberto Taccheri Gr'00** see **Jennie Hirsh C'93 G'98 G'00**.

**Karen Winn Nu'00** is publishing her second novel, *The Society*, with Dutton/Penguin Random House. She writes, "This twisty literary suspense follows two women whose lives become intertwined amid a notorious secret society in the heart of Boston." *The Society* comes out on January 20 and can be ordered wherever books are sold.

## 2002

**Liz Cohen C'02** shares that she has published her "first book, *The Future of Tutoring: Lessons from 10,000 School District Tutoring Initiatives* (Harvard Education Press), about how thousands of public schools have used tutoring to address pandemic learning loss, and what this work says about how we can make important changes in public education. I visited 19 schools in seven states and DC to tell the story of

schools doing what we rarely give them credit for: trying a big new idea that leads to meaningful differences in kids' lives."

## 2003

**Cynthia Ericson W'03** is the vice president of the weed management segment at Corteva Agriscience, an agriculture technology company based in Indianapolis. In this role, she is responsible for the company's portfolio of weed control products.

**Sebastian Sas WG'03** has coauthored a new book with Ilan Greenfield, titled *Amatulo: Chronicles of an Argentine Hustler*. Sebastian writes, "We call it 'autobiographical group fiction,' but at its core, it's a novel inspired by the true story of my friend Amatulo. It explores many themes, like reinvention, and sparked my own." He continues, "Around the time I was working on my MBA application, seven years after graduating from college, an Argentine friend told me that one of the world's most famous billionaires was bringing him to New York, paying for his college, and welcoming him into his family. My friend was a total hustler—no one could even confirm how he graduated high school. I told him it sounded cinematic and that he should write a book. He replied, 'You go ahead.' It took me 25 years to start." Their book is now available on Amazon and Apple Books.

## 2004

**Joe Cohn G'04 L'04** recently joined the faculty of Yale Law School as the executive director of its new Center for Academic Freedom and Free Speech. Joe writes, "I'm grateful to have the opportunity to work on such important issues remotely from my horse farm in Southern New Jersey."

**Kimberly Dobson C'04**, a partner and shareholder at the law firm Littler, has been honored with the Pillar of the Profession Award from the Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association. From the press materials: "This is due to her remarkable experience and talent... [and] this award stands as a testament to her professional excellence, leadership, and the doors she continues to open for others in the legal community."

## 2005

**John Barry C'05** has joined the law firm Epstein Becker Green as senior counsel in

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its Newark, New Jersey, office. John is a member of the firm's Healthcare and Life Sciences practice group.

## 2009

**Victoria Marie Lees LPS'09** has authored a new memoir, *Determination: A Mother of Five Conquers College*. From the press materials: "With raw honesty and humor, Victoria chronicles her relentless pursuit of education, from community college to an Ivy League scholarship. She juggles coursework, parenting, and self-doubt, to fight for her success." More information about the book and Victoria can be found on her website, victoriamarielees.com.

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## 2011

**Brian Antar LPS'11 LPS'14** see **Bill Carlin W'18**.

**Rose S. Espinola C'11** and artist Ayeola Omolara Kaplan have collaborated on a project called *Jewish Postpartum through the Stories of JOC in the United States*. Ayeola created a series of five artworks depicting the postpartum traditions and rituals of Jews of Color in the United States, and Rose curated a chapbook of postpartum stories. The chapbook is available online at [roseespinola.com/jewish-postpartum](http://roseespinola.com/jewish-postpartum).

## 2012

**Dr. Gina Cotter Russell W'12 M'23** see **Bill Cotter W'81**.

**Jabari Zuberi LPS'12** is chief operating officer of the Order of New Arts (ONA), a new free museum in Philadelphia that opened its doors on October 9. Jabari writes, "We unite the public in dialogue with creatives, curators, and scholars to activate our mission through exhibitions, residencies, and educational programming. Grounded in the belief that humanity's shared histories and migrations connect us all, ONA carves out a new way forward, fostering creative growth and critical reflection on what it means to be human." For the opening, Jabari curated an inaugural exhibition, *Visions of a New Order*, which featured six newly commissioned works by Zora J. Murff, Meesha Goldberg, Patricia Renee Thomas, William Camargo, and others. Jabari explains, "Together, these artists explore the origins and evolution of artistic systems and the possibilities for reimagining them in our time." More information can be found at [orderarts.org](http://orderarts.org).

## 2013

**Dr. David Fajgenbaum M'13 WG'15**, co-founder of Every Cure, a nonprofit that uses AI to repurpose approved drugs for rare diseases such as the one he has, idiopathic multicentric Castleman disease (iMCD) ["Chasing Every Cure," Jul Aug 2025], has been recognized with the 2025 John Scott Award. The Scott Award was created in 1815 by Scottish chemist John Scott to honor the scientific legacy of Benjamin Franklin, and it is presented each year in ceremonies at the American Philosophical Society.

**Rose Kozar W'13** see **Annie Christian C'14**.

## 2014

**Annie Christian C'14**, vice president of marketing for Courier Health, shares that Penn has the "biggest alumni group" in her company of approximately 65 people. Along with Annie, **Caleb Epstein C'22**, **Rose Kozar W'13**, and **Beryl Chen C'21** all work for Courier, a New York City-based technology company that aims to improve the patient experience for millions of people living with chronic conditions or rare diseases. Annie adds, "We are hiring and always looking for talented Penn alumni based in New York City!"

**Eric Santoli LPS'14** is an artist and teacher currently developing an instructional art and travel series for public television. *Eric En Plein Air* will provide art instructions while Eric visits different locations to highlight nature and wildlife. In 2023, Eric was artist-in-residence at Claude Monet's estate in Giverny, France; in 2024, he appeared as a guest on the PBS floral arranging show *J Schwanke's Life in Bloom*, on a special "Painting and Flowers" episode. After filming Eric wrote a treatment for his own program and filmed a pilot, which can be viewed at [vimeo.com/1077682478](https://vimeo.com/1077682478). He is currently filming season one and blogging about it on his website, [ericenpleinair.com](http://ericenpleinair.com).

## 2015

**Roland F. Rivera Santiago Gr'15** has joined Blank Rome as a patent attorney in the Intellectual Property group at the firm's New York office. Roland represents clients across a wide array of industries, including pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, agriculture, and commerce.

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## 2016

**Brian C. Chao G'16 Gr'20** has published his first book, *Continental Powers and Naval Development: Strategy Coherence, Threat Diffusion, and Success at Sea*. He writes, "Based on the political-science doctoral dissertation I wrote at Penn, the book examines how continental great powers have fared at naval development over these past 225 years, with an eye on 21st-century China's prospects." Brian is an assistant professor in the Naval War College's National Security Affairs Department, and an associate at Penn's Center for the Study of Contemporary China.

**Alex Garlick Gr'16**, assistant professor of political science at the University of Vermont, has authored a new book, *Pre-Existing Conditions: How Lobbying Makes American Health Care More Expensive*. The book was recently covered in the October 21 edition of *Newsweek* magazine ([tinyurl.com/garlickbook](https://tinyurl.com/garlickbook)).

## 2017

**Chloe Kaczvinsky C'17** has earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Oxford in biology. Her thesis, entitled

"Factors that Influence Pygospelid Microbiomes Across the Scotia Arc," focused on Antarctic penguins and their microbiome in a biogeographic context. She will continue working at the intersection of genetics and ecology as a post-doc at Lund University.

## 2018

**Bill Carlin W'18** and **Brian Antar LPS'11 LPS'14** are cofounders of Racklify, a platform that connects merchants with 3PL warehouses and logistics service providers. Brian serves as CEO while Bill is chief marketing officer. In just a year since its launch, Racklify now has more than 10,000 warehouses listed on the platform, representing over two billion square feet of logistics space across more than 50 countries.

## 2020

**Edward M. Epstein GrEd'20** is author of *Race, Real Estate, and Education: Inventing Gentrification in Philadelphia, 1960-2020*. In this book, Edward, director of the Teachers Institute of Philadelphia, explores the role of university-led K-12 educational interventions in Philadelphia's transition to a postindustrial economy.

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## 2021

**Beryl Chen C'21** see **Annie Christian C'14**.

## 2022

**Caleb Epstein C'22** see **Annie Christian C'14**.

## 2024

**Kade Shippy C'24 W'24** is working in clinical operations at Genentech (Roche Group). This past year, her work has been published by the National Institutes of Health, American Society of Clinical Oncology, and the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*; and with her team she was honored with a Social Impact Telly Award for "Why Advancing Inclusive Research Matters in Ophthalmology Studies." In addition, Kade was recognized internationally as Miss European Continental New York 2025 and a Top 15 finalist in Miss Universe Jamaica, which she uses as platforms to advocate for STEM careers, health access, and inclusive clinical research participation.

## 1944

**Dr. Seth H. Barovick C'44**, South Burlington, VT, a retired dentist; Sept. 11, at 102. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity.

## 1947

**Annette Hirshorn Fine Ed'47**, Pennsauken, NJ, July 19. At Penn, she was a member of Delta Phi Epsilon sorority. One daughter is Moira F. Tenzer C'81, and one grandchild is Harrison M. Tenzer C'11.

## 1948

**Aven Hyatt OT'48**, Huntingdon Valley, PA, Sept. 1.

**Dr. Irwin M. Potash C'48**, Miami, FL, a surgeon; Sept. 25. He served in the US Air Force as a flight surgeon. At Penn, he was a member of the track team. One son is Neil L. Potash L'90.

## 1949

**Albert Barash Ar'49**, West Palm Beach, FL, a retired architect who specialized in bank design and corporate office planning; Sept. 15, at 100. He served in the US Navy during World War II.

**Patricia Miller Graham HUP'49**, a former nurse; Mount Gretna, PA, Oct. 16.

## 1950

**Gerald L. Albert C'50**, Elkins Park, PA, a retired accountant; Oct. 7. His son is Howard W. Albert C'81 W'81.

**Elaine Webster Linton Mu'50**, Wilmington, DE, owner of Highland Orchards; Sept. 9.

**Lila Smilowitz London Ed'50 GEd'51**, Palm, PA, a former junior high school teacher; Sept. 13. At Penn, she was a member of Phi Sigma Sigma sorority. Her husband is Matthew London W'51, who died Nov. 19, 2021 (see Class of 1951).

**Thomas C. Stroupe WG'50**, Charlotte, NC, retired managing partner at a life insurance agency; Aug. 31, 2024, at 99. He served in the US Army Airborne Division during World War II.

## 1951

**MaryEllen Musser Bigler Ed'51**, Rochester, NY, a schoolteacher; July 24. At

Penn, she was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority and Penn Players.

**Edwin B. Cox C'51 Gr'60**, Bedford, MA, a retired economics professor at Boston University; Sept. 12. Earlier in his career, he taught economics at Wharton. He served in the US Air Force. At Penn, he was a member of the ROTC. One son is Edwin B. Cox Jr. C'81.

**Carmen P. DiToro C'51**, Philadelphia, a retired chemical engineer for the US Department of Defense; Sept. 17. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

**Herman S. Harvey Jr. C'51 L'56**, Sewickley, PA, a retired attorney; Aug. 31. He served in the US Army during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.

**Matthew London W'51**, Palm, PA, a former assistant professor at Philadelphia University; Nov. 19, 2021. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Delta Phi fraternity. His wife is Lila Smilowitz London Ed'50 GEd'51, who died Sept. 13 (see Class of 1950).

**William C. Traphagen Jr. W'51**, Amherst, MA, a retired international logistics manager at Pratt & Whitney, a manufacturer of aircraft engines; Sept. 23. He served in the US Army during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity, the rowing team, and the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

## 1952

**Leon Goldstein W'52**, Mountain Lakes, NJ, retired president and CEO of Madison Business Forms, a commercial printing company; Oct. 23, 2024. He served in the US Army Signal Corps during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Nu fraternity.

**Judith Geselowitz Gordon CW'52**, Silver Spring, MD, a scientist whose accomplishments included developing the concept for the red sharps biohazard containers used in healthcare facilities; Sept. 1. At Penn, she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

**Andrew J. Lelik C'52**, Allegheny Twp., PA, Sept. 23. He served in the US Army and the US Air Force during World War II and the Korean War.

## Notifications

Please send notifications of deaths of alumni directly to: Alumni Records, University of Pennsylvania, Suite 300, 2929 Walnut Street, Phila., PA 19104

**EMAIL** record@ben.dev.upenn.edu

Newspaper obits are appreciated.

## 1953

**Dr. Phillip M. Levy C'53 GM'62**, Cocoa Beach, FL, a retired ophthalmologist; Aug. 26. Earlier in his career, he taught ophthalmology at Wills Eye Hospital. He served in the US Navy as a flight surgeon. At Penn, he was a member of the cross country and track teams.

**John D. "Jack" Lucey Jr. C'53 L'56**, Haverford, PA, a retired attorney and artist; Aug. 9. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity.

**Dr. William J. "Jack" McDonnell C'53 D'57**, Moorestown, NJ, a retired dentist; July 26. He served in the US Navy. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity and the rowing team.

**Britton "Britt" Murdoch C'53**, Villanova, PA, Sept. 8. He served in the US Army during the Korean War. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and the football team. As an alumnus, he was a volunteer for his Class. Two sons are Britton H. Murdoch W'79 and Winslow W. Murdoch C'82 (Donna L. Brodsky G'70), and one grandchild is Sarah W. Murdoch-Weissman C'06.

**Dorothy Goliash Mullaney HUP'53**, Rockville, MD, a retired nurse; Oct. 16.

## 1954

**Dr. John L. Coker Jr. D'54 GD'55**, Gainesville, FL, a retired oral and maxillofacial surgeon; Oct. 23. He served in the US Navy Reserve.

**Dr. Donald W. Cooper M'54**, Tubac, AZ, a retired neurosurgeon and former assistant head of a ski school; Aug. 29.

**Audrey M. Lesky Ed'54 GEd'58**, Aston, PA, a retired school principal; Sept. 5. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Xi Delta sorority.

**Charles Robert Lonshein W'54**, Marlboro, NJ, Sept. 5.

**Laurance E. Masters W'54**, Fayetteville, AR, a retired insurance executive; Oct. 25. He served in the US Army and the US Army Reserve. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity, Friars Senior Society, and the basketball and baseball teams. His wife is Joyce Kirkpatrick Masters Ed'54.

**Eugene H. Rotberg L'54**, Potomac, MD, former vice president and treasurer of the World Bank, executive vice president of Merrill Lynch, and a chief counsel of the Securities and Exchange Commission; Oct. 6. He served in the US Army during the Korean War.

## 1955

**Alan S. Berk W'55**, Stamford, CT, retired chief financial officer at Ernst & Young; Sept. 2. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Epsilon Phi fraternity and WXPB.

**Jean Marie Kono HUP'55**, Secaucus, NJ, an oncology nurse; Aug. 29.

**Norman M. Kranzendorf L'55**, Ventnor, NJ, president and CEO of a real estate development company; Sept. 10.

**Thelma "Timmie" Moyer Scott HUP'55**, Currituck, NC, June 30.

**Dr. Saul J. Wallshein GD'55**, Lake Worth, FL, Jan. 12, at 103. He served in the US Army during World War II.

## 1956

**Richard M. Bistriz SW'56**, Silver Spring, MD, Aug. 14. He served in the US Army.

**Elizabeth Anderson Dornberger CW'56**, Bryn Mawr, PA, Sept. 23.

**Dr. W. Darby Glenn III M'56**, Vero Beach, FL, a retired ear, nose, and throat specialist; Oct. 15. He and his late wife, Dr. Frances Bondi Glenn D'56, founded the Children's Dental Research Society to study the use of prenatal fluoride supplementation in the prevention of dental caries. He served in the US Air Force. His son is Dr. William D. Glenn IV M'92 (Lynn Engelberg Glenn GNu'92).

**Joan Jackson Jeffers Ed'56**, Stroudsburg, PA, a former middle school and high school English teacher; Sept. 19. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Omicron Pi sorority, Sphinx Senior Society, and the fencing team.

**Dr. Charles W. Jensen Jr. C'56 D'59**, Stamford, CT, a retired dentist; Oct. 17. He served in the US Air Force Dental Corps. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and the ROTC.

**Paul A. Rubinstein W'56**, Lake Forest, IL, an investment banker; Nov. 16. He served in the US Army. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity and the basketball and swimming teams.

## 1957

**David I. Caplan GEE'57**, Canton, MA, a technology executive, a licensed USPTO Patent Agent, and a pilot; Oct. 3.

**Sebastian T. Demanop Ed'57**, Haverstown, PA, June 8, 2022. He worked for the Delaware Commission for the Blind and the Pennsylvania Division for Visual Services in Philadelphia. His wife is Theresa Papan Demanop GED'57.

**Marie C. Farca Ed'57**, Yardley, PA, a retired demonstration teacher and a novelist; Oct. 12. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Omicron Pi sorority.

**Charles H. Helmetag C'57**, Newtown Square, PA, a retired professor of German language and literature at Villanova University; Sept. 1. At Penn, he was a member of Penn Players and the Choral Society.

**Henry C. Morlock Jr. C'57 Gr'64**, Plattsburgh, NY, a retired psychology professor at Plattsburgh State University College; Oct. 25. He served in the US Army Medical Service Corps.

**Dr. Lawrence R. Soma V'57 GM'63**, Bolton, CT, a professor emeritus of anesthesiology at Penn Vet; Sept. 8. He began his career at Penn in 1960. He was assistant and associate professor prior to becoming professor of veterinary medicine clinical studies in 1972. In 1993, he became the Marilyn M. Simpson Professor of Veterinary Medicine. He was internationally recognized for his contributions to veterinary anesthesia and clinical pharmacology. He retired in 2013. He served in the US Army Veterinary Corps and the US Army Reserve during the Vietnam War.

**Ann Trimble Winner CW'57**, Orrstown, PA, a retired public librarian; Sept. 20.

**Simon R. Zimmerman III L'57**, Pequea, PA, a retired attorney; Aug. 28. One brother is Edward W. Zimmerman WG'58.

## 1958

**William D. Ashcraft GEE'58**, Fullerton, CA, Sept. 11. He worked for the US Forest Service. He served in the US Army.

**Pasquale G. D'Esposito ME'58**, Ocean Twp., NJ, a retired superintendent of Jersey Central Power and Light's Sayreville Generating Station; Oct. 2. He served in the US Army during the Korean War. His daughter is Lisa A. D'Esposito W'84.

**Alan S. Finger W'58**, Houston, Sept. 26. He worked for his family's furniture business. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity and the fencing team.

**Dr. Edward A. Janon C'58**, La Jolla, CA, a radiologist; April 21. At Penn, he was a member of Kappa Nu fraternity, Penn Band, and the sprint football and rowing teams.

**Robert L. Kline W'58**, Delray Beach, FL, a retired manager at the International Monetary Fund; Oct. 24. At Penn, he was a member of Tau Epsilon Phi fraternity.

**Dr. James S. McFarland III V'58**, Plant City, FL, a retired veterinarian; Aug. 21. He served in the US Air Force during the Korean War.

**Ruth Neuman Smith CW'58**, Rydal, PA, Sept. 1. One grandchild is Adam S. Ginsberg C'18.

## 1959

**George E. Bagley Gr'59**, Lancaster, PA, a retired manager of coatings and materials, and floor products operations at Armstrong World Industries; Oct. 27. He helped develop radiation curable coatings for no-wax flooring products and held eight patents.

**Dr. Clyde F. Barker GM'59**, Haverford, PA, a former professor in the department of surgery in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine who helped Penn become a national leader in transplantation clinical care and research; Oct. 2. After completing his fellowship in vascular surgery, he joined the faculty of Penn's School of Medicine. He rose through the ranks to become chief of vascular surgery in 1981.

He held multiple endowed professorships, serving as the J. William White Professor of Surgical Research, the John Rhea Barton Professor, and the Donald Guthrie Professor of Surgery. Soon after joining Penn, he began work on the immune aspects of tolerance with the pioneer immunologist Rupert Billingham, with whom he coauthored 12 pivotal papers. On February 10, 1966, he put his theories into practice when he implanted a living-donor kidney into recipient Howard Mehl, the first time this procedure was successful. He continued to perform complex and innovative procedures throughout his career at Penn and went on to found Penn's division of transplant surgery. In his honor, Penn opened the Clyde F. Barker Transplant House as a home away from home for families of patients in 2008. He was recently featured by the *Gazette* for his pioneering transplant surgery work ["The New World of Organ Transplantation," Mar|Apr 2025] and previously for his unofficial role as Penn Medicine's historian-in-chief ["The Link," Jul|Aug 2015]. His 2024 book, cowritten with his daughter Elizabeth Barker, *Surgeons and Something More: The History of Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania*, chronicles the evolution of the country's first surgery department, established in 1765.

**J. Earl Epstein L'59**, Narberth, PA, a retired tax attorney; Oct. 5. He was a former clerk to the US Tax Court and an active faculty member with the American Bar Association.

**John P. Follman W'59**, Wayne, PA, retired chief financial officer of Day and Zimmermann; Sept. 18. He was also founder and chairman of Wharton Surety Consultants. He served in the US Marine Corps. At Penn, he was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity and the basketball team. One daughter is Therese-Cecilia Follman Nu'87.

**Dr. Barry L. Halpern C'59 M'63**, Coral Gables, FL, a former cardiologist and professor of cardiology at the University of Miami; Aug. 28. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. His wife is Sheila Auerbach Halpern CW'61, and one child is Rochelle Halpern-Yankwitt L'94.

**Thomas J. Kearney G'59**, Fair Lawn, NJ, a retired executive for the New York Port Authority; Sept. 1. He served in the US Army.

**Hon. Clement J. McGovern Jr. L'59**, Chadds Ford, PA, a longtime judge in Delaware County, PA; Oct. 15. He was also a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church, a former councilman for the City of Chester, PA, and a law professor. He served in the US Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps.

**Richard C. Sanford C'59**, Yarmouth, ME, a retired insurance broker; Aug. 25. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, Glee Club, Mask & Wig, and the ice hockey team. Two grandchildren are Timothy J. Sanford C'20 and Megan L. Sanford C'22.

**Donald Tulloch III C'59 WG'65**, Wawaka, IN, former editor and publisher for *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Ladies Home Journal*; Sept. 25. He also owned and operated his own publishing company. He served in the US Air Force during the Korean War.

## 1960

**Bette Seddon Danielson DH'60**, Eastford, CT, a dental hygienist and real estate agent; Oct. 31. Her husband is Dr. Winfield S. Danielson Jr. D'60.

**Dr. John B. "Jack" Gworek D'60**, Sanibel, FL, a retired dentist; Oct. 4. He served in the US Army.

**Mudite Kisis Jansons MT'60**, Malvern, PA, Oct. 1. She retired from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Bureau of Laboratories.

**Diane Rutenberg Posternack CW'60**, Villanova, PA, a retired human resources executive at JEVS Human Services; Sept. 21. At Penn, she was a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority. Her daughter is Dr. Jill Posternack Kavalier C'87 M'91 GM'93, her sister is Susan Walsh CW'64, and two grandchildren are Melanie E. Kavalier C'19 and Michael Kavalier C'21.

**Estelle Ellenberg Price Ed'60 G'64**, Elkins Park, PA, Oct. 21.

## 1961

**Joel M. Dash EE'61 GEE'69**, Lafayette Hill, PA, Oct. 22. Two children are Howard Dash EE'83 and Scott A. Dash C'85, and one grandchild is Alex B. Dash C'28.

**Alan J. Gardner C'61**, Floral Park, NY, a retired attorney; Aug. 30. His wife is Ann Schlossberg Gardner CW'64.

**Benjamin H. Oehlert III W'61**, Charlotte, NC, a retired attorney; Oct. 7. He was a former assistant district attorney in Fulton County, Georgia. At Penn, he was a member of Alpha Chi Rho fraternity. He served in the US Coast Guard.

**Arthur S. Reber C'61**, Point Roberts, WA, a professor emeritus at Brooklyn College who studied probability learning and the cellular basis of consciousness; Sept. 2. His son is Paul Joshua Reber EAS'88.

## 1962

**Frank C. Bender L'62**, Lansdale, PA, a retired attorney; Sept. 17. He served in the US Army Reserve.

**Dr. Charles E. Kresge V'62**, Santa Barbara, CA, a retired circuit supervisor for the US Department of Agriculture; Feb. 22.

**Amelia Lauck Rothermel SW'62**, An-nville, PA, a former social worker and executive at a funeral home; Aug. 29.

## 1963

**Leon H. Assadourian C'63**, Saint Augustine, FL, a civilian in the US Army; Sept. 24. He retired from the Ground Combat Simulation Team at Picatinny Arsenal. Earlier, he served in the US Navy.

**Charles Harry Bruder C'63**, Lafayette, LA, a retired English professor at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Oct. 27. At Penn, he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity, Mask & Wig, and the rowing team. His son is Miles S. Bruder W'04, and his brother is G. Stuart Bruder Jr. W'61.

**Dr. Lee H. Ferguson M'63**, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, a retired banker at Wells Fargo; Aug. 31.

**Dr. Donald E. Praiss GM'63**, Sicklerville, NJ, a pediatric urologist and member of a hospital kidney transplant team; Sept. 9.

**Martin S. Rozenberg Gr'63**, Cedar Grove, NJ, a retired rabbi, author, archaeologist, and professor; Nov. 30, 2023.

**James A. Weiss L'63**, Bryn Mawr, PA, an attorney and real estate developer; Aug. 29. His wife is Nancy Bendiner Weiss CW'62.

**Charles T. “Chuck” Wyckoff II WEv’63**, Hawley, PA, owner and proprietor of an inn; Oct. 4.

## 1964

**Richard A. Cardner W’64**, Londonderry, NH, a high school guidance counselor, driving instructor, and adjunct professor of critical thinking at Granite State College and the University of New Hampshire; Sept. 4.

**Sir Terry Farrell GAR’64 GFA’64**, London, an architect; Sept. 28. He designed the headquarters for the British foreign intelligence service MI6. He was knighted in 2001 for his service to architecture and urban design.

**Dr. James E. Kintzel M’64 GM’68**, Allentown, PA, a retired nephrologist; Sept. 4. His wife is Kay Corman Kintzel GNu’65.

**Mary Ann Levitt CW’64**, Sausalito, CA, president and CEO of Breuner’s Home Furnishings; Aug. 28. At Penn, she was a member of Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority.

## 1965

**Dr. James D. Brackett D’65**, Hanover, NH, a retired dentist; Oct. 8.

**John B. Brooks Gr’65**, Oshkosh, WI, a professor emeritus of English at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh; Oct. 11. He served in the US Air Force.

**Dr. Edward David M’65 GM’71**, Holden, ME, a retired neurologist and deputy chief medical examiner for the State of Maine who later switched careers to become a lawyer; Sept. 2. He also trained search and rescue dogs.

**Henry H. Gunther III GCh’65 Gr’67**, Wilmington, DE, a retired engineer at Conrail; July 7. He served in the US Army. His daughter is Elizabeth M. Gunther Nu’06.

**Gerald A. Nichols GFA’65**, Pittstown, NJ, an artist and professor of fine arts at the old University of the Arts; Sept. 10. He also founded the experimental theater company Bricolage, active in Philadelphia from 1975 to 1987.

**Donald W. Price EE’65**, Lake Katrine, NY, an electrical engineer at IBM; Oct. 16. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity and the track team.

**Arthur B. Stein Gr’65**, Wakefield, RI, professor emeritus of political science at the Uni-

versity of Rhode Island; Oct. 24. He cofounded the Center for Nonviolence & Peace Studies at the university, as well as a food coop and vegetarian restaurant in his community.

## 1966

**Ada Kroon Casazza SW’66**, Boise, ID, a social worker and counselor; Aug. 15.

**Richard H. Close W’66**, Newport Beach, CA, president of the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association; Jan. 31, 2022. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. His children are Matthew W. Close W’93 and Abby H. Close C’97.

**Dorothy Brunner Gehres Nu’66**, Telford, PA, vice president of clinical and support services at a hospital; Oct. 3.

**Lawrence E. Itkin W’66**, Palm City, FL, a former executive at a furniture company; Feb. 10. At Penn, he was a member of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity.

**John M. Krein GEE’66**, Apalachin, NY, a retired engineer and manager at IBM; Sept. 13.

**Charles B. Moss Jr. C’66**, New York, owner and operator of what was once New York’s largest independent movie theater chain, Bow Tie Cinemas; Sept. 1. He also cofounded Bow Tie Partners, a real estate development and entertainment company, with his son.

**Gail Norton Richter CW’66**, Southport, ME, Aug. 24. At Penn, she was a member of the lacrosse team. Her sisters are Ann Norton Lingelbach CW’62 (Albert L. Lingelbach W’62 L’65) and Susan Norton McGuinness CW’65 (Dr. Aims C. McGuinness Jr. C’65 GM’73).

**Barbara A. Sciulli Nu’66**, Branford, CT, a former nurse and curator for the Irvington (NY) Historical Society; Sept. 2. Her husband is Frank J. Sciulli Jr. C’60 Gr’65.

**Dr. George E. Strobel Jr. GM’66**, Reading, PA, a retired pain management physician and anesthesiologist; Oct. 21. He served in the US Air Force during the Vietnam War.

## 1967

**Dr. Jack O. Greenberg GM’67 CGS’07**, Long Beach, NJ, a neurologist; March 11, 2024.

**Dr. Donald Kent “Doc” Wiley V’67**, Sarasota, FL, a retired veterinarian; Oct. 2. He served in the US Navy.

## 1968

**Edward Balassanian GCP’68 Gr’72**, New York, former executive director of the eastern diocese of the Armenian Church of America; Sept. 3, 2024. He later moved to Armenia and oversaw the construction of a large cathedral. His wife is Sonia Balassanian FA’70.

**J. Robert “Bob” Bedell WG’68**, Hilton Head, SC, former executive vice president at Viewer’s Choice, a pay-per-view television service; Sept. 18. He was the former chairman of the Wharton Business School Club of New York, where he established an eponymous annual dinner and lecture series.

**Philip C. Herwig G’68**, Milaca, MN, Sept. 9.

**Dr. Robert Allen Hirsh M’68 G’79 GM’74**, Philadelphia, a retired physician and anesthesiologist; Oct. 4. He served in the US Army.

**Edith “DeDe” Gresham Laver L’68**, Bethlehem, PA, a retired lawyer for Bethlehem Steel; Sept. 11.

**Charles Kenneth “Ken” Miller GEE’68**, Concord, MA, a computer scientist who founded several technology and communications businesses; Sept. 11.

**Elizabeth L. Omand Gr’68**, Elkins Park, PA, June 23. She retired from the School District of Philadelphia.

**Dr. Jay Irving Rozen GM’68**, Mission Hills, KS, a radiologist; May 10, 2024. He served in the US National Guard.

**Dr. Marcia J. Wagaman Nu’68 M’75**, Saint Petersburg, FL, a former physician at a children’s hospital; Oct. 1.

## 1969

**Dr. Malcolm Borthwick Jr. V’69**, New Hope, PA, a retired equine veterinarian; Oct. 21.

**William P. Egan II WG’69**, Delray Beach, FL, founder of a private equity firm; Sept. 13. One son is Mark P. Egan WG’07, and one grandchild is Tyson C. Reed C’19.

**Ronald E. Kehler Jr. GED’69**, Berwyn, PA, a retired middle school science teacher and guidance counselor; Oct. 16.

**Dr. James W. Shepard G’69**, Chatham, MA, a physician specializing in HIV medicine; Sept. 17.

**Raju K. G. Varghese SW'69**, Ellicott City, MD, a retired professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore; Oct. 16.

## 1970

**Kenneth A. Deveau C'70**, Sarasota, FL, Aug. 22. At Penn, he was a member of the cross country, sprint football, and track teams.

**Jeanne Boncek Fitzgerald HUP'70 Nu'78**, Clifton Heights, PA, a nurse; Aug. 28.

**Lt. Col. Bernadine T. Harrity CW'70**, Wilmington, NC, a retired attorney; Oct. 10. Earlier in her career, she worked for the US Army Judge Advocates General's Corps.

**Mary "Fritzi" Lynch Inman CGS'70 GEd'81**, Bryn Mawr, PA, a high school English teacher; Aug. 25.

**Robert L. Solar WG'70**, Lincoln, MA, a real estate executive; Sept. 17. His brother is Barry L. Solar C'63.

**Gregory T. Stengel L'70**, Scarsdale, NY, an attorney and real estate investor; Sept. 21.

## 1971

**John W. Huff PT'71**, Front Royal, VA, a retired physical therapist; Sept. 20. He served in the US Air Force and the US Army Reserve.

**John M. Hunt C'71**, Portland, OR, a retired senior engineer at Oregon Health & Science University; Sept. 7. At Penn, he was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

**Dr. Robert S. Weinstein M'71 GM'75**, West Berlin, NJ, a former clinical associate professor of obstetrics/gynecology in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine; Oct. 7. While a resident at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, he became an instructor in Penn's School of Medicine in 1972. In 1977, he became assistant clinical professor and later associate clinical professor, a role he held until his retirement in 2018. Outside of his teaching duties, he joined his father in his ob/gyn practice in Philadelphia from 1975 to 1985, then continued in his solo practice until 2019.

## 1972

**Frances L. "Lorri" Bodi CW'72 GEd'72**, Lake Forest Park, WA, retired vice president for fish, wildlife, and the environment at the Bonneville Power Administration, a federal agency responsible for producing

hydropower in the Pacific Northwest; April 17. At Penn, she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

**Dr. John J. Cashen D'72**, Saint Helena Island, SC, a retired dentist; Sept. 16. His sister is Mary Cashen Purcell GNu'74.

**Dr. John S. Kelchner D'72**, Portsmouth, RI, a retired orthodontist; Oct. 9.

**Marie Kovacs Guay Nu'72**, Mickleton, NJ, May 6, 2024. She served in the US Air Force.

**John W. Masius W'72**, Los Angeles, an Emmy Award-winning writer and producer; Sept. 13. Two television series he is known for creating are *St. Elsewhere* and *Touched by an Angel*. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity and Penn Players.

**Norma Oelkers Notzold-De Rosa GEd'72**, Wallingford, PA, retired head of the Penn State Brandywine Learning Center; Aug. 30.

## 1973

**Margaret M. "Peggy" McMahon Nu'73**, Clayton, NJ, a retired emergency nurse and nursing instructor; Nov. 6. She served in the US Army Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War and also the US Army Reserve.

**Dr. Arthur Leonard "Lenny" Pineau V'73**, Reisterstown, MD, a veterinarian; Oct. 25. He also owned a thoroughbred racing and breeding business with his wife.

## 1974

**Joyce Jones Czesnakowicz CW'74**, Eustis, FL, a graphic designer and a middle school math teacher; Aug. 23. At Penn, she was a member of Chi Omega sorority.

**Hon. Frederica Massiah-Jackson L'74**, Philadelphia, a retired Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas judge; Aug. 27. She was the first African American woman to preside over civil trials in Philadelphia and the first African American president judge of any county in Pennsylvania. One brother is Allen B. Massiah C'74 GEd'78.

**George S. Pappas Gr'74**, Richmond, VA, a philosophy professor at The Ohio State University; Sept. 3. One daughter is Sara Ruth Pappas C'95.

## 1975

**John F. Fulgoney G'75 Gr'79**, Wilmington, DE, former general counsel and CEO of

an investment bank; Sept. 3. After retirement, he taught history at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Temple University.

**Rafael Ruano CE'75**, Rocklin, CA, a former construction manager; Oct. 5.

## 1976

**Ahmet C. Acar Gr'76**, Ankara, Türkiye, a former rector at Middle East Technical University; Dec. 27.

**Vijay K. Kapur Gr'76**, Arlington, VA, a retired president of a solar electricity company; Sept. 27. His wife is Dr. Patricia A. Kapur M'76.

**Loretta "Lori" Walkusky Keenan CGS'76**, Stone Harbor, NJ, a retired supervisor in the hematology department of a hospital; Oct. 10. Earlier in her career, she worked in the clinical laboratory at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

**Michael R. Zimmerman Gr'76**, Audubon, PA, an anthropologist and pathologist who was a former adjunct associate professor of anthropology in Penn's School of Arts & Sciences and a consulting scholar at the Penn Museum; Sept. 28. He joined the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in 1972 as a research associate in medical pathology. After earning his doctorate from Penn, his primary faculty affiliation switched to the department of anthropology in the School of Arts & Sciences, where he lectured and performed research on mummy paleopathology at the Penn Museum until retiring in 2018. He also was an adjunct professor of biology at Villanova University and a visiting professor at the University of Manchester's KNH Centre for Biomedical Egyptology in the UK. His research inquired into the evolution of diseases over time, analyzing mummies to reveal clues about what they may have suffered. His wife is Barbara Robbins Zimmerman CW'61.

## 1977

**Monty V. Allen WG'77**, Houston, an accountant; March 27.

**Dr. Robert W. Harris V'77**, Mantua, NJ, a retired veterinarian; Sept. 15.

**Juliet Hacopian Sabouri-Yaghoobinasab G'77**, Princeton, NJ, a former cataloger

of Middle Eastern languages at Princeton University; March 17. Her husband is Frank Farrokh Sabouri GAR'73 GCP'77 GFA'77.

## 1978

**Brian P. Flaherty L'78**, Philadelphia, a lawyer and artist; Oct. 6. He was involved in Penn Law's American Inn of Court, a legal mentoring organization. His wife is Dr. Karen M. Lyons M'79 GM'83 and one child is Sarah Flaherty GED'10.

**Charles Yvon LeBlanc Gr'78**, Moncton, NB, Canada, a retired professor in the department of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Montreal; Oct. 9. He also served as the secretary for science and culture at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing.

## 1979

**Kenneth F. Burda GrEd'79**, Wilmington, NC, retired vice president for institutional advancement at the State University of New York at New Paltz; Oct. 17.

**Timothy H. Haahs EE'79 GCE'85**, Lower Gwynedd, PA, an architect and engineer; Dec. 26, 2024. One daughter is Julianna Haahs GAR'18, and one brother is Christopher Haahs EE'78.

**Lawrence A. Klatzkin C'79**, New York, an investment bank executive; July 3, 2024. At Penn, he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

**Robert J. Levin C'79**, Spring Lake, NJ, general counsel at Orbis Operations, a provider of specialized training, intelligence support, and cyber security services to the US military and intelligence community, foreign governments, and commercial customers; Oct. 13. At Penn, he was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

## 1980

**Raleigh R. Birch III C'80**, Media, PA, a videographer, recording engineer, singer-songwriter, and bandleader, who built and installed audiovisual systems; Sept. 24.

**John M. Fitzpatrick W'80**, Philadelphia, an events manager; Aug. 30. He later founded a company that created sets and scenery for shows at casinos.

**Dr. Frederick J. Lacey D'80**, Hilton Head Island, SC, a dentist; Aug. 28.

**Dr. David Julius Petcu C'80 M'88 GM'92**, Nashville, an anesthesiologist; Oct. 6. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity. His brother is Dr. Louis G. Petcu C'77 M'85 (Dr. Nancy M. Westermann M'84).

## 1981

**Dr. Michael J. Herman V'81**, Greensboro, GA, a retired veterinarian; Aug. 26. His step-mother is Judith Bucko Herman Nu'67.

**David E. Loder L'81**, Flourtown, PA, a partner at the law firm Duane Morris; Oct. 23. He chaired the Health Law Practice Group. As a student at Penn, he received the Thouron Award. His former spouse is Nadya K. Shmavonian WG'86.

## 1982

**Rafael H. Martínez Monefeldt Gr'82**, Carolina, Puerto Rico, a former executive at Citibank; July 30.

**Marlene Sefton GNu'82**, Chicago, a clinical assistant professor of nursing at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Oct. 14.

## 1983

**Susan M. Glover GNu'83**, Odessa, FL, a former cancer prevention nurse; Sept. 15. She served in the US Army as a nurse.

**Daniel J. Krofcheck WG'83**, Monterey, CA, a finance executive; Oct. 6, 2024.

## 1984

**David J. Bates WG'84**, Miami Beach, FL, Aug. 23, 2024. He had a decades-long career at the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation in Washington, DC.

**David H. Friedman W'84**, Greenwood Village, CO, Feb. 2, 2024. He worked for H.B Fuller Chemicals and the Museum of Modern Art in Hamlin, PA. At Penn, he was a member of Friars Senior Society and the tennis team.

## 1985

**Ronald Krensel C'85**, New York, a director, editor, producer, and showrunner; Oct. 20. He created television shows and commercials for stations such as ESPN, Discovery, BBC, ABC, PBS, and more.

**Christopher B. Mario C'85**, Key West, FL, a musician and former director of the

Mario Family Foundation, which was a supporter of the Penn Band; Sept. 8. At Penn, he was a member of the Penn Band.

## 1986

**Charles M. "Chuck" Fleischman WG'86**, Chevy Chase, MD, cofounder, president, director, and chief financial officer of Digene Corporation, a cervical cancer screening and molecular diagnostics company; Nov. 12. His children include Joan Fleischman WG'23 and Philip Claudy Fleischman WG'23.

**Phillip M. Friday G'86**, Lemoyne, PA, retired director of information services at the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency; Oct. 17. He served in the US Air Force during the Vietnam War and the First Gulf War.

## 1987

**William H. McBeath Jr. C'87**, Chevy Chase, MD, an architect; Sept. 15. At Penn, he was a member of Friars Senior Society, and the cross country and track teams.

## 1988

**Marizita T. "Zita" Seher GEd'88**, Haddonfield, NJ, neuropsychologist; Aug. 26.

## 1989

**Theresa Stuccio Grabo Gr'89**, Pittston, PA, a nurse and professor of nursing at Binghamton University; Oct. 2.

**Timothy J. Mahoney Jr. C'89**, New York, an insurance broker; Sept. 23. At Penn, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, Friars Senior Society, and the lacrosse team.

## 1993

**Jane Neddoff Brown Gr'93**, Mountain Top, PA, retired associate dean of nursing and health sciences at Luzerne County Community College; Sept. 2.

**Julia "Joyce" Raymond Gangel GNu'93**, Juliustown, NJ, a retired director of nursing at several nursing homes and an adjunct professor of nursing at Burlington County College; Sept. 22.

**Shanti Mittra W'93**, Minneapolis, partner at a venture capital fund; Sept. 26.

## 1994

**Scott M. Miller C'94**, Tenafly, NJ, a literary agent and executive vice president at Trident Media Group; April 23.

## 1995

**Sheri L. Chin WG'95**, Greenwich, CT, a finance executive; March 11. Her husband is Gordon J. Ng C'79 W'79 WG'83.

**Jeffrey N. Draine SWP'95**, Wallingford, PA, chair of the School of Social Work at Temple University; Sept. 7. Earlier in his career, he was a professor of social work and led a research program at Penn's School of Social Policy and Practice from 1994 to 2011. His wife is Debora J. Dunbar GNu'90 GrNu'23, and one daughter is Leah R. Dunbar C'22 L'27.

**Robert F. Rogers Gr'95**, Newark, DE, a neurophysiologist who conducted research at several pharmaceutical companies and taught at the University of Delaware, Drexel University, and Thomas Jefferson University, among many other schools; Aug. 25.

## 1997

**Deborah L. Torres GNu'97**, Mountain Top, PA, Oct. 10. She was an advocate for women's health and was instrumental in opening several clinics in Northeast Pennsylvania.

## 1998

**Patricia M. Connelly CGS'98 CGS'02**, Philadelphia, former director of training at NJ Transit; Sept. 14.

**Thomas O. Millner G'98**, Providence, NC, Oct. 28. He retired from the pharmaceutical industry and then became a pastor.

## 1999

**Marcia E. Laforest GEd'99**, Vineland, NJ, a retired public school teacher; May 12, 2024.

## 2000

**Andre E. James L'00 WG'00**, Manhattan Beach, CA, executive vice president and head of corporate strategy for Walt Disney Company; Aug. 29.

## 2004

**Paul S. Horos III CGS'04 LPS'11**, Philadelphia, a real estate developer; Oct. 12.

### School Abbreviations

Ar	Architecture	GEE	master's, Electrical Engineering	HUP	Nurse training (till 1978)
ASC	Annenberg	GEng	master's, Engineering and Applied Science	L	Law
C	College (bachelor's)	GEx	master's, Engineering Executive	LAR	Landscape Architecture
CCC	College Collateral Courses	GFA	master's, Fine Arts	LPS	Liberal and Professional Studies
CE	Civil Engineering	GGS	master's, College of General Studies	M	Medicine
CGS	College of General Studies (till 2008)	GL	master's, Law	ME	Mechanical Engineering
Ch	Chemistry	GLA	master's, Landscape Architecture	MT	Medical Technology
ChE	Chemical Engineering	GME	master's, Mechanical Engineering	MtE	Metallurgical Engineering
CW	College for Women (till 1975)	GM	Medicine, post-degree	Mu	Music
D	Dental Medicine	GMt	master's, Metallurgical Engineering	NEd	Certificate in Nursing
DH	Dental Hygiene	GNu	master's, Nursing	Nu	Nursing (bachelor's)
EAS	Engineering and Applied Science (bachelor's)	GPU	master's, Governmental Administration	OT	Occupational Therapy
Ed	Education	Gr	doctorate	PSW	Pennsylvania School of Social Work
EE	Electrical Engineering	GrC	doctorate, Civil Engineering	PT	Physical Therapy
FA	Fine Arts	GrE	doctorate, Electrical Engineering	SAMP	School of Allied Medical Professions
G	master's, Arts and Sciences	GrEd	doctorate, Education	SPP	Social Policy and Practice (master's)
GAr	master's, Architecture	GrL	doctorate, Law	SW	Social Work (master's) (till 2005)
GCE	master's, Civil Engineering	GrN	doctorate, Nursing	V	Veterinary Medicine
GCh	master's, Chemical Engineering	GRP	master's, Regional Planning	W	Wharton (bachelor's)
GCP	master's, City Planning	GrS	doctorate, Social Work	WAM	Wharton Advanced Management
GD	Dental, post-degree	GrW	doctorate, Wharton	WEF	Wharton Extension Finance
GE	Education	GV	Veterinary, post-degree	WEv	Wharton Evening School
		Hon	Honorary	WG	master's, Wharton
				WMP	Wharton Management Program

## 2006

**Andrew Silverman WG'06**, New York, a former product management director for Google; July 16, 2023.

## 2007

**Nathaniel G. Brogadir C'07**, Westport, CT, an operating partner at the venture studio 1848 Ventures; Sept. 28. His father is Dr. Stuart P. Brogadir GM'79.

**Miriam Diamond CGS'07**, Philadelphia, Aug. 21. She worked for a variety of women's health centers.

## 2010

**Andrew R. Wong C'10**, Long Island City, NY, a sales executive; Sept. 6.

## Faculty & Staff

**Michael T. Aiken**, Cody, WY, former provost at Penn from 1987 to 1993; Aug. 25. He later became chancellor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

**Dr. Clyde F. Barker.** *See Class of 1959.*

**Edwin B. Cox.** *See Class of 1951.*

**Jeffrey N. Draine.** *See Class of 1995.*

**Dr. Victoria "Vicky" E. Johnson**, Philadelphia, an associate professor of neurosurgery in the Perelman School of Medicine; Sept. 4.

She came to Penn in 2005 to take a position as a postdoc in neurosurgery, joined Penn's faculty in 2013 as an instructor of neurosurgery, and in 2016 became an assistant professor. At Penn, she quickly established herself as a leader in her field, securing funding from the Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health. Her research focused on the chronic neuropathological sequelae of traumatic brain injuries (TBI), including the links between TBI and neurodegenerative disease. She and her colleagues demonstrated that even a single TBI is associated with an increased incidence of Alzheimer-associated pathologies many years after injury. She was a two-time winner of the Murray Goldstein Award for Excellence in Neurotrauma Research, and in 2024, Penn's department of neurosurgery ranked third in the nation in NIH funding research among departments of neurosurgery, thanks in part to grants she was awarded. In 2025, shortly before she died, she was promoted to associate professor.

**Loretta "Lori" Walkusky Keenan.** *See Class of 1976.*

**Dr. Lawrence R. Soma.** *See Class of 1957.*

**Dr. Robert S. Weinstein.** *See Class of 1971.*

**Michael R. Zimmerman.** *See Class of 1976.*

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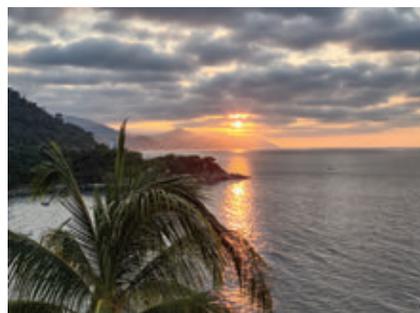


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## Education on Display

America's centennial celebration in 1876 was considered a smashing success, but 50 years later, the sesquicentennial event was, by most accounts, a flop, and it took place right here in Philadelphia.

Political bickering, delayed construction, the death of the director, and torrential rain all contributed to

low attendance. The entrance's centerpiece, a majestic "Tower of Light" that had been widely advertised, was not even completed before opening day.

The *New York Times* put it politely, in a June 1, 1926, article: "Some disappointment was expressed by visitors because of the incompleteness of the exposition, which is esti-

mated by its officials as about 75 per cent ready. The larger buildings are completed, but few of the exhibits are in."

One bright spot, though, was the University of Pennsylvania's booth in the education wing. Installed by George E. Nitzsche L1898, recorder of the University (and also founding editor of *Old Penn*, as the *Gazette* was called from 1902 to 1919), it drew connections between the school and the country's founders.

Plaques on the outside highlighted Benjamin Franklin and John Nixon (a Penn Trustee who was the first to read the Declaration of Independence publicly), and a reproduction of the Declaration showed 10 University signers underlined in red ink. Inside the booth, more than 15,000 objects were on display telling the story of higher education in America, including Franklin's original Leyden jars (used in his electricity experiments); Penn physicist Arthur Goodspeed's x-ray tubes (used to create the first x-ray); a miniature replica of Penn's first campus; 27 original Babylonian clay tablets; and a page from the Gutenberg Bible. All departments were represented, as well as many student organizations, such as the Mask and Wig Club.

The booth took home a gold medal. —NP



Photo courtesy of the Office of University Communications

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